



Avon-Midland Country Zone

Western Australian Local Government Association

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The Principal Research Officer
Economics and Industry Standing Committee
Level 1, 11 Harvest Terrace
WEST PERTH WA 6005

Dear Dr Abernethie

INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S FREIGHT RAIL NETWORK

The Avon-Midland Country Zone provides the secretarial support for the Local Government Grain Freight Group. This Group was established in March 2007 to discuss the impact on local roads of potential closures of grain freight rail lines. Its membership comprises the Avon-Midland Country Zone, Central Country Zone, Great Eastern Country Zone, Great Southern Country Zone, Northern Country Zone, East Metropolitan Zone, South Metropolitan Zone, South-East Metropolitan Zone of the WA Local Government Association and the President of the WA Local Government Association. The Group represents 82 local governments throughout the WA grain freight network, including port access. The Group's objectives are:

- (1) To achieve an integrated road/rail network to support the grain freight task.
- (2) To facilitate the development of local government policy and capacity for a coordinated efficient approach to the use of roads by heavy vehicles in the grain freight task.
- (3) To provide input to the Western Australian Local Government Association on the grain freight task.
- (4) To provide a forum to promote and advocate an understanding of the issues associated with local roads supporting the grain freight task.
- (5) To advocate a community and industry understanding of the issues associated with the grain freight task.

At its meeting on 14 April 2014 the Group considered the interim submission by the WA Local Government Association to the Committee's Inquiry into the Management of Western Australia's Freight Rail Network. The meeting resolved to fully support the Association's interim submission.

The meeting noted:

- That recent State government strategic directions and policy decisions relating to grain freight have not considered the views of Local Government or their communities and has not given appropriate consideration to the impact on these communities.
- The lack of transparency with regard to the State Government's lease agreement with Brookfield Rail and in particular to the capital investment and maintenance obligations.
- That better outcomes could be achieved if Government investment was increased on the Tier 3 rail lines or that management of these lines was transferred to other operators with a greater willingness to invest in them.

Representing

*Shires of Chittering, Dalwallinu, Dandaragan, Gingin, Goomalling, Moora, Northam,
Toodyay, Victoria Plains, Wongan-Ballidu & York*



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- When considering the levels of investment needed in rail Government should take into account the cross subsidisation received by road transport and the additional costs that would result from increased road transport of grain.
- Where grain lines are closed local governments should be funded to upgrade and maintain the associated roads to a standard to allow for the increased heavy vehicle traffic to be conducted safely and with respect to the issues of community amenity.
- Any additional rail investment by Government should not come at the expense of road funding.
- That Strategic Grain Network Review undertaken in 2009 is no longer a current assessment of grain freight in WA. A more up-to-date, transparent and comprehensive assessment is required.

The Group believes that it is important for the Committee to conduct hearings in the Wheatbelt to properly gauge the impact and effect on local governments and their communities of rail line closures and increased heavy vehicle road transport. Likewise the Group believes that a hearing in Kwinana, as the State's main export terminal, would be beneficial. The Group urges the Committee to hold hearings in the Wheatbelt and in Kwinana.

Representatives of the Group would be interested in appearing before the Committee to further discuss the issues.

Yours Faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Dew", is written over a horizontal line.

Robert Dew
EXECUTIVE OFFICER

17 April 2014

Representing

*Shires of Chittering, Dalwallinu, Dandaragan, Gingin, Goomalling, Moora, Northam,
Toodyay, Victoria Plains, Wongan-Ballidu & York*