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LEADING BUSINESS

Hunter Business Chamber

Aurizon Hexham Train Support Facility Project

MP07_0171

Submission December 2012

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Submission

The Hunter Business Chamber is the largest regional business chamber in Australia and is now over 126 years old. The Chamber represents over 900 member businesses to all levels of government. The Hunter Region has long held the reputation as the powerhouse of the NSW economy and ranks highly as one of the most valued, diverse and resilient regions in Australia.

The Hunter Business Chamber welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Major Assessment process for the Aurizon (QR National) *Hexham Train Support Facility Project (MP07_0171)*.

Key points:

- The Chamber is highly supportive of the redevelopment of industrial land at Hexham in order to construct a Train Support Facility (TSF). This facility will provide a strategic location for fuelling, provisioning and inspection activities currently occurring at Kooragang Island and Carrington.
- The Hunter Valley Coal Chain is the world's largest coal export operation and in recent years has undergone significant capacity upgrades both at the Port of Newcastle and on rail infrastructure more broadly. It is fundamental to both the state and national economies that the coal chain operate as efficiently as possible particularly against the background of a highly competitive global market.
- The Hunter Business Chamber endorses the sentiments expressed by Aurizon regarding the potential importance of the economic contributions of the project to the region. Of particular note is the acknowledgement of potential employment opportunities as a result of the construction phase and subsequent operation of the TSF.
- The Chamber has noted that the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) has adopted a strong strategy of continuous improvement and has encouraged above rail operators to re-establish train provisioning facilities away from the port terminals to effectively minimise rail congestion on approach to the dump stations. The Chamber endorses this requirement and commends Aurizon for advancing the Hexham TSF.
- It is the view of the Chamber that this project needs to be delivered as a matter of urgency and further, that it will provide vital benefits to the entire coal chain, better utilize infrastructure capacity and minimize delays in the supply chain.
- The Chamber supports the process of site selection and notes that keys issues such as ecology, traffic management, aboriginal cultural heritage, noise, and air quality have been more than adequately addressed by Aurizon.
- The Chamber has noted that all criteria in regard to consultation and stakeholder engagement processes have been addressed in a timely and transparent manner.

In conclusion, the Hunter Business Chamber strongly supports the timely approval and development of this site and is of the firm belief that this initiative is of strategic importance to the ongoing productivity of the Hunter Valley Coal Chain, which in turn is a significant contributor to the prosperity of both the state and national economies.

The Hunter Business Chamber is pleased to provide further representation to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure, if required, on this crucial project.

Contact

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