

# ANNUAL REPORT

2016



**Rail Freight**  
Alliance

[www.railfreightalliance.com](http://www.railfreightalliance.com)



# Our Mission

To advocate for:

- Rail standardisation of all key rail lines in Victoria
  - Upgrading and connecting to a National Rail Freight Network
  - A competitive, independent and open access rail freight system
  - Seamless freight logistics that will facilitate efficient rail freight movement
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# The Alliance

The Rail Freight Alliance is made up of Victorian rural, and regional and metropolitan Local Government Councils.

The Rail Freight Alliance represents the Local Government Sector in Victoria and adjoining States in freight logistics interests connecting Victoria nationally and internationally.

The Alliance was first formed in 1997 due to growing frustration with the lack of rail connectivity both within Victoria and with the neighbouring States and the lack of investment in Victoria's antiquated 19th century rail freight system.

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# Our Members

Buloke Shire Council

Central Goldfields Shire Council

City of Ballarat

City of Melbourne

City of Wodonga

East Gippsland Shire Council

Loddon Shire Council

Gannawarra Shire Council

Glenelg Shire Council

Greater Shepparton City Council

Hindmarsh Shire Council

Horsham Rural City Council

Latrobe City

Mildura Rural City Council

Moyne Shire Council

Northern Grampians

Pyrenees Shire Council

South Gippsland Shire Council

Southern Grampians Shire

Swan Hill Rural City Council

Warrnambool City Council

Wellington Shire Council

Yarriambiack Shire Council

# Chair Report



The freight task continues to grow in Australia and both Federal and State governments have a recently renewed focus on 'freight to rail' as an important component of the future infrastructure requirements in meeting the growing transport task. The Rail Freight Alliance advocacy program continues to gain momentum and is receiving significant standing from both the government of the day, the opposition, and key industry stakeholders. The Alliance remains accessible to all parties and liaison with all levels of government is a primary focus.

Reflecting on the 2015-2016 period, we can see the significant achievements and highlights of the Alliance.

The Alliance's Website; well maintained and well utilised is a critical source of primary knowledge and information relevant to rail freight transport and the industry. The website has now become the 'go to' site for information, reports, and policy positions relevant to the rail freight agenda.

The Rail Freight Alliance has maintained its policy input momentum by providing submissions to a range of government policy platforms including to the Port of Melbourne Lease Transaction Bill. The Alliance has also put forward positions on a number of key industry wide taskforces and issues. Further, the Alliance has researched, and developed its own

policy platform as outlined in the 2016 RFA Policy Manual which very clearly articulates the group's position across a range of key industry related areas.

A crucial component of the Alliance's advocacy has been focussed on building relationships with key industry stakeholders and strengthening our relevance within the sector. The RFA 2015 Conference "Intermodal Hubs, Keys to Success", was widely well received, and certainly raised both the profile and professionalism of the RFA and its intent, as well as providing a platform to raise and discuss several industry-wide rail freight initiatives.

In addition, our key stakeholder advocacy program has increased significantly, with outstanding recognition and outcomes to date including; the announcement made for the Murray Basin Region Freight Transport Project by the Federal Government recently, and the subsequent recognition of the Alliance and its work - an outstanding outcome for the Alliance.

The Alliance holds one of four positions on the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail Alliance (MBIRA). This project which (touted as the 'backbone' for the national interstate rail network for the future) should not be underestimated. This infrastructure has the ability to transform the East Coast Freight Route and complement East West Freight in Australia.

The Alliance remains active with our Victorian representation for this project.

We continue to build on our reputation for providing 'solution based' and forward thinking outcomes, and have now developed a serious following within government and more generally across the sector. RFA continues its work with key industry stakeholders across government and industry - an imperative to get the best possible solutions.

I take this opportunity, my final Chair's report, to pass on appreciation to our member Councils, who's ongoing support and commitment has strengthened the Alliance in the sector. I can assure members the Executive have been (and remain) very focussed on providing a high quality and credible platform for advancing the 'freight to rail' policy platform. I also take this opportunity to pass on my personal thanks and appreciation to the Executive group, the Executive Officer, and the members at large for their unwaiving efforts toward our cause.

In particular, our collective appreciation to the Executive Officer, who has taken on the role with energy and enthusiasm, and has done an outstanding job – well done!

At the time of writing this report I have resigned from my position as Councillor with the City of Wodonga

to pursue a career in State Government. As a consequence, I can no longer continue my role as Chair of the Rail Freight Alliance. This was a difficult decision for me and one that required a great deal of thought.

One of the things that I will miss and look back on with great pride is the work that the Rail Freight Alliance has done and my part in an organisation that is held in highest of regard by its members, government, and industry. I am pleased to say, on my read, we are well advanced toward achieving our primary objectives including being the key 'go to' local government representative group in the rail freight policy area – a worthy aspiration

Thank you one and all.

**Cr Mark Byatt**  
Chair  
Rail Freight Alliance

# Deputy Chair Report



It is a pleasure to present the Deputy Chair's Report for the Rail Freight Alliance.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge my predecessor Cr Geoff White. Geoff was the architect of the Alliance and has been a friend and a mentor to many over our advocacy journey.

I am of the firm belief that the future freight task cannot be met by road transport alone, rail must be a significant part of the future freight transport task. Apart from the added cost to the Local and State road networks, timely access to ports, being "on time delivery" will become increasingly important. It will be a critical factor in attracting investment into the Victoria's regions and essential in Victoria maintaining a competitive export market.

