

**Submission
No 17**

INLAND RAIL PROJECT AND REGIONAL NSW

Name: Brad and Katie Cox

Date Received: 5 February 2021

OBJECTION: INLAND RAILWAY NARROMINE TO NARRABRI ROUTE

Introduction

A brief introduction to our family: we are a fourth-generation mixed farming family who have been farming in the Kickabil, Dubbo area for over 90 years. Bradley Cox and his wife Katie currently operate the family farm of over 4,233 hectares with their children Edward 6, James 3 & Georgia 18months. Bradleys' parents Dennis and Judith still reside on the farm and are actively involved in the business. Dennis 72 has lived on the farm since birth and still plays a physical part in the daily farming operations.

Darcy Cox was Dennis' grandfather, and he brought the first block of land (DP/36//752568) in the 1920s as others in the district were receiving soldiers' settlement blocks. This original block, known as 'Rosewood' (360.6ha), is still the main homestead block.

It contains two residences and all essential farming-related infrastructure including:

- An Operational Shearing Shed
- Sheep and Cattle Yards
- Sheep and Cattle Feed-lotting Yards
- Weaning yards
- Main Workshop
- Three Machinery Sheds
- One Hay Sheds
- Four Permanent Fuel Tanks
- Fourteen Silos with 1500 Tonnes of Storage

These are all situated within a 200-meter radius of the Rosewood properties' front gates, and this infrastructure supports the entire farm holding and all other properties.

In 1950 Herb Cox, Dennis' father, purchased adjoining acreage (Bells 161ha) on Rosewood's eastern side.

In 1978 Dennis purchased neighbouring Langleydale (240.30ha) as his first addition to the family farm.

Over the last 40 years, the farming business has expanded to include several other larger properties in the district including Coorabong (852.66ha) (not shown on map), Goburn (1036ha), Glenayr (480ha), Roslyn (1102.38ha) and Glenburn (long term lease) (1200ha). Attached is a map detailing the location and boundaries. All properties are easily accessible through laneways, and safe minor road crossings, ensuring the movement of stock and machinery is a straightforward task.

We are a mixed farming enterprise and have the capacity to hold:

- 5,000 merino breeding ewes
- 300 head of Shorthorn and Angus cattle
- Annually plant up to 4,000 ha of crops including:
 - Wheat
 - Barley
 - Oats
 - Canola

The diversity between cropping and livestock farming allows protection during variable weather conditions and fluctuating markets. With the farmland suitable for the multiuse functions of cropping, grazing and improved pastures the farm can benefit from rotational cropping and pasture regimes to get the best from the land.

Route Selection

Communication from ARTC

In late 2016 the ARTC held a meeting at Rosewood advising us there were seven alternative routes proposed for the N2N greenfield route, including one that dissected Rosewood.

The ARTC had advised neighbouring properties in advance of routes that impacted their properties and therefore they were able to investigate and submitted objections earlier in the process.

The ARTC's failure to advise us of the proposed railway track at this same point, substantially disadvantages us compared to our neighbours.

In the meeting, we were given limited documents (only route proposal maps) and information but assured that the route affecting Rosewood was still one of many options and the best step was to sit tight until the route was finalised.

Little additional information has been provided during the last 4+ years and highlights the ARTC's lack of consideration to those impacted.

Objection to current route selection

The current route selection is flawed for many reasons, including but not limited to:

- Noise, vibration, and visual disturbance
 - Business Disturbance
 - Family Disruption
- Property Access
- Financial Impact
- Flooding and Hydrology
- Local Farmer Consultation

Additionally, the current alignment goes through a locally significant site, being the Drinane Public School with little consideration put to losing the district's historical school site.

We have addressed detailed outlines below for each of the above mention criteria.

Noise, Vibration and Visual Disturbance

The EIS on the NSW Government Planning portal specifies the Noise and Disturbance during the construction, and the ongoing operation of the track can be managed and is time-sensitive. However, the disruptive nature of the construction phase and the lasting effects of ongoing train movement passing and dissecting our properties is indefinite.

The ARTC need to act with urgency, to ensure the most reasonable route is established to balance being cost-effective, environmentally conscious, and working in conjunction with current farming operations.

