

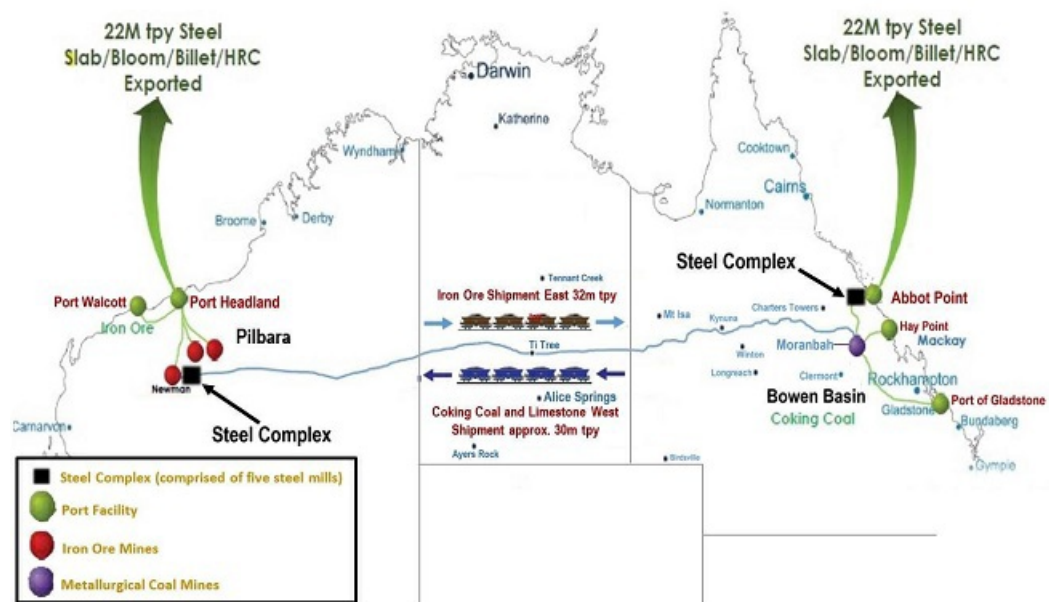
Motion for Inquiry into Iron Boomerang passes Senate!

On 5 September One Nation Senator Malcolm Roberts moved a motion for an inquiry by the Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee on Project Iron Boomerang—an Australian transcontinental rail infrastructure corridor and steel manufacturing complex which will revolutionise global steel production. The motion passed, notably with resounding support from Labor Senator from Western Australia Glenn Sterle, deputy chair of the committee charged with the inquiry (with Nationals Senator Matt Canavan as chair). According to the terms of reference, the committee will examine the employment created by the project; the benefit to Australian GDP and balance of payments from increased productive capacity; the capital, energy and resources required to build and operate the project; feasibility of design; environmental benefits or impacts and impacts on Aboriginal communities; the project's relevance to national security; and any related matters. The committee will report by the first parliamentary sitting day of 2023.

[Click here to watch the video of Roberts explaining his motion and Sen. Sterle's response.](#)

Senator Roberts outlined the proposal in some depth: “Project Iron Boomerang is an exciting and visionary project that can make our country's north and can make our whole country. Project Iron Boomerang's main elements are a 3,300-kilometre transcontinental railroad with heavy duty axle capacity connecting existing rail networks in the iron ore region of the Pilbara to the existing rail networks in Central Queensland, on the way linking with the existing Darwin-Adelaide rail line to improve freight movement nationally.

“The essence of this project is that iron ore will be



Project Iron Boomerang. Photo: [Facebook](#)

transported from west to east, and those carriages will be then backloaded with coal to transport coal to Western Australia—hence the boomerang name. Steel blast furnaces and steel parks at both ends—in the east in the Bowen Basin of Queensland and in the west in the Pilbara in Western Australia—will in turn turn the iron ore and coal into steel slabs for export from Port Hedland in Western Australia and from Abbot Point and the Port of Gladstone and Queensland. Fibre optic, water, power and potentially gas lines can be laid along the rail alignment for additional commercial benefit.

“Project Iron Boomerang will strengthen Australia's balance of payments. It will lift our gross domestic product, and, with that, lift our whole economy, restoring our national security, restoring opportunity. We have allowed too many industries to be closed and sent overseas. Too many jobs have been exported. It's time to turn that around. ...

“There is a strong case for adding a water pipeline along the alignment to add potable water to the services that Project Iron Boomerang will offer remote communities. Lake Argyle in Western Australia is part of the Ord River Irrigation Scheme. At 5,600 gigalitres, it is mainland Australia's largest dam. The Ord River irrigation network extends close to the start of Project Iron Boomerang. A connection could be made to bring potable water, which is town, stock and station water, to remote communities. ...”

Sen. Sterle added these important words of support: “I hadn't heard of Project Iron Boomerang, but I sat down and got a briefing from Senator Roberts. It comes back to when I was a kid growing up. I remember in the great state of New South Wales we used to do all of this sort of stuff. We actually used to make our own steel. We used to have proud steel cities, where there were communities, there were bonds and there were families, before all this 'flyin, fly-out' nonsense took over. It was before the farm was sold—if I can use the terminology of a farm. It breaks my heart to think, as I'm watching my

grandchildren grow up, how disgusted they should be with the politicians before us who thought it was a good idea to contract out work we used to do and we did well. I hear conversations like those I've picked up in Senate inquiries on the Inland Rail, where there are concerns about cheaper steel coming from China, nowhere near the Australian standard. Regardless of who's in government, I always have a fear: Who are the ones who are supposed to be out there monitoring this stuff? Are they doing their job properly? That's not a blue-versus-red conversation or blue-versus-red argument.

"So I want to support this. I know the Labor Party and Prime Minister Albanese—the Albanese government—support you, Senator Roberts, for bringing this to us. I think it's a magnificent thing, and I also think this is what we should be doing. These are the big-ticket items that, when I first came into the Senate, lo and behold, I thought we would be discussing on a daily basis. How tricked I got! But, anyway, at least let's get back to the big stuff about building a better nation, as I said in my first speech, and leaving it better than how we found it. ...

"I want to support this, and we will support this, Senator Roberts. I understand the opposition are, hopefully, getting behind this too, because this is the stuff we need to do. The beauty of speaking after Senator Roberts is you've heard the whole guts and crux of the matter. I can't pick an argument there. There's not a downside that I've seen. ... Let's try and put these two great industries together: iron ore in my state of WA and coal in your state of Queensland. It just makes too much sense. I'm starting to get a headache because it's sounding too easy."

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