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## Private sector interested in inland rail – but not the ARTC proposal



National Trunk Rail Pty Ltd  
ACN 168 063 643

The opportunity to seek private sector investment in an inland freight rail line between Melbourne and Brisbane must not be derailed by a recent report by the Federal Government's Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC).

Australia's only private sector proponent for an inland rail freight line, National Trunk Rail Pty Ltd (NTR), said the 2015 Inland Rail Programme Business Case confirmed its view that the ARTC proposal for inland rail was flawed.

But NTR Chairman Martin Albrecht AC said the Federal Government and the State Governments in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria should not let the ARTC report distract them from pursuing a real solution to Australia's growing freight challenge.

"NTR agrees with the ARTC business case that its proposal is not attractive to the private sector - we've had a look at the ARTC business case and we are certainly not interested," Mr Albrecht said.

"However, let's not confuse the ARTC proposal with the proposal for a new inland freight rail line between the Ports of Melbourne and Brisbane – there is private sector interest in that and NTR is a case in point."

Mr Albrecht urged the governments to not confuse the poor business case for the ARTC's piecemeal approach to inland rail with the proposal for a new purpose-build, high speed rail line.

"It is true that what the ARTC proposes is not attractive to the private sector – it will take too long to build and proposes to cobble together existing track with bits and pieces of new track," Mr Albrecht said.

"The NTR proposal is shorter, straighter, flatter and faster than what ARTC is proposing and there is definitely interest in that. We are proof that the private sector is interested in inland rail, but only if it is the right solution delivered in the right timeframe - the NTR solution would be delivered in less than six years from approvals.

"NTR seeks to complement the existing rail route via Albury and Wagga with a new 21<sup>st</sup> century alignment line through the Murray Goulburn Valley and Murrumbidgee irrigation area.

"Connection to Port of Brisbane via a tunnel from Acacia Ridge, twin tunnels on the Toowoomba Range and standard gauge connection to Miles - from day one - are essential ingredients to capture private sector interest and deliver the modal transformation from road to rail."

Mr Albrecht said the best way to progress inland rail was via a competitive Public Private Partnership process and called on the Federal Government to "get on with it" and for industry and peak infrastructure bodies to endorse the PPP approach as "the proven and best way to optimise private sector participation in the delivery of major infrastructure."

*Note: NTR has produced a short video which compares the ARTC and NTR proposals: <http://nationaltrunkrail.com/news/national-trunk-rail-video/>*

*The NTR group ([www.nationaltrunkrail.com](http://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.*

### Media inquiries:

Barton Green  
0411 702 209  
[barton.green@principalis.com.au](mailto:barton.green@principalis.com.au)

Martin Albrecht  
National Trunk Rail  
07 3512 5602

Suite 2, Level 1, 5 Gardner Close  
Milton Qld 4064