Predominately desktop-based analysis has determined outcomes for the longest new section of Inland Rail, stretching from Narramine to Narrabri (306km), without assessing the true consequence for Family-based farming operations. We are suffering great loses, losing land, access to income generation for our families, and most importantly, our right to be heard.

With the significant effect it has on both our farming operation and our family lifestyle and safety, we have addressed these points below:

Business Disturbance

- As specified in the original route (N2N Greenfield Project Option A) in Mid 2016 the track was to follow property boundaries to minimise impacts on the landholders. This proposal did not directly impact and section off Rosewood property into separate portions and segregate the farm away from the main infrastructure.
- Old Mill Road is currently a quiet local traffic road that acts as a laneway between the North and South Sections of Rosewood—used frequently by the farm for our daily farming operation. We estimate fewer than ten additional vehicles use the road daily.
- Below is the breakdown of the land's dissection; only 2.15% of Rosewood is proposed for acquisition by Inland Rail for this project. However, the impacts are much more significant.

LAND DIVISION	HECTARES
ROSEWOOD CURRENTLY	360.60
RAILWAY CORRIDOR	7.75
ROSEWOOD REMAINING	352.85
INFRASTRUCTURE SOUTH BLOCK	277.85
DIsected NORTH BLOCK	75

- With all Farming Infrastructure located on the Southern Side of Old Mill Road, the dissected Northern Block becomes somewhat unusable.
- The distance of the proposed track development along Old Mill Road is approximately 120 meters from Rosewood's front gate and a maximum of 200m from all farming infrastructures. It will impact substantial operations of our farming enterprise.



- *MUSTERING / STOCK MOVEMENT*
 - The current farming access has direct thoroughfare through gates on both the Southern and Northern Paddocks which allows fast movement of stock, less time for the livestock to be on public roads, and less workforce required for the movement and mustering of them.
 - The proposal sees the northern segment with a gate moved 800m to the paddock's western corner and a rail crossing.
 - Mustering time will increase from 30 minutes independently and often on foot to needing two or more people and vehicles and taking up over 2 hours.
- *SHEARING SHEDS AND YARDING*
 - The entire yarding network including, weaning yards, holding yards, feeding allotments, working cattle yards and sheep yards located on the southern section of Rosewood will need to relocate due to consistent and ongoing disturbances.
 - The construction, track location, noise and vibrations will affect:
 - Feeding patterns and prolong fattening of livestock.
 - Cause issues at weaning with cattle unable to settle as quickly and calmly.
 - Stock mustering and movement will be longer as the gate positions are moving and livestock movement will have to be dependent on train schedules.
 - Relocation of the network of yards is near impossible given the soil type, lay of the land, and the Goulbourn Creek's positioning. Additionally, the cost of the movement of this infrastructure would be substantial.
 - All yard structures need to be accessible by vehicles, including stock trucks during all weather conditions. This allows us to access markets in wet conditions taking advantage of higher markets.
 - They are near the homesteads for easy access and 24-hour monitoring of the weaning yards and feeding lots.
 - The feeding lot ground needs ideal slopping, well-draining soil with easy access to water, close access to hay shed and silos. The current location meets all these criteria.
- *PROPERTY MAINTENANCE*
 - The constant noise and vibrations during the track's construction and the frequent trains once completed will cause additional damage from constant vibration on current infrastructure including silos, and sheds which will only be 50m from the track. There will also be substantial disturbance to the property's peace.
 - During Droughts, or dry years the dust will be unmanageable. Many of the sheds, including machinery sheds, are not entirely closed in and the additional maintenance and cleaning on all machinery will be costly.

