

20 September 2018

Major rail service company Watco invests in Southern Downs

The Southern Downs agriculture and transport industries will receive a major boost with Watco Transportation Services set to invest in the region.

On Wednesday, Watco committed to establishing a rail based transport facility in Warwick after meeting with Southern Downs Regional Council.

Watco will be undertaking grain haulage, acquiring the contract previously held by Aurizon and once its facility is operating it will create up to 20 jobs in the Southern Downs.

Wednesday's meeting followed earlier discussions around the potential of Watco to establish a rail based transport facility in Warwick.

Southern Downs Deputy Mayor, Jo McNally said Watco's investment in the region would be a great boost to the agriculture sector and would create local employment opportunities.

"It is great to see this level of investment in the Southern Downs," Cr McNally said.

"This important project supports the agribusiness sector, transport sector and creates potential for more investment opportunities in our region.

"The first stage of Watco's plans sound very exciting and Council will work with Watco on further stages of the development."

Watco Executive Chairman, Rick Webb said he was excited about the project and the warm welcome he had received.

"The level of positivity from the Southern Downs Steam Rail Group and Southern Downs Regional Council was great and certainly influenced Watco's decision to establish a new facility in Warwick rather than in another location in Queensland," Mr Webb said. Mr Webb went onto to say that "Watco is proud to have Graincorp as its foundation customer who has facilitated its entrance into the important Queensland marketplace."

Southern Downs Steam Rail Group indicated the Watco project will provide more of a focus on the importance of the Warwick Railyards and the integral role rail transport has played in the past and will play in the future.

"As a company, we want to be able to give back to the community, as well as supporting more growth in rail based transport and the region. Watco really appreciates the enthusiastic approach and welcome that they have received from Southern Downs Steam Rail, and looks forward to working closely with the Steam Rail, Council and the Southern Downs community."

Watco is eager to attract locomotive drivers to the region as the business starts operations in the first quarter of 2019.

In its initial stages, the project will employ up to 20 people including in locomotive operations and maintenance roles.

Watco Companies is a Kansas based company which employs more than 5,300 people and currently has a presence in Western Australia.



L to R: Kelvin Hutchinson – Southern Downs Steam Railway; Max Johnson – Project Manager, Watco; Deputy Mayor Cr Jo McNally; Peter Gregory – Southern Downs Steam Railway; Rick Webb – Executive Chairman, Watco; David Rankine – Senior Vice President Operations, Watco; Ken Potts – Chief Commercial Officer, Watco; Chris Hood.



L to R: Deputy Mayor Cr Jo McNally, Rick Webb – Executive Chairman, Watco

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