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Expression of Interest Inland Rail Interface Program

Grain Trade Australia

September 2020

Version Control

Date	Version	Amendments
16 September 2020	1.5	

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1 Proposal Title

Inland Rail - Grain Supply Chain Integration

2 **Summary**

- Grain industry structure, disaggregated demand for transport assets and the cyclic nature of grain production is resulting in a modal shift from rail to road.
- Funding shortfalls on below rail infrastructure across regional lines does not support rail usage due to the load capacity difference across Networks significantly impacting transport efficiencies.
- Rural supply chain network strategies are necessary to leverage any benefits from Inland Rail
 and to integrate the project with existing infrastructure and market and operational
 arrangements.
- Industry collaboration and coordination is likely to foster more efficient intermodal operations and the integration of farm-based storages into the supply chain.

3 Proponents

Grain Trade Australia is the focal point for the commercial grain industry within Australia. It facilitates trade and works to provide an efficient, equitable and open trading environment by providing leadership, advocacy and commercial services to the Australian grain value chain. GTA is non-political, industry driven with a primary focus to ensure the efficient facilitation of commercial activities across the grain supply chain. This includes a strong focus on the logistics of grain through transport storage and ports.

GTA's has over 260 organisations as members ranging from regional family businesses to large national and international trading, storage and handling companies, grain marketers, consumers and processors. The vast majority of grain contracts executed in Australia refer to GTA grain trading standards, standard-form grain contracts and GTA Trade Rules. Most of Australia's grain storage and freight movements are made by GTA members. Key national and state producer representative groups are also GTA Members. A full list of GTA Members is attached to this Submission.

Whilst GTA is the proponent of this application it is proposed any review undertaken is inclusive all of industry and includes all participants of the grain supply chain. This includes representation from primary producers, bulk and container storage and handling companies, transport providers, grain marketers, port service providers and domestic processors and end-users of processed grain products.

3.1 Description of Proposal

Over the last decade, the Australian grain industry has significantly changed. In particular, the grain supply chain has grown in complexity, creating challenges and constraints for industry participants. These challenges have been most strongly felt across eastern Australia, limiting supply chain effectiveness and capacity, and ultimately impacting the capability of eastern Australia's global competitiveness within the grain supply chain.

GTA is proposing a **joint grain industry, ARTC and multi-level government strategic review** of the grain supply chain in eastern Australia. The **objective** of the review is to drive value for grain producers, rural communities, the grain supply chain and for the Inland Rail project. This will be achieved through:

GTA EOI – Inland Rail Interface Program

GRAIN TRADE AUSTRALIA

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- 1. A study of the existing eastern Australian grain supply chain and quantify the benefits and opportunities of the grain supply chain from the Inland Rail project.
- This proposed review will include the creation of inclusive state and regional strategic
 forums for focus and dialogue amongst the numerous supply chain stakeholders with the aim of
 isolating and defining strategic investment and for ongoing operational efficiency
 opportunities.

The review should consider a process that includes:

Table 1. Indicative Program Process

Phase	Process Steps	
1.Planning	Development of Strategic Review design and structure;	
	 Development of Scope and supporting Scope Outline 	
	 Identification of key stakeholders, key resources and analytical 	
	data requirements	
	 Development of the strategic framework and regional engagement 	
	including:	
	 Levels and layers (eg. State, port zone & regional) 	
2.Capture	Stakeholder engagement, and test and refine the Scope and design, which	
	includes:	
	Seeking governments and industry stakeholder buy-in and	
	alignment	
	Capture and refine analytical data and processes	
	Capture ideas/concepts - test and find synergies	
	Establish and recruit talent to network strategy and planning	
	teams	
	Determine industry level data, metrics and information sharing that will be a fit symply shain officions.	
3.Analyse	that will benefit supply chain efficiency. Implement detailed analysis and further refine and discuss	
3.Allalyse	opportunities/concepts	
	Assess all valid opportunities/concepts against set criteria and	
	rank/prioritise according to value	
	 Refine analytical data to support the planning process. 	
	 Design the proposed logistical planning processes/information 	
	sharing	
	 Prepare an outline document that capture and presents all the 	
	outcomes of the review	
4.Test	Second round stakeholder engagement	
	 Extensive discussion/workshops to refine direction and confirm 	
	opportunities – Investment and operational	
5. Conclusion	Finalise outcomes of the review and progress opportunities and	
	collaborative planning.	