Family Disruption

- The railway line's proposed placement is approx 120 meters to 150 meters from our places of residence.
- Four generations of Cox Family have resided in the same area, and currently, Katie and Brad Cox are raising their three young children as 5th Generation Cox farmers with hope for one day the land to be theirs.
- The last 100 years have seen the farm enjoy:
 - Tranquil agricultural surrounds

- Minimal local transport noise
 - Low road safety risk
 - Serene farming landscapes with uninterrupted views
 - Safe area to raise children
- The ARTCs proposal is putting a fast stop to this. The Inland Railway is going to replace these with:
 - Up to 18 Trains a day
 - Trains between 1800 and 3000m long
 - 6.5m High, Double Stacked Containers
 - Hurtling past at 80 - 115km/hr

Noise & Vibration

- The ARTC reports that Rosewood and Roslyn are both classified as residential receivers. We will be impacted by excessive noise during the construction and ongoing noise during the 24-hour railway operation.
 - Rosewood residential sensitive receiver (243471)
 - 120m away from the house to the rail corridor.
 - Roslyn residential sensitive receiver (243428)
 - The track and level crossings are 500m from Roslyn house and 300m from the property's boundary.
 - The residents at Roslyn will hear the trains breaks and horn for the railway crossing.
- The closest noise monitoring station (M03) is on the Eumungerie Road over 10km away. Therefore, it brings into dispute the validity of the noise data at the Rosewood and Roslyn properties.
- The ARTC has not provided information on how they determine the vibration consequence to our properties and why there has been no direct monitoring or consultation at the property.
- ARTC's suggestions in the EIS report to mitigate noise include:
 - Keep current windows closed.
 - Double glaze windows.
 - Use Air-Conditioning to avoid opening windows.

Has ARTC considered:

- 24/7 cost of running the air conditioner
- Maintenance on air conditioning
- High frequency of power outages during summer storms with power often not restored for long period of time.

Landscape & Surrounds

- The main homestead on Rosewood has recently undergone renovations with the whole front and side of the extension being large glass windows and sliding door. These allow plenty of light in, the feeling of nature inside and a beautifully framed landscape from all aspects.
- The design of the windows allows the natural air flow to avoid use of air conditioners and in winter capitalise on winter sun.
- With a north-easterly direction, the main house overlooks Old Mill Road, and this landscape is soon to be construction, railway track and trains hurtling past.

Health & Safety

- Katie and Brad are raising three small children at Rosewood, and the current Inland Rail proposal brings a train track within 120m of their doorstep with nothing but wire fencing keeping everyone safe and secure there is a great deal of stress that comes with this. It is also up for debate what ATRC are setting as standard fencing requirements.
- There will be a high volume of trucks, machinery, equipment, and non-local traffic on Old Mill Road, increasing the current volume significantly during construction. It will also bring more road dust; it will damage the dirt roads faster, generate more potholes, and the roads will need additional grading for road safety.
- The school bus stop is currently at the corner of Old Mill Road and Collie Road, where the proposed railway crossing will be. Will this affect the school bus stop location, and the children's safety during pick up and drop off?
- The EIS summarises findings from the World Health Organisation that Sleep Disturbance is more significant if you are not used to background noise. The properties currently experience minimal noise disruption.
- The reports state a difference in noise tolerance in rural areas compared to urban areas or even houses tolerance nearer main arterial roads or current rail lines.

Although the current proposal does bring with it criteria to mitigate some of the problems addressed above, they are unsatisfactory.

There are still additional concerns regarding landscape disruption, health and safety, business sacrifices and noise the ARTC must consider before continuing with the proposal.

With many alternative options for this section of track, the ARTC needs to prove they have selected the most cost-effective solution and reflect on local landholders' feedback.

Property Access

Property access has been addressed in the subsection Business Disruption as they go hand in hand. Rosewood's southern block would be untouched in access; however, there is a significant access issue with the division of the northern corner by the railway track.

- Removal of current access gate for Rosewood on the Northside of Old Mill Road
- The northern paddocks gate is to be moved approximately 800m to the block's western corner.
- Significant and lengthy mustering would have to take place to move the livestock to the southern section for shearing, draughting, feeding etc.
- Mustering from North to South paddocks of Rosewood, crossing over Old Mill Road, or vice versa, would require additional staffing as Old Mill Road is a public road and safety is paramount.

The Level Crossing at Collie Road will severely impact our farming operations as Roslyn is on the western side of the crossing. All essential farming infrastructure and farming operation are at Rosewood homestead block. All stock and machinery movement will require additional timeframes and extra staffing will be necessary.

