

Media Release

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Inland rail corridor must stay on the rails

The NSW Farmers' Association has welcomed the Rudd Government's announcement to commission a study into the multi-billion dollar inland railway between Melbourne and Brisbane.

NSW Farmers' Association President Jock Laurie says this is a project of national significance that would benefit farmers, as well as the entire agricultural industry and regional areas.

"For several years, we have been supporting this project that would provide a direct link for farmers to some of their most crucial domestic and export markets," Mr Laurie said.

"The inland railway from Melbourne to Brisbane will also save the industry millions of dollars a year in transport costs," Mr Laurie said.

The Rudd Government has announced that the study, to be undertaken by the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), will involve thorough consultation with all stakeholders, including state governments, industry, local government and major rail customers.

"The NSW Farmers' Association would be very keen to work with the Rudd Government to get his project off the ground. It's too important to wait another 11 years to see movement on this," Mr Laurie said.

"However, I would encourage the Rudd Government to utilise the enormous amount of work already undertaken on this proposal, to ensure this happens as soon as possible," Mr Laurie said.

At its recent Executive Council meeting in Parkes, the NSW Farmers' Association voted to "lobby the Federal Government to fund the construction of the Inland Rail Route".

Rail transport is also more energy efficient than road transport, with rail transport emitting significantly less greenhouse gases and pollution than road transport.

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- *Fast Fact:* NSW exports around \$1.25 billion worth of rural goods annually which represents 3.7% of all goods and services exported by NSW.

