

## 12.3 Rail Committee Minutes 12 May 2022

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR COMMUNITY  
TO 15 JUNE 2022 ORDINARY MEETING  
GOV400098, TRA300009

### RECOMMENDATION

#### That Council:

1. **receive the report by the Director Community on the Rail Committee Minutes 12 May 2022;**
2. **endorse the minutes of the Rail Committee Meeting 12<sup>th</sup> May 2022;**
3. **endorse the Terms of Reference for the Rail Committee; and**
4. **seek and facilitate a meeting with the relevant Ministers regarding the future potential for use of the Mudgee and Oberon rail lines.**

### Executive summary

This report is to advise Council of the matters given consideration at the meeting of the Rail Committee held on 12 May 2022.

The members of the Rail Committee has a focus of re-instating the 89km rail line between Rylstone and Gulgong for passenger rail, light freight and tourism opportunities.

### Disclosure of Interest

Nil

### Detailed report

At the meeting on 2 February 2022, Council endorsed the formation of a Rail Committee. The public were invited to be members of the Committee and these members were endorsed at the April Council meeting.

The Committee held its first meeting on 12 May 2022 and this report provides the minutes to Council for their information.

One of the main tasks was to establish a Terms of Reference which needs to be supported by Council. This is provided to Council for endorsement.

The Committee have also recommended two other actions for Council to consider. The first is to seek a meeting with the relevant Ministers regarding the future of the rail line through the region. This is supported by staff with the condition that Council is supportive of the proposed Terms of Reference.

The second action is to seek to establish a multi-Council Committee ("a Tablelands Rail Committee") that would examine potential uses of the line from the Armidale region through to Oberon. This is not supported by staff at this stage as it is felt that further direction would be required from the State

Government and relevant agencies on what is possible or may be possible in the future. However, if Council is of a mind to support this recommendation from the Committee a further part of the resolution could be added such as:

*That Council.....engage with all other Councils between Oberon and Armidale regarding the potential future uses of the rail lines for light freight with the aim of establishing a Tablelands Rail Committee*

With the Terms of Reference, it is important that Council considers this carefully. By accepting the Terms of Reference, Council is signalling to the community that they are supportive of lobbying actions that would culminate in the reinstatement of passenger and light freight activity on the rail line. While there is some support in the community for a return of passenger rail services, there have been no indications at this stage that this is a likely outcome in the foreseeable future. It is also worth noting the increasing number of residential properties that have been built within close distance of the railway corridor over the past twenty years.

## Community Plan implications

<b>Theme</b>	<b>Good Governance</b>
Goal	Good communications and engagement
Strategy	Encourage community access and participation in Council decision making

## Strategic implications

### **Council Strategies**

Community Plan

### **Council Policies**

Code of Conduct

### **Legislation**

Section 355 of the Local Government Act (1993)

## Financial implications

Nil

## Associated Risks

In considering the Terms of Reference for this Committee, Council should determine whether there are any risks associated with accepting this as a course of action for Council, whether further community consultation would be appropriate and whether it fits within the body of work expressed to the community through the Community Plan.

SIMON JONES  
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY

30 May 2022

*Attachments:* 1. Rail Committee Minutes May 12 2022.

2. Mid-Western Regional Council Rail Committee Terms of Reference - May 2022.
3. Mudgee Region Rail Inc Proposal.

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

BRAD CAM  
GENERAL MANAGER



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## MINUTES RAIL COMMITTEE

Thursday 12th May 2022 at the Council Chambers Mudgee

### Meeting opened at 11.03am

Present: Mike Sweeney, John Bentley, John Wood, Brad Cam (General Manager), Simon Jones (staff)

#### 1. Apologies

Apologies were noted from Cr Peter Shelley and Drew Stein

#### 2. Update from General Manager

Brad Cam provided an overview of recent discussions held with ARTC.

*Brad left the meeting at 11.20am*

#### 3. Committee Terms of Reference

Discussion was held regarding the Terms of Reference for the Committee. The focus of the Committee was on promoting the use of rail for passenger services and light freight, as well as opportunities for tourist rail in the region.

A draft Terms of Reference is to be presented to Council for endorsement.

#### 4. Request for Meeting with Minister

The Committee suggests that a meeting be arranged with The Hon Sam Farraday, Minister for Regional Transport. Relevant notes from Drew Stein were tabled at the meeting.

**Motion: That Council seek and facilitate a meeting with the relevant Ministers regarding the future potential for use of the Mudgee and Oberon rail lines**

***Supported by all***

## **5. Tablelands Rail Committee**

There was discussion regarding the potential for timber freight on the rail lines between Armidale and Oberon. There are many Council areas involved along these lines including Bathurst, Oberon, Lithgow, Mid-Western, Warrumbungle, Walcha, Armidale, Liverpool Plains

**Motion: That Council engage with all other Councils between Oberon and Armidale regarding the potential future uses of the rail lines for light freight with the aim of establishing a Tablelands Rail Committee**

*Supported by all*

## **6. Inclusion of Rail News in Council's Community News publication**

There was general discussion regarding the work of the Rail Committee and keeping the community up to date with news on progress of rail projects including passenger rail services and light freight. The inclusion of items in Community News may help to facilitate this communication.

## **7. Councillor Workshop**

Members of the Rail Committee will speak at the Councillor Workshop prior to the Council meeting on 18 May.

