

RAIL FREIGHT KEY TO SUPPLY CHAIN SECURITY IN CURRENT CLIMATE

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The *Freight on Rail Group* (FORG) has welcomed the Australian Government's ongoing engagement with industry on fuel security, noting that there is currently adequate fuel supply and no immediate impacts on rail freight operations.

However, global fuel markets are evolving rapidly and the situation in the Middle East underlines the importance of continued forward planning to protect essential freight services.

"Freight rail is an essential service and critical infrastructure that must be prioritised during any fuel supply disruption," Geoff Smith, the Chair of FORG highlighted.

FORG has been involved in the direct briefings from the Federal Government on the current supply situation, and is supportive of the Government's approach.

"Rail moves groceries, medical supplies, liquid fuels and grain, and also supports Australia's energy exports relied upon by partners such as China, Korea and Japan."

Rail freight is fuel efficient, able to move up to five times more freight using the same amount of fuel as road transport, making it an important contributor to the supply chain when fuel security is impacted.

The rail freight industry stands ready to assist government by rapidly adding capacity on key East–West and East Coast corridors, allowing freight to shift from road to rail, reducing diesel consumption and strengthening supply chain resilience.

"Prioritising rail freight in fuel allocation and contingency planning is one of the most effective ways to keep essential goods moving in a fuel-constrained environment," Mr Smith concluded.

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FORG consists of the nine major rail freight businesses in Australia: Pacific National, Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), One Rail Australia, Aurizon, Qube Holdings, SCT Logistics, Arc Infrastructure, WatCo Australia, and Southern Shorthaul Railroad (SSR).

These rail freight companies contribute more than \$11 billion each year to the nation's economy, employ 20,000 people (many based in regional Australia), operate in every mainland Australian state and territory, utilise 1,600 locomotives and 34,000 wagons, and manage and operate 23,000 kilometres of rail track.