



AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION LTD

## **Submission For Hexham Train Facility Development**

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To The Department of Planning & Infrastructure

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From Alec Mackenzie: Executive General Manager Hunter Valley

Australian Rail Track Corporation

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Subject Hexham Train Facility Development Proposal

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The Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd (ARTC) is one of Australia's largest rail network owners, operating and managing over 8,500 kilometres of standard gauge track in South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia, New South Wales and Queensland. ARTC plays a critical role in the transport supply chain and in the overall economic development of Australia. We provide customers with access to our network to move a range of commodities including general freight, coal, iron ore, other bulk minerals and agricultural products. The network is also important in providing access for interstate and inter-city passenger services. ARTC was established in South Australia in 1998 as part of a major economic reform program aimed at improving the competitiveness and long-term viability of the Australian rail freight industry. Our mandate is to increase the volume of freight carried by rail and to do so in a commercially sustainable way.

Since formation ARTC has played a critical role in the economic development of Australia and now provides access between Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth. ARTC is comprised of two distinct operating businesses; Interstate network and Hunter Valley network. The Interstate network is poised to become an even tougher competitor with road as the major infrastructure projects underway between Melbourne and Sydney make for more reliable transit between Melbourne and Brisbane. Primarily used to transport general and containerised freight, as well as mineral ores, agricultural products, steel and passenger services – this network is a critical link for many national industries.

The New South Wales Hunter Valley coal network transported 130 million tonnes of coal across the network in 2011-12, the majority exported through the Port of Newcastle to overseas customers. This volume is set to grow even more and ARTC has over 20 individual infrastructure projects underway to expand the network in order to provide track capacity ahead of the demand. The growth of our network has been reliant on strong partnerships with customers, the community, regulators and our industry colleagues. These partnerships are something we are focused on strengthening. The Australian Rail Track Corporation welcomes the opportunity to

provide a submission to the Major Assessment process for the Aurizon (formerly QR National) Hexham Train Support Facility Project (MP07\_0171).

Key points:

- ARTC is highly supportive of the project due to its strategic importance in ensuring the continued success and growth of the rail industry.
- ARTC has and will continue to invest in significant infrastructure upgrades throughout the Hunter Valley to increase the capacity of the region to grow coal exports. We are of the view the Hexham Train Support Facility is integral to this growth and essential in ensuring the investment across the Coal Chain is both economically efficient and operationally effective.
- The construction and ongoing operations will provide significant economic benefits for the Hunter Valley region through employment opportunities for both high & low skilled personnel.
- ARTC are of the view that this project needs to be delivered as soon as is practicable to ensure bottlenecks around key logistic chain infrastructure such as Port Dumps Stations is minimised.
- ARTC is committed to working with Aurizon to ensure appropriate environmental and community impact concerns are addressed appropriately