



National Trunk Rail Pty Ltd
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Private sector a strong contender for inland rail

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Australia's only private sector proponent for an inland rail freight line has welcomed the Federal Government's announcement (<http://www.financeminister.gov.au/media/2015/0902-artc.html>) that it is now considering other options to develop the Melbourne to Brisbane link.

National Trunk Rail Pty Ltd (NTR) Chairman Martin Albrecht AC said the announcement was the first time the Federal Government had acknowledged there were options to deliver inland rail, with all previous attention focused on the government's Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) as the only entity to investigate and deliver the project.

Mr Albrecht urged the Federal Government to open up the inland rail project to a Public Private Partnership (PPP) process as soon as possible – to “drive productivity through innovation to reduce costs to taxpayers and the Government”.

Mr Albrecht said that, while a government decision on the implementation of inland rail had been imminent, this week's decision to defer the tender process for a scoping study on the sale of ARTC recognised the important role the private sector can play in delivering a fully integrated supply chain solution for inland rail.

“The Federal Government has said it is looking for the most efficient and cost effective way possible to deliver inland rail. This is what we have been promoting to government for some time with our NTR solution,” Mr Albrecht said.

“The time for a high speed, fully integrated inland rail freight line is unquestionably now.

“We need a far-reaching and cost-effective solution to the nation's growing east coast freight task, which is expected to double by 2030 and treble by 2050 - export opportunities through Free Trade Agreements can only be captured through the lowest life-cycle cost transport infrastructure.”

Mr Albrecht said the private sector had an appetite for infrastructure investment and NTR's view was that the private sector was best placed to largely fund and build large infrastructure in a timely manner to attract early investment.

“NTR would be a strong participant in a PPP process and would deliver an inland rail design that is shorter, flatter, straighter and faster, and in less than six years from commencement,” Mr Albrecht said.

“Most importantly, it will deliver massive productivity gains which will improve the international competitiveness of Australia's agricultural and resource exports.

“That's the best way to guarantee the ‘most efficient and cost effective’ inland rail the Federal Government is seeking.”

The National Trunk Rail group (www.nationaltrunkrail.com) combines decades of engineering, economic and policy experience among its members. Besides Mr Albrecht, it also includes former Queensland Rail CEO Vincent O'Rourke, former CEO of Queensland Investment Corporation Dr Doug McTaggart and former CEO of Queensland Treasury Mark Gray.

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