*Meeting closed 11.40am*

*Next meeting – to be confirmed*



## TERMS OF REFERENCE Mid-Western Regional Council Rail Committee

*A prosperous  
and progressive  
community.*

ADOPTED		REFERENCE	2.1
MIN		REVIEW DATE	JANUARY 2025
DATE PREPARED:	12 MAY 2022	FILE NUMBER	TRA300009

### Preamble

Mid-Western Regional Council appreciates the advice, voluntary time, commitment, interest and dedication demonstrated by members of its Advisory Committees. Council will give consideration to recommendations stated in the minutes of Advisory Committees. Such recommendations are considered in the context of Council's Community Plan, Operational Plan and Delivery Program and budgetary considerations at an operational and strategic level.

### Responsibilities

- Provide advice and recommendations to Council on strategic and long term issues related to passenger rail services
- Promote the use of passenger rail, light freight and tourist rail opportunities within the Mid-Western region
- Keep Council informed of relevant matters related to rail services in the region

### Composition of Committee

The Committee shall comprise the following members:

- One (1) elected Councillor
- Community representatives (up to 10)

### Meeting Frequency and Quorum

The Committee shall meet twice per year and report the minutes from these meetings back to Council.

The quorum shall be half the current membership plus one.

### Council Contact and Support

The Director, Community or their delegate is the Council contact officer for the Rail Committee.

## **MUDGEES REGION RAIL Inc.**

**Our Aim:** To reintroduce a rail passenger service, re-establish general freight and boost tourism and enterprise business opportunities and across and beyond the Mudgee Region

**Our Proposal:** Re-instate the 89km rail line between Rylstone and Gulgong. This will complete the connection of New South Wales' active and crucial rail lines (see attached map).

### **Benefits:**

#### **1. Providing Passenger Rail to and from Mudgee Station**

A general twice daily service both ways will connect with Interurban trains at Lithgow.

Bus services to towns will continue to operate from Mudgee station to connecting villages rather than from Lithgow.

#### **2. Enhancing Movement of General Freight**

As well as serving passengers, enhanced supply, business and employment opportunities would be provided to the region.

Currently, businesses and people working and living within this proposed rail corridor beyond Lithgow are not given any commercial and commuting or recreational alternative to road transport.

Further, a few major freight opportunities already exist should the Gulgong-Rylstone rail link be in operation. For example:

NSW Forestry Corporation's major logging business from the Armidale State Forest, currently moves by road through Mudgee's streets annually 100,000 tonnes of log timber.

Graymont's Charbon Lime plant and Excelsior Lime quarry south of Kandos, whose product if transferred by rail would significantly boost Graymont's operation both economically and environmentally.

The transportation of heavy coal rail freight is not possible on this line.

#### **3. Boosting Mid-Western Regional Tourism**

There is a vibrant heritage rail movement in NSW. With restoration of the 'missing link' on the Mudgee branch, there would be enormous potential in this space for the Mudgee region.

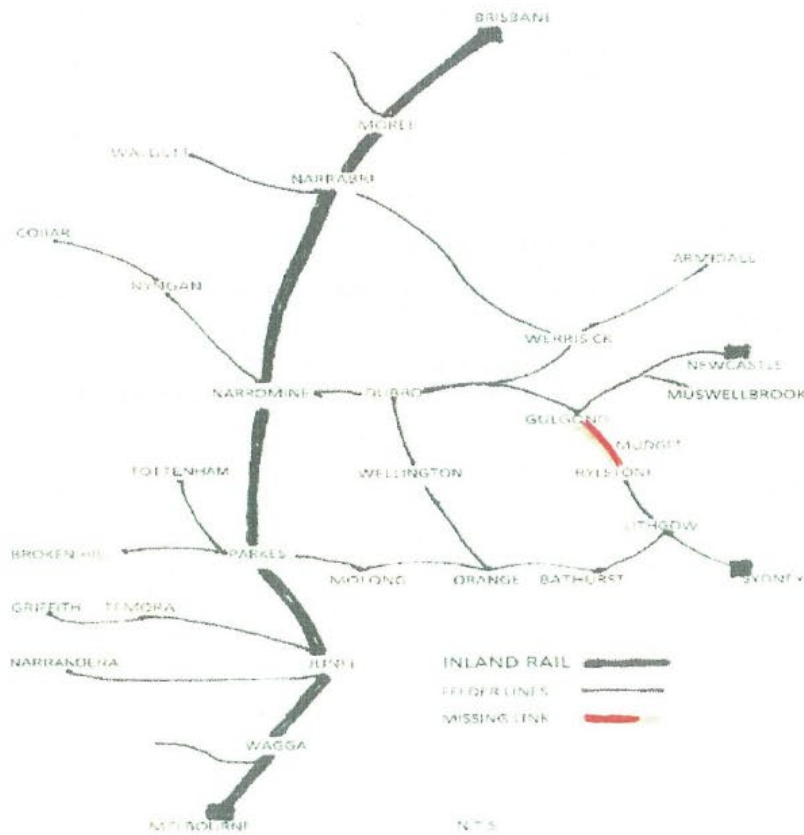
Flow on benefits to the broader community would see facilities, currently underutilised all along the line, given a new lease of life to our other centres at Gulgong, Rylstone, Lue and Kandos.

Reinstating the line will provide an attractive, safer alternative to travel by car to the Region as visitors from Sydney face increased congestion and travel times particularly at times of peak tourism.

#### **4. Improving Sustainability**

Increased noise polluting road traffic is only accelerating the very emissions governments are trying to control.

The power of rail is its capacity to move freight and people with enormous efficiency compared with road transport.



As the map shows, the “missing link” (seen in red) if connected would mean a complete rail network would be in place, opening possibilities for unbroken rail transportation to and from our region, across our State, and beyond.

May 2022



