

# Grain lines give us bang for buck

Rail system keeps grower costs low

Rail is essential to both lower costs and meet carbon neutral targets.

National Farmers Federation has an objective of "farm energy sources to be 50 per cent renewable by 2030 and for agriculture to be trending towards carbon neutral by the same year".

Without a doubt, rail has the greatest potential of reducing the carbon footprint in Australian Grain Production than any other area of the grain supply chain from paddock to port. Grain production is a renewable resource and will be around forever, unlike mining which is a limited resource with limited life span.

Capital spent on rail can have a very long benefit for government and community.

In 2004, a report from the United States claimed rail to be 17 times more energy efficient than road transport in its supply chain.

In the 1980s — to produce 3000 tonnes of grain — we used 60,000 litres of fuel, and to cart all the grain to port by road 360km with our truck, we used another 60,000 litres of fuel.

With minimum till farming practices and a reasonable year we now produce 15,000 tonnes of grain and still only use 60,000 litres of fuel.

If we were to cart that grain to port with the same truck equivalents we would need 300,000 litres of fuel, plus five times the number of trucks, tyres and drivers.

The Federal Government has as a priority an Emissions Reduction Fund of \$3.5 billion in investment to deliver Australia's 2030 Paris climate commitments.

On ABC Radio last Friday, it was quoted that: "The European Union has adopted new targets to cut carbon emissions by at least 55 per cent by 2030, and that by the year 2035 no internal combustion engines would be produced there".

This coming harvest — as has happened in many recent harvests —

there will not have been enough road trucks or rail capacity to meet the demand for shipping. It has been a very expensive exercise with huge demurrage costs as a consequence.

In the past, CBH has had an excellent turnaround for shipping with demurrage costs very rare.

On the east coast, in past years there have been discounts on grain prices from \$20 to \$40 a tonne compared to the same grain here.

This is as a consequence of the inefficiencies in that grain supply chain.

This is an indication of the costs we could incur should we not improve the grain supply chain to port.

We do not need road transport carting grain where it can be put on rail. CBH has always prioritised rail over road in the past, with up to 80 per cent going on rail.

The shortage of road transport, the impact it has on our roads, the inefficiencies compared to rail, and the impact it has on our communities and other road users makes capital spent on rail a no-brainer for directors, management and government.

We must give some credit to our State Government for the regional forums on WA Agricultural Supply Chain Improvements, which will start in Geraldton on July 22 and end in Esperance on August 3.

To register, visit [mysaytransport.wa.gov.au](http://mysaytransport.wa.gov.au).

Every grower should consider seriously attending one of these forums.

Your CBH board, management and the Government need to hear from you if you want to keep grain on rail as the least cost pathway to port, including tier 3 rail, and do our bit to lower the grain carbon footprint for all Australians.

# Funding focuses on road and rail

CALLY DUPE

State Government representatives have embarked on a regional roadshow designed to nut out how to spend \$200 million of Federal and State funds earmarked to improve agricultural transport in WA.

Seven forums have been scheduled between Geraldton and Esperance from July 22 to August 3, with a focus on road and rail.

The first was expected to be held in Geraldton today, on July 22, with others in Wagin and Merredin on July 26, Dalwallinu and Northam on July 27, Albany on July 29 and Esperance on August 3.

Each forum will be led by the Department of Transport, giving community members the chance to hear about planned upgrades and to direct future investment.

The State Government is still deciding how to spend about \$200 million of Federal and State funds allocated to WA agricultural supply chain improvements, after \$40 million was allocated by the McGowan Government as part of the State Budget and \$160 million was included in the Federal Budget

## KEY TRANSPORT ROADSHOW DATES

Date	Time	Centre	Venue
Thursday, July 22	12-2pm	Geraldton	Batavia Coast Conference Centre
Monday, July 26	11-1pm	Wagin	Eric Farrow Pavilion
Monday, July 26	5-7pm	Merredin	Merredin Community & Leisure Centre
Tuesday, July 27	12-2pm	Dalwallinu	Dalwallinu Recreation Centre
Tuesday, July 27	5-7pm	Northam	Bridgeley Community Centre Northam
Thursday, July 29	12-2pm	Albany	Master Builders WA – Albany
Tuesday, August 3	12-2pm	Esperance	Noel White Pavilion

in May. WA Transport Minister Rita Saffioti said she had asked the department to hold the forums as the State Government continued its “strong focus” on regional WA.

“I have asked the Department of Transport to run forums throughout the regions and hear from the local communities about what they would like to see upgraded as part of the WA agricultural supply chain program,” she said.

“The forums will provide an update on work that has already been done and look for feedback on the proposals being considered as part of the agricultural supply chain improvement program.

“They will also explain the process and seek feedback on the

work under way to identify and rank the longer-term program of rail and road investment proposals.

“This will form part of the next stage of a business case our Government will submit to Infrastructure Australia, which will guide future packages of funding.”

The \$200 million in funding includes \$40 million from the State Government — \$22 million of which is earmarked for upgrades to CBH sites in WA.

The \$22 million pre-State Budget announcement will be used to extend rail sidings at CBH’s Moora, Brookton, Cranbrook and Broomehill receival sites to allow

more wagons to fill with grain before heading to ports.

CBH and its 3900 grower members would also contribute \$80 million to build rapid rail loading infrastructure at the four sites to speed up how grain can be loaded into trains.

The \$160 million was included in a \$10 billion national spend on infrastructure improvements included in the Federal Budget in May. The money has been loosely committed to upgrading routes identified through the State Government’s Revitalising Agricultural Region Freight Strategy, which was released last year.



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**Rita Saffioti**