




Speech By
James Lister

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Inland Rail

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (2.07 pm): I rise to speak on the topic of inland rail and the route that it is going to take in my electorate of Southern Downs in the region between the New South Wales-Queensland border not far from Inglewood and Gowrie. This particular passage of proposed track is very controversial because it crosses the Condamine flood plain in my electorate. The landowners there are very concerned about the impacts that this rail line might have on flooding levels and on the velocity of the water flows through the Condamine flood plain which may result in erosion.

There are other landholders further south in my electorate between Inglewood and Millmerran where the current favoured route would dissect their properties. They have feedlots and broadacre farming there. It is prime agricultural land. Having the rail line there is going to cause a great deal of difficulty for those farmers, particularly those who have feedlots and need more than just one crossing of a railway line every kilometre.

This is a matter of great importance to the people in that part of my electorate of Southern Downs. There is a broad feeling that they are not being listened to. I have to admit that the current Base Case Modified, as it is called, which stretches from the border to Gowrie, is being examined and assessed as to how the crossing of the Condamine flood plain would be done. I thank the federal government for doing that. My constituents tell me that they are not too sure that merely showing that the case will not work without spending a vast amount of money to cross the flood plain will mean that they will go somewhere else. They are very concerned that they will be presented with an outcome as a fait accompli and they will just have to live with the consequences.

I would like to state for the record that there are other ways this railway line could go—perhaps through Karara and Leyburn or, to avoid at least the prime agricultural land south of Millmerran, the railway line could be moved further to the west and go through a state forest. My understanding is that that is pretty poor country, so that seems a better solution to me.

Whatever happens, I commit myself to working very closely with locals such as Bud Kelly and Wes Judd, who are on the flood plain, or Jed Cameron and Russell Stevens, who are in that area south of Millmerran whose properties stand to be dissected. I will be working closely with them, the Deputy Prime Minister and the federal member for Maranoa, David Littleproud—I have met them in the past week—to ensure an optimal outcome for those landholders. I do not want to see them disadvantaged in any way.