

Item 12: Reports from Committees

12.1 Rail Committee Minutes - 25 May 2023

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR COMMUNITY
TO 19 JULY 2023 ORDINARY MEETING
GOV400103, TRA300009

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. **receive the report by the Director Community on the Rail Committee Minutes - 25 May 2023;**
2. **endorse the minutes of the Rail Committee Meeting 25th May 2023;**
3. **endorse the proposed change to the Terms of Reference for the Rail Committee; and**
4. **undertake a consultation process with the community on the reinstatement of passenger, light freight and heavy rail services and report the results of this consultation process to Council.**

Executive summary

This report is to advise Council of the matters given consideration at the meeting of the Rail Committee held on 25 May 2023.

There were a number of matters raised at the meeting that require Council consideration.

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 2022 Council meeting.

The Committee held its most recent meeting on 25 May 2023 and this report provides the minutes to Council for their information.

There is a proposed change to the Terms of Reference and this is recommended. It broadens the scope of the Committee to include light freight rail as well as passenger trains.

Other matters raised, however, are likely to require Council to make a clear statement on their level of support for rail services in the region from Gulgong through Mudgee to Rylstone and Kandos.

In establishing this Committee, Council has been supportive of receiving information and updates on the issue but has not communicated a clear position to the community on its support for passenger rail, light freight, heavy freight and the circumstances by which Council (and the community) would be supportive of these initiatives.

At the Rail Committee meeting, there was a request for the Mayor to provide a letter of support to Mudgee Region Rail Inc regarding Council's support for the re-opening of the rail line for passenger services. Should Council support this request this should be added to the resolution.

There was a request from the Rail Committee to discuss using rail as part of the Bowdens Silver Mine transport strategy.

The Rail Committee has also asked for the Mudgee Region Rail Committee to provide content for Council's Community News publication. Again, it would be useful for staff to have a clear position from Council on the re-establishment of rail services in order to facilitate this request.

There is a concern that the Committee has been established as a parallel Committee to the separate Mudgee Region Rail Inc and this does not necessarily provide opportunities for differing perspectives on the issue of the use of the rail line to be raised at the Rail Committee meetings.

For example, there are some in the community who have expressed interest in the rail corridors being used for cycling and walking recreation purposes. Also, there may be community members who are landowners alongside the rail corridor who may be less keen on rail services being re-established.

The establishment of these two separate but similar committees also means that it can be hard to distinguish when Committee members are speaking in the media and the community on behalf of Council's Rail Committee or on behalf of Mudgee Region Rail Inc.

It is recommended that Council undertake their own consultation with the community on the issue of use of the railway lines prior to determining a more precise position or establishing clear support for the re-instatement of services on the lines and acting further on the requests of the Mudgee Region Rail Inc. It is also worth noting that the future use (or not) of the railway line is not within Council's responsibility so it may happen (or not happen) regardless of Council's position on the matter.

Community Plan implications

Theme	Good Government
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 proposals from the Rail Committee, Council should determine whether there are any risks associated with taking this as a course of action for Council or whether further community consultation would be appropriate.

SIMON JONES
DIRECTOR COMMUNITY

26 June 2023

Attachments:

1. Rail Committee Meeting Minutes May 25 2023.
2. 2023 Mudgee Region Rail Update No. 2.
3. Completing Significant Loops Appendix 1.
4. Terms of Reference - Rail Committee - May 2022 - proposed change June 2023.

