

# KEY DEVELOPMENT: Ex-deputy PM to lobby Federal Government over vital inland project

## Anderson promotes rail plan

Gen Kennedy

gen.kennedy@thechronicle.com.au

JOHN Anderson is planning to present the Federal Government with a blueprint for the inland rail project by the end of this year.

The former deputy Prime Minister, who is heading the implementation group for the project, told Darling Downs agriculture representatives yesterday that he wanted work to start within the first term of the Abbott government.

Mr Anderson was speaking at a Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise's inland rail workshop, which sought industry feedback from the rural sector about the rail line which would eventually run from Melbourne to the Port of Brisbane via Charlton, north of Toowoomba.

"I'm very passionate that this can make a significant contribution to agriculture," Mr Anderson said.

"We are hoping this calendar year to be able to put a blueprint to Commonwealth Government.

"If we get it right, I hope they can move quickly and make this a reality. We want to see action this term of government."

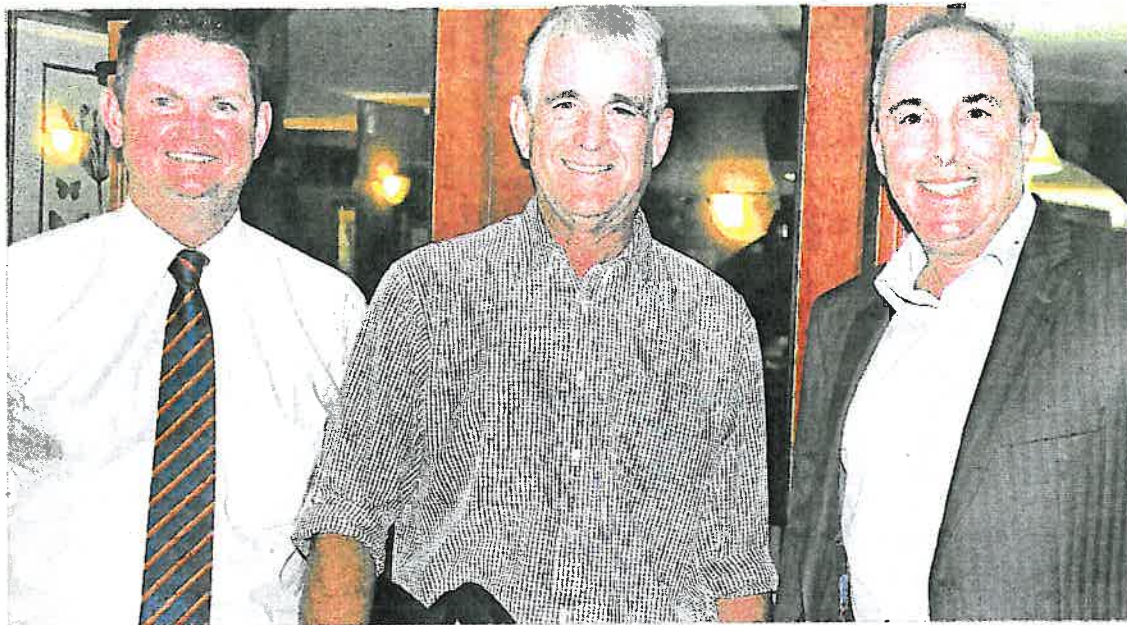
While the workshop sought the feedback of the agricultural sector, Port of Brisbane CEO Russell Smith said the project would not be paid for by cattle and crops.

"Coal is the way that this will be paid for, that's why there's a fair focus for it.

"(The Brisbane to Toowoomba link) is the only real bit that can stand on its own two feet. Why? Because there's coal in the Surat Basin.

"Fundamentally, the reason for the project is agriculture."

Mr Smith said he wanted to see work start soon on the Brisbane to



**ON TRACK:** Gathering at the TSBE workshop are (from left) TSBE CEO Shane Charles, former federal politician John Anderson and Port of Brisbane CEO Russell Smith.

PHOTO: GEN KENNEDY



**Ready for an update on the project are (from left) Emily Jackman, Chris Wolski, George Moore and Geoff Byers.**



**Catching up before the conference are (from left) Anthony Clark, Jo Sheppard and Geoff Cockfield.**

### Toowoomba link.

"I'd like to see it as phase one for inland rail, but I believe there are shovel-ready parts of that line, and we need to start laying track rather than doing more studies," he said.

### TRACKING THE INLAND RAIL PROJECT

- The 1800 kilometre project is earmarked to be completed by 2020.
- Will involve constructing a two kilometre long tunnel through the Toowoomba Range.
- The Federal Government has committed \$300 million in funding over three years to finalise plans. The total cost is \$4.7 billion.
- Will see the existing rail network through the CBD removed.