



MEDIA RELEASE

12 October 2022

VTA welcomes Commonwealth Inland Rail review

The Victorian Transport Association has welcomed the appointment of Kerry Schott by federal transport and infrastructure minister Catherine King to lead an inquiry into the Inland Rail Project.

The project has been widely hailed by the transport industry and the VTA for its potential to create productivity and efficiency gains, among the likely net positive contributions to Australia's intermodal freight system, however it has been beleaguered by recent cost and route problems.

According to Minister King, the review will consider the process for selecting the Inland Rail route and assess the project's scope, schedule and cost. It will also assess options for the new Inland Rail intermodal terminals to be built in Melbourne and Brisbane and improving rail links to the ports in these cities.

"We concur with Minister King that Inland Rail is critical to build additional capacity and to increase Australia's freight supply chain resiliency whilst meeting the growing freight task," said VTA CEO Peter Anderson.

"In its early days the project fostered a collegiate perspective of developing national supply chain infrastructure that would benefit all Australians. But unfortunately, recent project management has taken on a far more adversarial position towards modal value and positioning, with an unhelpful narrative that rail transport is better than road transport, and that Inland Rail will take trucks off our roads.

"This goes against the original spirit and intent of the project, which was to create productivity improvements for freight operators and their customers through greater choice of transport modes. The project was never created to have an adverse impact on one modality over another, but rather to continue our industry's push towards greater intermodal transport."

Anderson particularly welcomed scope in the review to assess proposed intermodal terminals in Victoria.

"Six years into the project, and with only another four years until its proposed completion, we still have not decided where the Victorian terminal will be located," Anderson said.

"The Western Industrial Freight Terminal (WIFT) and the Beveridge Industrial Freight Terminal (BIFT) are currently fighting for recognition, funding and a green light to start building. From a road freight integration perspective, it would seem the best intermodal connectivity will be through the development of the WIFT, whose positioning, connectivity and efficiency would ensure that those this supply chain serves will get the best value with the least disruption.

"The VTA looks forward to playing a constructive role in the review as it considers the views of all stakeholders on a project that has great potential to transform our national supply chain and create growth and greater productivity amongst all the transport modes," Anderson said.

Ends...

For further information please contact Brian O'Neil on 0411 055 284