3.2 Background to Proposal

The Australian grain sector has been a consistent provider of productivity increases to the Australian economy. Depending on the season the Australian grain industry is **Australia's largest or second largest agricultural export industry.** In 2020/21 ABARES estimates the **Australian grain industry value to be around \$A14.57 billion (at the farm gate)**. This is 12% above the 5-year average of \$A13.0 billion with 60% of production exported in a normal season the industry is a major driver of export revenue. Exports in 2020-21 are forecast by ABARES at \$A9.6 billion (FOB) and approximately 26.7 million metric tonnes (mmt). This has been severely impacted by the drought being 4.8% below the 5-year average. The grain industry, and its ancillary suppliers and service providers, are a **substantial employer of people from farm gate through to domestic consumer and port.**



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Domestic demand for all crops is estimated at 14.6mmt in 2019/20. The domestic market continues to be the largest consumptive home for Australian grain.

The grain industry supply chain is geographically diverse and is spread across 18 ports in the 5 major producing states of the nation.

Forecast production in 2020-21 is 47.3mmt (5 year average 41mmt) from approximately 21,000 farms production units1 the grain industry has an inordinately heavy reliance on the nation's road and rail networks including rural branch lines and the many non-sealed farm access and rural roads.

Historically, the Australian grain supply chain operated under a simple aggregation system with farmers delivering their produce approximately 10-30kms at harvest time to local collection points from where the grain would, over time be delivered to domestic and export destinations. This model has now changed with the industry increasingly moving to a disaggregated market with:

- Increased use of on-farm storage.
- Rationalisation of bulk handler receival sites and service arrangements.
- Privatisation of the above rail operating companies and their rolling stock assets and some of the below rail track networks. Removal of government ownership and in some states Community Service Obligations (CSOs) for rail leading to a transport modal shift from rail to road.
- Vertical separation of rail infrastructure from rail operators.
- Increased use of containers for export tonnage due to favourable sea transport back freight opportunities combined with international markets preferences in delivery and order size.
- Increased commodity trading activity with multiple aggregators for most sales contracts and a dramatic increase in supply chain participants resulting in competing demand for common use

The increased complexity in the grain supply chain has created challenges and constraints. This evolving model and its complexity need to be understood and factored into any planning and reform agenda by governments and industry.

Problem or Opportunity Description

Description of Problem

The grain supply chain in eastern Australia is fragmented and has minimal strategic planning and coordination. It is exhibiting a significant modal shift to road across the three eastern seaboard states of Queensland, NSW and Victoria. Whether this modal change will continue, or can be reversed, is uncertain even with the major investment in the Inland Rail project.

These changes at the local level are impacting the competitiveness of grain growers and industry as it competes on a competitive and in some cases heavily subsidised global market.

An inclusive joint industry and government review is considered necessary to focus on **creating** efficiency and to better understand the causal issues of the modal shift to road and to consider the potential benefits through integration and alignment of the grain supply chain to the Inland Rail project.

¹ Grain Growers Limited – State of the Australian Grain Industry 2016 GTA EOI – Inland Rail Interface Program



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4.2 Cause of the Problem

Historically, rail transport has supported the majority of the grain tonnage moved to export ports and to a portion of the domestic market.

Due to several factors, including a funding shortfall for below rail assets, a highly agile and innovative road trucking sector combined with a disparity in infrastructure access pricing has **resulted in a significant modal shift to road across the three eastern states of Queensland, NSW and Victoria**. Whether this modal change will continue, or can be reversed, is uncertain even with the major investment in the Inland Rail project. This should be of concern to government due to road transport's increased emissions, road congestion and safety considerations.