Financial Impact

The actual financial impacts are hard to determine precisely; however, they go beyond the current proposal from the ARTC.

- The proposed acquisition of 7.75ha of land valued at \$4,000/ha gives compensation value of \$31,000

- Rosewood was valued in 2018 at \$1.5 million/360.6ha = \$4,159/ha
- ARTC is undervaluing the parcel of land and not compensating for:
 - Business and Family disruption
 - Property devaluation
 - The Northern 75ha will be harder to access and farm.
 - As outlined above, Rosewood now has a 277ha parcel of land that houses the main infrastructure.
 - A property valuation would now consider the train noise, farming inconvenience and property severance. There is evidence of previously sold properties getting less due to the proposed railway line.
- In addition to land values, ongoing staffing increases would need to be considered for stock and machinery movement equating to at least \$30,000 per year.
- Housing improvements if the proposal were to go ahead to make the house more soundproof.
- Shed and Yarding potential costs if the animals did not adjust to the train noises and vibration.

Local Consultation

- The ARTC failed to consider that the Kickabil district has fewer landholders then land titles as different properties may be in multiple names but farmed under the one entity. The division of these properties with the proposed railway track separates many farms. More the ARTC has considered.
- The region consists of many experienced senior farmers who are both passionate and knowledgeable. With a better consultation process and utilising their historical memories of the land more insight could have been used for the route section.
- An example is Denise Cox 72, living on the land at Rosewood since birth, living and breathing farming and the lay of the land, there are also many other farms in the same situation.

Flooding and Hydrology

Creek Crossings

- The Burroway to Curban area transverses numerous creek crossings including six creeks all within a 25km section, being:
 - Ewenmar Creek
 - Goulburn Creek
 - Emogandry Creek
 - Kickabil Creek
 - Millpulling Creek
 - Leeches Creek
- The EIS identifies two significant bridges at Emogandry Creek and Kickabil Creek. There will be a combined bridge span of over 600m within a 6-10km section of track. Other landowners have suggested these will be as high as 6-7m.
- Along the Kickabil section of the proposed line is predominately sandy loam soils prone to washing and erosion.
- The ARTC did not utilise the local landowner and senior farmers knowledge of the land, weather changes and conditions route selection.
- ARTC assessed the Hydrology during drought conditions. Any studies should be current and reviewed now that we have experienced rainfall and storm events.

- Any high rainfall events in the Kickabil area trigger flash flooding in Goulbourn Creek at Mawbys Road and access to Rosewood is limited to Old Mill Road. However, with these rainfalls, Ewenmar Creek will flood on Old Mill Road and also Goulburn Creek crosses over Old Mill. The train line infrastructure will divert waters and change the landscape effecting potential access to properties. These creeks are all in the proposed rail corridor.

Proposed Alternative Route

N2N Greenfield Track – 2016 Concept Alignment Option A (Eumungerie Road)

The 2016 Concept Alignment Option A was one of the initially proposed routes. Although still affecting landholders in the local area, it is believed it to be a much more viable option for many reasons, including:

- The impact on our farming operations is far less than if you were to use Old Mill Road
- The Eumungerie Road is already a busy road connecting North-South transport detouring around Dubbo.
- The dwellings situated close to the road are used to some noise level.
- When we need to move livestock or equipment across the road from our farms situated on both sides of the Narromine-Eumungerie Road, we already have obstacles and must plan more than if we are using the local road network Old Mill Road.
- This route would have fewer flooding issues.

ATRC disregarded the 2016 concept alignment – Option A – Eumungerie Road option, can anyone explain why? It had a positive overall MCA scoring, it reduced property impacts, and it had fewer geotechnical and hydrology and flooding issues.

Consideration was given to three options during the Phase 2 option assessment, for the Eumungerie Road Option A.

1. West of the Eumungerie Road
2. East of the Eumungerie Road
3. Traversing farmland and joining Cobbocco road

These again had positive MCA scoring, and ideally, for our area, the options run parallel with an existing transport corridor and had fewer interactions with existing roads and public accesses.

