

Record wheat and chickpea yields boost grain rail volumes

Date: 9 February 2017

Record wheat and chickpea yields across Queensland and New South Wales have driven an increase in annual grain rail volumes to support local growers meet export demands.

During 2016, Aurizon transported more than 750,000 tonnes of grain for export, a 32% increase on the year prior, boosted by strong export demand and favourable seasonal conditions in cropping regions.

In peak grain season, December to May, Aurizon rails 10 grain trains a week in South West Queensland, up to seven trains a week in Central Queensland, and up to four trains a week in New South Wales.

Aurizon's Grain Key Account Manager Craig Acutt said Aurizon primarily transports wheat, sorghum, chick peas and barley, and is working with customers to increase the tonnes being hauled on rail during peak periods.

"Favourable spring weather has driven bumper grain yields across Australia, resulting in increased demand for grain trains to haul large crops of wheat and chickpeas to port for export," Mr Acutt said.

"In Northern New South Wales, grain growers have experienced their largest wheat crop on record, which has significantly boosted export demands."

In Southern Queensland highly profitable chickpea crops have been the main driver growing demand for rail transport, with approximately 95% of Australia's chickpeas exported to India and Pakistan, and volumes continuing to grow year on year.

"We have been working closely with customers to ensure we meet their large export demands," Mr Acutt said.

"A fully loaded Queensland grain train carries up to 1,750 tonnes of grain to export, the same as 44 trucks, and is the most efficient way of transporting grain to port for export."

In 2016, grain haulage volumes from the Roma, Thallon and Goondiwindi regions in South West Queensland were the largest, with the Company transporting primarily chickpeas into the Fisherman Islands and Pinkenba port terminals in Brisbane.

While volumes in Central Queensland reduced slightly on the year prior, tonnages remained strong, hauling from the Emerald, Capella and Mt McLaren regions in Central Queensland into the Mackay and Gladstone port terminals.

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