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

BRAD CAM
GENERAL MANAGER



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MINUTES RAIL COMMITTEE

Thursday 25th May at the Council Administration Building, Mudgee

Meeting opened at 10.00am

Present: Cr Peter Shelley, Mike Sweeney, John Bentley, John Wood, Simon Jones (staff)

1. Apologies

Cr Peter Shelley, Drew Stein

2. Minutes from the Previous meeting

Motion: That the minutes from the May meeting be accepted

Moved: Mike Sweeney

Seconded: John Wood

Motion Supported by all

3. Update on Rail Services

- Mudgee Region Rail Committee have been busy with letters being sent to Ministers as well as senior bureaucrats
- Bowdens Silver Mine approval – a minor change to the rail line could allow for mine output to be transported by rail
- Significant logging materials being transported by road when this could be transported by Rail. Reference is made to the GHD report on the viability of the rail line from Oberon to Tarana
- Map was provided showing rail loops that could be used for forestry industry

Motion: That Council write to Bowdens Silver Mine encouraging them to include rail in their transport strategy for the movement of materials.

Moved: John Wood

Seconded: John Bentley

Motion Supported by all

Motion: That Council provide opportunity through the monthly Community News publication for Mudgee Region Rail to provide draft information to our region

Moved: John Wood Seconded: John Bentley Motion Supported by all

4. Proposed Change to the Terms of Reference

Proposed to change the wording of the Terms of Reference to provide more of an explanation as to what rail services are included.

Motion: That Council include the following wording “passenger and strategic regional freight rail services” into the Terms of Reference for the Rail Committee.

Moved: John Wood Seconded: John Bentley Motion Supported by all

5. Letter of Support Request

A letter of support for passenger rail services has been provided by the Mayor of Dubbo Regional Council. Mudgee Region Rail Committee has requested a similar letter to come from the Mayor of Mid-Western Regional Council.

Motion: That Council provide a letter of support for passenger rail services to be established from Dubbo to Sydney via Mudgee.

Moved: John Wood Seconded: John Bentley Motion Supported by all

Meeting closed 10.35am

Next meeting – to be confirmed for November 2023

2023 MUDGEES REGION RAIL UPDATE No.2



Welcome to our second Newsletter for 2023: you are one of over 1300 people able to access this online communication – many thanks to all of you for the support!

1. Even more heavy transport on our roads?

The NSW Independent Planning Commission has conditionally approved an open-cut silver, lead and zinc mine near Lue, east of Mudgee.

The mine would extract and process about 30 million tonnes of ore over a 23-year lifespan.

You might ask what has this to do with our brief to reinstate the Rylstone-Gulgong "missing link " rail line.

Well, it is planned to extract 60,000 Tonnes of ore annually, which without a rail link, would see the 60,000 tonnes road hauled through the streets of Mudgee, then on to Parkes and thence rail to Port Pirie.

Or, if for export through the streets of Lue, Rylstone & Blue Mountains to port Botany.

This does not even take into account the mine's anticipated inbound mining consumable supplies of 5-10,000 tonnes pa (flotation agents, grinding balls, explosives etc) mostly imported and, from port Botany hence through Rylstone and Lue.

So when we add this potential road usage calamity to our already deeply worrying 200Kt of Forestry logs already a very unwelcome regular sight on our streets and the highways to Oberon, does not the case for the rail link seem like common sense?

Now that conditional approval has been achieved, we plan to seek a further meeting with the Bowden Silver mine principals to discuss again the ongoing economic and environmental benefits to both the mine and our communities if rail rather than road transport was available.

2. New State Government, New Ministers

You might recall we had made contact with a range of ministers over the last two years, but with a change of state government minister such as:

Jennifer Kathleen Aitchison MP Minister for Regional Transport and Roads;

Joanna Elizabeth Haylen MP Minister for Transport;

John Graham MLC Minister for Roads; and

Tara Moriarty MLC Minister for Regional New South Wales and Western New South Wales, we are redoubling our efforts to re-establish contacts to have the "missing link" reinstated!