Inland Rails EIS Submission - Chapter A6 states the existing east coast railway would not be competitive with the road in terms of cost or time. However, given the blow out in cost estimates for the Inland Rail, it poses a question of the cost comparisons between the East Coast Rail upgrade and the Current Inland Rail Project and whether this should be revisited?

OUTCOME & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REQUIRED

The Minister should refuse the project in its current form.

An independent body should conduct an additional and substantial investigation into the Inland railway project. There needs to be a review of ARTC's initial research. It should include the cost efficiency of the earlier proposed inland routes and, most importantly, have extra consultation with landholders to determine and clearly communicate that they have selected the best possible route.

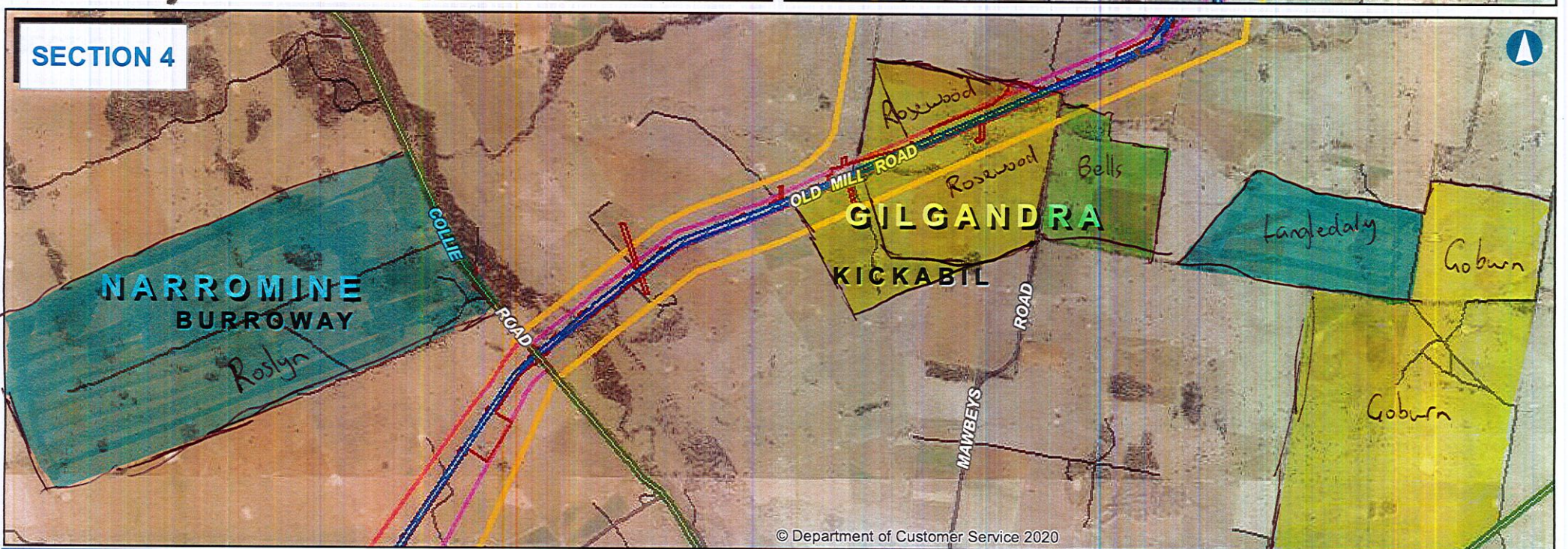
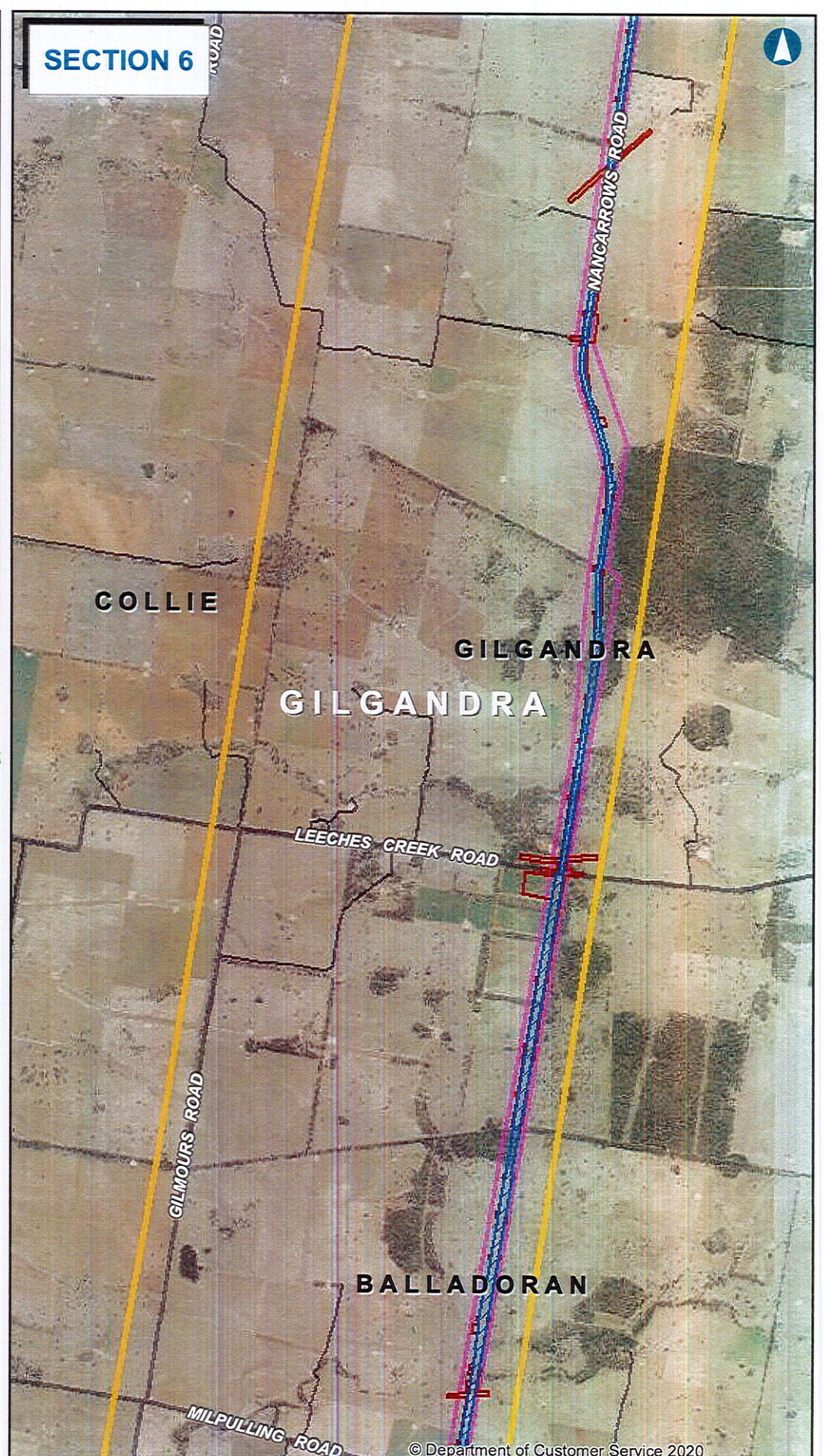
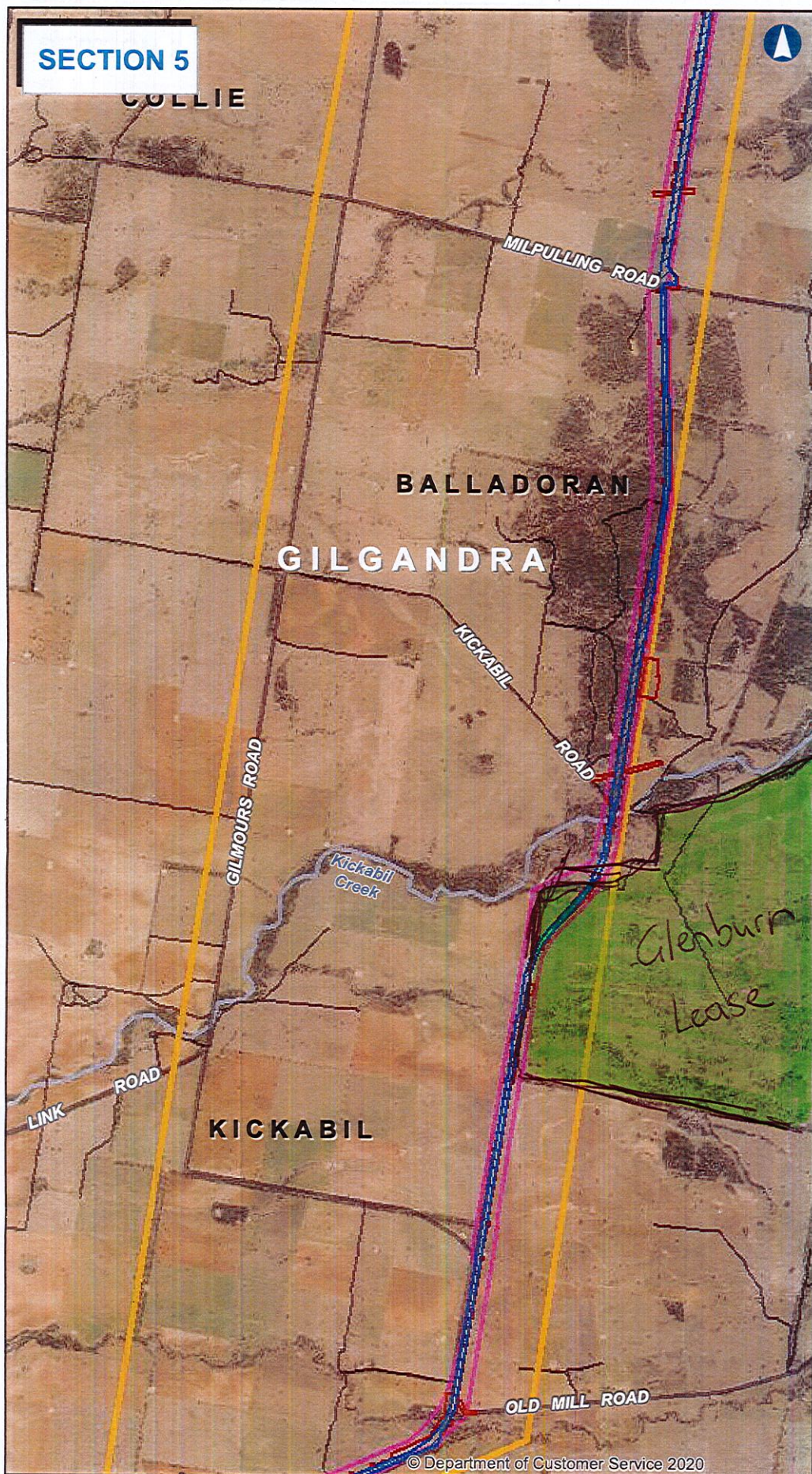
The ARTC should be transparent in their findings and quantify the current choice of route selection instead and without prejudice, determine the best option. The ARTC need to take into consideration cost and time and the people and the families this is affecting.

COMPENSATION

Upon conclusion and route selection, the ARTC need to consider the compensation to landholders. It must take into consideration and assess on a case-by-case base:

- Land Value & Loss of Land
- Land Dissection
- Loss of Remaining Land Productivity
- Devaluation of Remaining Land Value
- Increased Working Cost of the Land
- The severity of Business Disruptions
- Noise and Vibration Pollution
- Landscape Disruptions
- Health and Safety of Occupants of the Land
- Housing Improvements, Maintenance and Upkeep

There are many things left unanswered and until we have answers we can't support the Inland Railway with its current proposed route.



NARROMINE TO NARRABRI

General Corridor and Construction Impact Zone

Sections 4 - 6 MAP 2

0 2 4 Km

Coordinate System: GDA 1994 MGA Zone 55

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Date: 15/11/2020
Author: IR.GIS
Data Sources:

Paper: A3
Scale: 1:62,000

- Rail corridor
- Construction impact zone
- Focused area
- Study area - Phase 1
- Local government area



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The Australian Government is delivering Inland Rail through the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), in partnership with the private sector.