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MEDIA STATEMENT

Australia's rail renaissance races ahead

Australia's largest rail freight operators and infrastructure owners today congratulated the NSW Government's \$60 million commitment to upgrade the Junee to Griffith Rail Line.

Freight On Rail Group (FORG) of Australia Chair Dean Dalla Valle said Riverina farmers and exporters can look forward to getting their commodities from 'paddock to port' quicker and cheaper.

"Australian farmers and exporters operate in fiercely competitive global markets – our rail freight networks must be efficient so the price of our products and commodities appeal to buyers and consumers around the world," said Mr Dalla Valle.

Mr Dalla Valle said moving produce by rail from towns like Junee, Griffith, Leeton and Narrandera should be efficient and cost-effective; not an exercise in battling 20th century freight bottlenecks.

"Running freight trains at higher speeds and axle weights gives the Riverina rail network a boost in productivity; resulting in reduced costs and delays for farmers and exporters," said Mr Dalla Valle.

Mr Dalla Valle said regions like North America and Western Europe have a long history of investing heavily in rail freight infrastructure to shift the haulage of bulk commodities like rice, wheat, cotton, coal, steel, timber, fuel and fertiliser from road to rail.

"Moving bulk freight by rail is safer, more efficient and cleaner than road – a typical freight train hauling containers takes up to 65 B-doubles off the road, while rail freight produces 16 times less carbon pollution per tonne kilometre than road," said Mr Dalla Valle.

Mr Dalla Valle said programs like the NSW Government's \$400 million Fixing Country Rail initiative and the Australian Government's \$10 billion Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail project signal the start of a 'rail renaissance' in Australia.

"I believe the many and varied benefits of rail have started to capture both the imagination and interest of our key decision-makers – long may it continue," said Mr Dalla Valle.

Mr Dalla Valle said Minister Pavey's announcement to also fund additional passing loops and sidings, upgrade level crossings and strengthen bridges would significantly improve both capacity and safety along the Junee to Griffith rail corridor.

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About Freight On Rail Group (FORG) of Australia

FORG members contribute:

- More than \$11 billion to Australia's economy each year
- Employ almost 20,000 people across the nation
- Operate 1,600 freight locomotives and 34,000 units of rolling stock (e.g. train wagons)
- Manage 23,000 kilometres of rail track