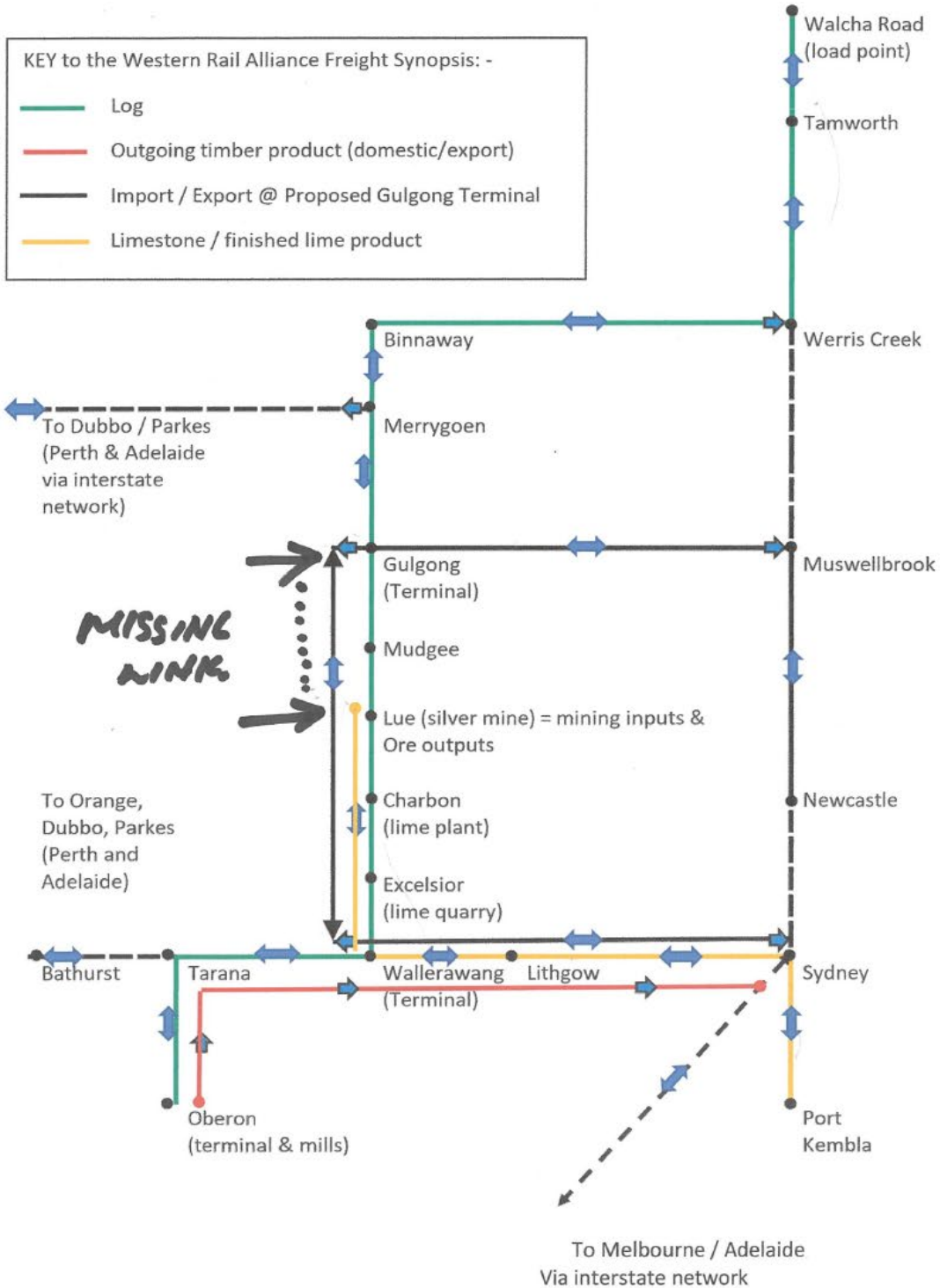
We will keep you informed of developments.

Mike Sweeney

Chair
Mudgee Region Rail Inc.
April 2023

Appendix 1

Completing Significant Loops





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:	16 JUNE 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 and strategic regional freight rail services
- 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.