



*Advancing Australian Cotton*

Committee Secretary  
Senate Standing Committees on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

11-11-2019

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Dear Secretary,

*RE: Management of the Inland Rail project by the Australian Rail Track Corporation and the Commonwealth Government*

Cotton Australia welcomes the opportunity to make a brief submission to this Inquiry.

Cotton Australia is the peak body representing the interest of Australia's 1400 cotton growers, a large number of whom farm along the general vicinity of the Inland Rail route, and a smaller number who will either be adjacent to the route, or have the route dissect their properties.

Cotton Australia is a supporter of Inland Rail, and recognises that it will provide significant economic benefits to the country as a whole, as well as some direct and indirect benefits to the cotton industry.

Cotton Australia also accepts that it is impossible to build a railway line, without impacting some landholders, and that route selection must take in many factors; further Cotton Australia does not propose to submit on one route over another.

What Cotton Australia is primarily concerned about is the impact of the Inland Rail where it crosses significant floodplains – such as in the Border Rivers Region and across the Condamine Floodplain south-west of Toowoomba.

Cotton Australia is very concerned, that despite significant investment in hydrological modelling by the proponents, it has seen clear photographic evidence that the modelling has not match the photographic evidence, and is in significant conflict with local knowledge.

The large flood events of 2010/11 provide a wealth of recent knowledge and evidence, and it is alarming that the modelling has not been able to closely match the known extent of these floods.

Cotton Australia calls on this Inquiry to ensure that it gives very heavy weighting to the evidence provided by land-holders and Councils with first-hand knowledge of the local impacts of floods. It is very important that the Inquiry has confidence that the proponent's knowledge of flood flows across these floodplains is accurate; and matches the historical evidence.

Cotton Australia does acknowledge that the proponents have done considerable hydrological modelling, have updated models and assumptions due to new evidence, and have considerably amended the proposed design; particularly across the Condamine Floodplain.

It is clear that the proposed new designs, with significantly higher total bridge length, and increased culverts, will have added considerable costs to this route.

This cost increase might extend further if revised modelling, that matches outcomes with the 2010/11 floods historical evidence, leads to further design changes.

Therefore, Cotton Australia respectfully suggests, that the committee should recommend a route review based on the new costings.

As mentioned above Cotton Australia is not recommending an alternative route, but does think it would be appropriate to review the route decision, taking into account the increased costs.

Cotton Australia accepts that the outcome of this review may be a re-confirmation of the existing proposed route, but is of the belief that a review, based on new costings associated with design change would be good governance.

For further information on this submission please contact Cotton Australia General Manager, Michael Murray – [michaelm@cotton.org.au](mailto:michaelm@cotton.org.au) or 0427 707868.

Yours sincerely,



Michael Murray,  
General Manager,  
Cotton Australia