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## Inland rail link study is on track

The NSW Farmers' Association has expressed its strong support for the development of a western inland rail link from Melbourne to Brisbane, following the release of the first stage of study results from the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC).

NSW Farmers' Association President Jock Laurie says the first results of the Melbourne-Brisbane Inland Rail Alignment Study look promising.

"The development of a western inland rail link would open up regional Australia to the rest of the world, allowing our agricultural and manufacturing industries to be more competitive in terms of trade," Mr Laurie said.

"Such a link would allow for the cost effective movement of grain and other freight to major facilities on the east coast of Australia.

"And not only would the link give regional businesses a cost effective means of delivering goods to port, it would also serve as an incentive for those businesses seeking to reduce the costs associated with manufacturing," Mr Laurie said.

The Melbourne-Brisbane Inland Rail Alignment Study has been commissioned by the Federal Government to determine the economic benefits and likely commercial success of such an inland railway. The first stage of results was released by ARTC last week, with the second and third stages expected to be released by the end of the year.

Mr Laurie's comments support those of Shadow Transport Minister, the Hon. Warren Truss, who stated that such a project would revitalise regional communities.

"We certainly hope that this study is one of the final steps before construction starts," Mr Laurie said.

"The rail link has many obvious advantages for businesses and industries, and both urban and rural communities would also benefit.

"Such a rail link has the ability to dramatically reduce the pressures of urban sprawl by boosting rural and regional communities, encouraging new business opportunities and jobs in these areas and improving the lifestyles of many Australians.

"This western rail link is a vital infrastructure investment for rural and regional Australia, and something we at the Association have long advocated for. We await the outcome of the ARTC study and the Government's response with interest," Mr Laurie concluded.

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