Federal and State Government have a renewed interest in Rail. An improved rail network can provide benefits to all Victorians and to this end I welcome the Federal funding announcement to the Murray Basin Region Freight Transport Project. The Alliance continues to be involved in the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail Project, a game changer for the East Coast regions of Australia.

The Alliance has hosted a very successful conference in September 2015, "Intermodal Hubs, Keys to Success". This conference attracted sponsorship and was well attended by Rail Freight Alliance members, non-member councils and Industry, demonstrating our relevance to Local Government and Industry Groups.

The Alliance continues to foster and maintain a healthy working relationship with both sides of government and present a strong evidence based proposal for rail freight investment.

The Alliance has presented a number of submissions over the previous year. It is important that the Alliance continues to have a considered view and maintains a strong relationships with Membership, Governments and Industry.

I would like to acknowledge the work of our Executive Officer, Reid Mather and thank him for his support over the last year.

Finally I would like to acknowledge the work that Mark Byatt has done over the last few years. Mark represented the Alliance with great skill and grace, his involvement with the alliance will be greatly missed. On behalf of members I wish Mark every success in the future.

I thank members for their support and look forward to another year of achievements with the Rail Freight Alliance.

**Cr Glenn Milne**  
Deputy Chair  
Rail Freight Alliance

# Executive Officers Report



The Alliance has increased its presence in the local government sector, industry and the wider community over the last year. It is important that we provide value and be relevant to our membership, be a strong and informed advocate to State and Federal Government, remain a credible organisation to other stakeholders the wider community and understand industry direction.

The Alliance has continued to advocate to the Federal and Victorian Governments this year through budget submissions and meetings around a range of projects that all levels of government should work together to achieve. We were delighted with the recent announcement of \$220 million dollars towards the Murray Basin Region Freight Transport Project, as one of the key advocates of this project. The lack of rail connectivity in Western Victoria was the very genesis of the Alliance of Councils for Rail Freight Development, now known as the Rail Freight Alliance. This project that has enormous potential to transform a region and enhance Victoria's economy by all levels of government working together.

The Alliance released its 2016 Policy Manual in mid-2016. This can be found along with our Federal and State Government Budget Submissions, as well all current regional transport plans and major rail projects on our Website.

The Alliance continues to provide an opportunity for stakeholders to come together. The 2015 Conference, "Intermodal Hubs, Keys to Success", was a great success and well supported by member councils, government, industry and the Local Government sector. We welcomed the support of AON and SMEC for the 2015 Conference.

The Rail Freight Alliance holds one of the four executive positions on the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail Alliance (MBIRA), representing Victoria. This is a "landmark" project is an important one for the Alliance to be involved in as it has implications for Victoria and the East Coast of Australia.

The Alliance has continued to make representation and attended several forums across the state. The Alliance has presented at the Parliamentary Select Committee on the Port of Melbourne Lease Transaction Bill and the 2nd Annual Integrated Logistics Conference and partnered with the Freight Trade Alliance (FTA) in delivering the Port of Melbourne Rail Users Forum. The Alliance has maintained a presence at the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) Roads Congress and Aust Rail 2015 Conference.

The Rail Freight Alliance Executive has met with Ministers and Shadow Ministers and MPs throughout the year. The Political Landscape will continue to change; the Alliance will continue to be accessible to all MPs. We will continue to be at the forefront of emerging rail freight issues.

The Alliance continues to be involved in a number of organisations including industry, other advocacy groups, government departments and State and Federal Government.

I take this opportunity to thank, Cr Byatt for his leadership over several years, Mark announced in mid-2016 that he was resigning from the City of Wodonga Council and the Rail Freight Alliance. Mark was a strong advocate for rail freight and a great support to the Alliance Executive. I would like thank Cr Glenn Milne who has taken on the role of Deputy Chair and more recently Acting Chair in Mark's absence. Being part of the Alliance Executive is a big role and one that Mark and Glenn have fulfilled with great enthusiasm and skill. The last year has been a very active period and I appreciate the time taken out of their busy schedules to support the Rail Freight Alliance.

Finally, thank you to delegates for your support and insight into various issues across the State.

**Reid Mather**

Executive Officer

Rail Freight Alliance

# Financials

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## INCOME

Membership	\$66,000.00
Sponsorship	\$6,000.00
2015 Conference	\$12,210.82
Recognition Dinner	\$1,727.29
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$85,938.11</b>

## EXPENSES

Executive Officer	\$52,560.68
Catering	\$616.81
Design & Printing	\$4,318.93
Postage	\$870.03
Accommodation	\$1,383.23
Parking	\$383.36
Travel	\$8,254.50
Consultancy	\$1,875.00
Website	\$671.59
2015 Conference	\$9,174.57
Conferences & Seminars	\$1,894.53
Recognition Dinner	\$2007.73

<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>		<b>\$83,116.88</b>
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2015/16 End of year		\$2,821.23
Opening Balance	(01/07/15)	\$188,911.00
Closing Balance	(30/06/16)	\$191,732.23

# 2015 Conference

## Intermodal Hubs "Keys to Success"



# Cr Geoff White

## Recognition Dinner



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# Port of Portland





# Victorian Rail System 2016



**LEGEND**

- Broad Gauge
- Standard Gauge
- Dual Gauge
- ..... Rail Not In Service



