



## Transport recommendations must be actioned to bring rail out of shambles

AGFORCE Queensland has called on state government to restore efficiency to the 'shambolic' state rural rail freight services by actioning 45 recommendations handed down yesterday by the Parliamentary Committee investigating 'Rail Freight Use by the Agriculture and Livestock Industries'.

The recommendations, many of which were put forward by AgForce, will seek to ultimately redress exorbitant freight prices and expand the limited transport options currently provided to Queensland primary producers for movement of their commodities.

AgForce transport spokesman, Grant Maudsley, said poor rail freight access had for too long stifled agricultural productivity and the Committee was clear action must be taken by government as a matter of priority.

"As the Parliamentary Committee noted, rail services to the agriculture sector are in shambles with outdated and inefficient infrastructure, limited access to train paths and serious inefficiencies in the supply chain," Mr Maudsley said.

"As the Committee rightfully said doing nothing is not an option."

Key recommendations handed down included:

- That a high-level, accountable executive officer be appointed to coordinate freight supply chain logistics in consultation with government, the proposed freight authority and other stakeholders;
- That the proposed infrastructure taskforce ensure a state-wide rail infrastructure plan is developed in consultation with stakeholders to, amongst other things, identify and prioritise infrastructure requirements, given high priority to effective port access planning, identify priority projects and include a strategic approach to future arrangements for larger scale intermodal terminals as vital supply chain hubs;
- Boost investment in rail infrastructure;
- Preserve train paths, examine ways in which to make them more innovative, flexible and transparent and allocate new train paths;
- Ensure the subsidy of livestock rail freight through continuation of the Transport Services Contract and that this subsidy be, at a minimum, maintained at current levels;
- Review the Livestock Services Contract for flexibility, efficiency and costs;
- Investigate the benefits of an additional subsidy for the freight of non-livestock agricultural products such as grain, cotton and sugar where uncompetitive rail freight costs currently push rural commodities onto the road network;
- Plan strategically-located and interconnected hubs;

- Investigate locations and facilities to increase containerisations with planned intermodal terminals, inland ports and warehousing hubs;
- Invest in rolling stock.

AgForce Grains President, Wayne Newton, said not only would an improved rail network improve agricultural competitiveness and profitability but would also more broadly enhance road safety, the environment and the economy.

“Research has shown one single grain train can take up to 500 trucks off the road,” Mr Newton said.

“With up to 80 per cent of current bulk grain and 100pc of containerised exports moving by road now, improved rail efficiency and use will reduce grower costs and dramatically improve road safety and reduce road damage.

“Additionally, congestion costs in Brisbane are estimated to be \$6 billion by 2020 and up to \$9 billion by 2055 if improvements to the transport system are not delivered.

“Rail is safe, it is clean and it must be improved for agricultural use to enhance both the rural sector and the greater economy.”

Ends

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**Who is AgForce?** AgForce represents thousands of Queensland broadacre producers who recognise the value in having a strong voice. AgForce leads the way to ensure agriculture’s social, economic and environmental contribution is recognised by all levels of government. AgForce works alongside landholders, encourages and supports the next generation, builds industry partnerships and skills and promotes agriculture - for secure, sustainable, progressive and profitable food and fibre into the future.