



ALC Welcomes Action on Inland Rail

The Australian Logistics Council (ALC) has welcomed today's announcement by Nationals Leader Warren Truss that a Coalition Government would deliver on an inland rail line linking Brisbane and Melbourne.

"ALC has been vocal in its support for an inland rail line to improve rail reliability on the critical north south freight corridor and I am pleased the Coalition has reaffirmed its commitment to deliver on this much needed piece of infrastructure," said Michael Kilgariff, ALC Managing Director.

"ALC's Election Priorities Document [Time to Deliver](#) nominated an inland rail line as a key priority for the freight logistics industry to help meet Australia's rising freight task along the north south corridor where freight volumes continue to grow.

"The potential benefits of an inland rail line are enormous – it would improve rail freight efficiency and reliability along Australia's east coast and it would free-up rail capacity in our major cities, particularly in Sydney which often acts as a bottleneck as passenger trains are afforded priority.

"Rail freight mode share on the North–South corridor has declined significantly over the past 35 years, from 35 per cent in 1972 to 12 per cent in 2007ⁱ – an inland rail freight line would help to reverse this trend.

"The inland rail line would also come at a far more achievable price tag compared to high speed rail and would have a significant productivity pay-off.

"In particular, I welcome the commitment by the Federal Coalition and the Queensland Government to deploy tunnelling technology to deliver an efficient link to the Port of Brisbane.

"The Port of Brisbane is one of Australia's fastest growing container ports and is Queensland's largest general cargo port and it is important that the value of the rail line is maximised by ensuring there is an efficient link to the Port.

"The same principle would also apply to Melbourne when the line is eventually completed, where there would need to be efficient linkages with the rail network servicing the Port of Melbourne to get the full value out of this important piece of infrastructure.

"I also acknowledge the Coalition's strong focus on prioritising rail freight investment over public transport investment.

"Much has been said in this election campaign about whether the Commonwealth has a role to play investing in passenger rail projects, particularly in the major cities.

"Whilst our population is expected to increase by around 50 percent by the middle of the century, compare that with our national freight task which is expected to nearly triple by 2050.

"This reality underscores why there needs to be a strong focus at the federal level on investing in projects that will enhance supply chain efficiency and safety, which an inland rail line would certainly achieve," he said.

Mr Kilgariff also welcomed Federal Labor's announcement earlier this week that it would prioritise the necessary planning studies, environmental assessments and land acquisitions over the next 12 months to progress the inland rail line.

"With both major political parties now both publicly stating their support for progressing inland rail, we encourage whoever wins the next election to preserve and protect the preferred alignment now so that the land will be available when the inland rail freight line is eventually built," he said.

ALC's media backgrounder on the inland rail line is available by clicking [here](#).

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Further information: Duncan Sheppard on 0412 340 934

ⁱ 'Multimodal Interstate Freight in Australia, Bureau of Infrastructure, Transport and Regional Economics' Page 59 http://www.bitre.gov.au/publications/2010/files/report_120.pdf