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Vaughan Constructions wins \$200 million Riverina rail project



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Andrew Noble: "The concept of bringing rail to the customer, similar to the US is a winner." Nick Billings



by Larry Schlesinger

Logistics specialists Vaughan Constructions has been appointed to develop \$200 million worth of rail infrastructure and warehousing in the NSW Riverina for transport specialist Colin Rees and Griffith rice growers, the Morshead family's Amberley Group.

Melbourne-based Vaughan will design and build 45,000 square metres of warehousing at the Ettamogah Rail Hub near Albury, owned by the Colin Rees Group (CRG), and develop and construct a new rail hub, sidings and over 100,000 sq m of warehouse space, hardstand and road networks on a 68 hectare site in Widgelli, south east of Griffith owned by the Morsheads.

The new rail facilities will enable Riverina farmers to move their produce more quickly and efficiently to the main eastern seaboard ports, or even as far as Perth, using CRG's Regional Connect rail shuttle – taking its inspiration from the revival of short line rail in places like Chicago.

"The concept of bringing rail to the customer, similar to the US is a winner," said Andrew Noble, director at Vaughan Constructions.

The NSW Riverina is one of the country's prime food bowl regions, producing most of the state's carrots, oranges and apples, in addition to its vast vineyards. It also supplies nearly half of the state's rice needs.

Cameron Jackson, chief operating officer at CRG said pre-leasing enquiry at the

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\$255,000 - \$694,100 (excl. GST)

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Ettamogah Rail Hub had been encouraging with "multiple enquiries" indicating there is demand in the regional areas.

"We know that production costs have been squeezed to breaking point, so the focus of many producers, processors, retailers and exporters is the supply chain. We saw a definite gap in the market to offer short line rail services in addition to conventional warehouse, cold storage and distribution facilities to our customers," he said.

The Widgelli hub and business park received planning approval in August 2015. It will offer pre-lease land and building packages for warehouse and cold storage facilities ranging from 2500 to 20,000 sq m.

Ettamogah will be fully developed within 18 months with space available at about \$65 a sq m. The first two stages at Widgelli are to be completed over the next two years.

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