



MEDIA RELEASE

Worth its weight in wheat
24 October 2008

Mallee farmers have little to rejoice about but the decision to upgrade their railway line (Murrayville - Ouyen) by the State Government was worth a big celebration this week. What it proved was that a determined group of people who were disadvantaged by sections of the government could make their voices loud enough to be heard in Spring Street.

Many local farmers have provided information about all their additional costs of freighting fuel, fertiliser and the resultant crop to consultants employed by the Sunraysia Mallee Economic Development Board (SMEDB).

This information, as well as the impacts on the environment, roads and safety were documented in the report 'Mildura Derailed' (3 October 2008) and a powerful case was presented.

Chairman of SMEDB, Mr John Irwin, was high in his praise for those farmers whose efforts have now been rewarded.

"Every farmer approached was prepared to build the case and show how the loss of a rail line would impact on families in the Mallee as well as those impacted in the city by traffic and pollution".

"The Regional Rail Alliance led by its Chairman Vernon Knight should be congratulated for keeping the pressure on the State Government".

"But we must not stop there. It is absolutely critical that the railway upgrade is of a quality that conversion to standard gauge can be implemented within days when the spine of the link from Mildura to Geelong is converted to standard gauge in line with the Government pledge", said Mr Irwin.

END OF MEDIA RELEASE

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