A further factor that has contributed to the reduction in rail usage by the grain industry is the difficulty associated with the high fixed cost of rail in providing a service to an industry that has many peaks and troughs of demand. Historically, this has been managed by a commitment to rail operators of 'take or pay' multi-year rail contracts by the larger bulk handlers and exporters. Since the removal of legislation that supported regulated grain marketing **the rail and grain industries have been struggling to find a commercial model that supports rail** in the eastern states.

It is acknowledged with its relatively high fixed cost; rail requires a consistent volume preferably spread evenly throughout a calendar year. Matching demand for transport assets from the multiple marketing and trading companies to the supply of rail is challenging. Given the economic return on rail assets is sensitive to volume any decrease in rail's share of the market is likely to create a compounding withdrawal of demand for rail.

The aggregation of demand for rail assets and rail services across a number of domestic consumers and export marketers has proven difficult. The efficiencies of rail can be quickly eroded without a system overview or orchestration model being in place. In WA and SA system optimisation for transport occurs through a bundled transport service arrangement provided by the Bulk Handling Companies (BHCs) in those states.

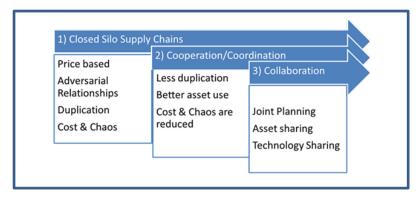
In the eastern states BHCs continue to provide rail services as part of their service offering without the same network impact and efficiencies as in WA and SA due to a more competitive environment, a large domestic market and the recent adverse production cycles. Transport economists would argue that some form of vertical cooperation amongst the key participants may result in more efficient planning, capital decisions and operational efficiency.

Some form of grain **supply chain system collaboration and coordination** amongst the participants may assist to at least analyse and understand the pressures on rail and road to determine if there is a model that **may support and enhance rail and road coexisting** in the grain supply chain.

The current grain industry model in eastern Australia has been described as a 'Closed Silo Supply Chain' with minimal strategic collaboration. The review may promote a focus on inclusive planning forums that discuss and seek methods to move towards a more efficient collaborative industry model.

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Figure 1- Degrees of Collaboration-



As a minimum governments and industry should at least work towards forming a view on the **viable model of rail transport for grain.**

It is important that any study includes **the integration of farm-based storage into the supply chain**. Farm storage has evolved to be a major component of the supply chain. Whilst this evolution is based on sound transport economic principles the proliferation of farm storage and small commercial storages is creating supply chain complexity and challenges from a biosecurity and quality management perspective.

Without a clear government and industry strategy that considers a full network review and considers road and below rail funding, the modal shift from rail to road may continue within the grain industry.

GTA poses the questions of whether the advent of the Inland Rail project will benefit the use of rail over road and whether any review or study that has been undertaken or published that indicates substantive benefit to the grain industry from the Inland Rail project. This may be a reflection of planning that is yet to be integrated and formed as how the new and upgraded rail infrastructure will coexist with existing grain routes and infrastructure and if it is likely to slow or halt the demise of the grain rail network. It is possible this can be corrected. However, it will not be possible without leadership, strategic consideration and discussion between industry, and federal and state governments.

4.3 Effects of the Problem

The effect of the problem is inefficiency within the grain supply chain that is **eroding value for growers**, **regional communities**, **and supply chain participants**. It is exhibited in a modal shift away from rail. Whether this is a systemic market correction or a combination of market failure, inefficiency in government planning and industry coordination is not known without a rigorous review of the grain supply chain. What is clear is that rail has inherent efficiencies and is supported by governments stated strategies. The grain market operates globally, is extremely competitive and is based on commodity trading principles including a focus on least cost pathways. The market is relatively mature, transparent, and competitive with importing countries experienced with processing grain from multiple origins. As a result, the Australian supply chain must be efficient and at least comparable in cost to its overseas competitors. However as discussed by AEGIC in its report, (Australia's grain supply chains- Costs, risks and opportunities) Australia's grain export sector should be concerned given the **high costs of its supply chains relative to those of emerging competitors**.

The grain supply chain requires efficiency in volume, price and operational arrangements. Rail can assist with these key metrics and the Inland Rail may generate benefit. However, the opportunity requires a collaborative approach to governments and industry planning at the strategic level that currently does not exist.

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5 Strategic Fit

5.1 Alignment with Productivity Enhancement Program (PEP) principles

Table 1. Alignment with PEP principles

Principles Desired Outcome Potential to achieve the Outcome objectives						
Reference	Desired outcome	1 otential to achieve the outcome objectives				
PEP1	Increase Inland Rail throughput, helping to maximise the benefits realised through the project, drive modal shift from road to rail and safeguard the Commonwealth's substantial equity investment.	This outcome is a major component of this Project and will be delivered through establishing system level collaboration and coordination that will support more effective strategic planning and decision making and will foster a more collegiate participation of the supply chain by its users. This will drive efficiency through greater industry coordination and focus on efficiency and key asset utilisation including rail.				
PEP2	Support regional economic growth by funding the development, repositioning or re-organising of local infrastructure to increase the competitiveness of regional economies and supply chains.	The grain supply chain is an integral component and driver of regional economic growth. This growth can be maximised through the more efficient coordination and re-organisation of local infrastructure aligned with potential savings in supply chain costs that will flow through to regional communities.				
PEP3	Deliver cost-effective improvements to the national rail freight network through strategic investment, based on independent technical advice and in consultation with the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) and state track managers.	The project plans to support collaborative and strategic discussion performed with the aid of contemporary analytical data that will produce opportunities and isolate cost-effective improvements to the national freight network (including rail). These should support cost effective improvements to the national rail freight network that is aligned with the existing supply chain and market and customer demands.				
PEP4	Support partnerships between Commonwealth and state governments with local government and industry, including shared funding responsibilities, appropriate risk allocation and improved data sharing	The grain supply chain requires a partnership approach with all participants involved and responsible for an appropriate risk level. The project has an objective to dramatically improve information sharing, alignment and shared contribution between industry and government.				
PEP5	Minimise downtime on regional rail lines.	The project aims to understand the value of road and rail and to integrate these modes within the supply chain to enable efficiency. The outcome of this objective should reduce the downtime on regional rail lines				
PEP6	Improve safety for road users through increased mode shift from road and rail and through strategic investment in the road interfaces with rail.	The grain supply chain may, as a result of this project see an increase in the modal shift of grain from road to rail. Similarly, the increased dialogue, discussion and collaborative planning will support any government and industry road safety initiatives.				
PEP7	Support National Freight and Supply Chain Priorities, enabling productivity improvements to Inland Rail by developing efficient and industry-relevant interfaces with priority regional rail networks	The project is directly aligned to the National Freight and Supply Chain priorities as one of its key outcomes is to develop efficient interfaces between road and rail where appropriate.				

Ends



Membership List as at 15 September 2020

Organisation	Contact	Website /Phone
Ordinary Member (Trading)		
Level A1 (over 7 Million Tonnes) CBH Grain Pty Ltd	Mr Jason Craig	cbh.com.au
Glencore Agriculture Pty Ltd	Mr Philip Hughes	glencoreagriculture.com.au
	F - 10 - 11	2
Level A2 (5 - 7 Million Tonnes)		
Graincorp Operations Ltd	Mr Robert Spurway	graincorp.com.au
		1
Level A3 (3 - 5 Million Tonnes)		_
ADM Trading Australia Pty Ltd	Mr Darryl Borlase	adm.com
Cargill Australia Limited	Mr Erik Wibholm	cargill.com.au
Level A4 (1.5 - 3 Million Tonnes)		2
Level P4 (4.0. 4.5 Million Tonne)		0
Level B1 (1.0 - 1.5 Million Tonnes)		
Emerald Grain Pty Limited	Mr David Johnson	emeraldgrain.com
Cofco International	Ms Sara Pan	cofcoagri.com.au
		2
Level B2 (500,000 - 1 Million Tonnes)	76 D	
Arrow Commodities Pty Ltd	Mr Dominic Vanzella	arrowcom.com.au
Australian Grain Export Pty Ltd	Mr Brett Dodson	australiangrainexport.com.au
CHS Broadbent Pty Ltd	Mr Steve Broadbent	broadbentgrain.com.au
Centre State Exports Pty Ltd	Mr Jeff Voigt	centrestateexports.com.au
George Weston Foods Limited	Mr Mark O'Brien	gwf.com.au
Ridley Agriproducts Pty Ltd	Mr Michael Reeves	agriproducts.com.au
Riordan Grain Services	Mr Mark Lewis	riordangrains.com.au
Riverina (Australia) Pty Ltd	Mr Gareth Stapleton	riverina.com.au
Bunge Agribusiness Australia Pty Ltd	Mr Stephen Bennett	bunge.com/agribusiness
Level B3 (250,000 - 500,000 Tonnes)		,
Allied Pinnacle Pty Ltd	Mr Josh Lawrence	alliedpinnacle.com
Robinson Grain Trading Co Pty Ltd	Mr Gary Robinson	robinsongrain.com.au
Wilmar Gavilon Pty Ltd	Mr Matt Albion	07 3713 8700
Louis Dreyfus Company Australia Pty Ltd	Mr Sam Roache	louisdreyfus.com.au
Quadra Commodities Pty Ltd	Mr Robin Cassar	quadra.com
		5
Level C1 (over 10 employees, under 250,000 Tonnes)		
Adams Australia Pty Ltd	Mr Ian Mack	adamsaustralia.com.au
Agriex Australia Pty Ltd	Mr Joseph Khnessier	02 9232 0690
Agrisk Management Pty Ltd	Mr Brett Stevenson Mr Michael Brittain	02 9499 4199
AGT Foods Australia Associated Grain t/a Agrocorp Processing Australia	Mr Bhuvan Gandhi	agtfoods.com/australia 07 4662 1999
Auscott Ltd	Mr Peter Webb	auscott.com.au
Australian Fresh Milk Holdings (AFMH)	Ms Jill Smith	02 6344 8462
BFB Pty Ltd	Mr Shane Bird	bfb.com.au
Blairs Produce Company	Mr Sean Blair	02 6025 4600
Boolah Farms Pty Ltd	Mr Stuart Tighe	02 6754 0343
Castlegate James Australasia Pty Ltd	Mr Ross Giovanetti	castlegatejames.com.au
Coprice	Mr Lyndon Benecke	coprice.com.au
Darwalla Milling Co Pty Ltd	Mr Gary Heidenreich	07 3822 0527
Deacon Seeds Company	Mr Mark Schmidt	07 4662 3217
Deckert Group Pty Ltd	Mr Chris Deckert	deckerts.com.au
Esperance Quality Grains	Mr Neil Wandel	members.westnet.com.au/eqg
Five Star Stock Feeds	Mr Tim Huggins	fssf.com.au
Fletcher International Exports Pty Ltd	Mr Kurt Wilkinson	fletchint.com.au
Hanlon Enterprises Grain	Mr Peter Gerhardy	02 6924 1781
Independent Grain Handlers Pty Ltd	Mr Brad Bryant	igh.net.au
Irwin Stockfeeds	Mr Bryan Irwin	irwinstockfeeds.com.au
Itochu Australia Ltd	Mr Justin Swan	www.itochu.com.au
J K International Pty Ltd	Mr Sandeep Mohan	jki.com.au

jamesstockfeed.com.au

Mr Adrian Moule

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