

**Submission  
No 18**

## **INLAND RAIL PROJECT AND REGIONAL NSW**

**Name:** Mrs Sonya Marshall

**Date Received:** 5 February 2021

Please note all information in italics is taken directly from The Case for Inland Rail + Summary of the 2015 Business Case. The one exception is a quote from the ABC.

a) Why are the detailed business papers not available to the public? This just shows there is no transparency and does not engender public faith in the whole process. Much of the money for this project is from taxpayers and you have an obligation to prove this project will repay the taxpayer and will not be a very expensive white elephant. The 2015 Case for Inland Rail admits it will not create enough income to pay for construction. It will only be able to cover running costs once it is completed. That is an estimated \$10b shortfall not being paid for by the users. This report is very short on actual budget or projected financial figures. A few pretty graphs etc do not provide in depth data.

a) The business case 2015 states the Inland Rail link to the Port of Brisbane has not been completed. Don't **all** costs for the **entire** project need to be taken into consideration before it goes ahead?

b) One of the proposed routes was supposed to be west of Narrabri, near Burren Junction, so all the agricultural commodities from Coonamble, Narrabri, Walgett shires etc didn't need to be road freighted as far. There has been no reason given for this move. Why go through the fire prone Pilliga if you aren't catering to coal and CSG. LNG is increasing being moved by (and fuelling) trains in other countries. The proposed route has also moved in Queensland without a reason being given.

b) In places along the proposed route they will be using the old brownfield sites. Near Pampas and Brookstead in Queensland this old track has not been used in many years, possibly decades. This track has not been maintained in this time and whilst it is buckled it has not been washed away even after successive floods. Why does the track need to be raised to extraordinary heights which will create a huge backlog of water and subsequently wash out the track. There are many instances of elevated track that has been washed out numerous times and this forces closure of the line for extended periods of time. The lower level of track, whilst it may be cut while the flood waters are up will be in use much quicker than a destroyed track.



Track in a floodway which has not had maintenance for years but it still in good condition after many floods.



A bridge over the Condamine River which has not had maintenance for years but it still in good condition after many floods.



The height on the left was the 2010 flood level with the current track height. That was the flood that decimated Grantham and the rail bridge there caused a lot of water to back up. The height on the right is the probable flood height with the built up track.





The old track and the proposed height of the Inland Rail. Many homes and businesses along this floodplain will be inundated.

c) I was told but could not find confirmation that the train will only stop in two places in NSW. I asked the ARTC person at Agquip this year and he confirmed that freight will only be put on and taken off in Narromine and Narrabri. Why are governments providing so much money to build 'hubs' at many places along the route if the train does not even stop? *"Better connecting cities and farms to markets."* Only 2 stops in NSW will mean extra handling, costs and time. Currently the majority of grain is trucked to either a local silo then moved by train to the Port of Newcastle (or Sydney or Port Kembla). 1 truck, 1 train. Otherwise it is trucked to say Narrabri, (Moree, Coonamble etc) containerised and rail freighted to Newcastle (Sydney or Port Kembla). 1 truck, 1 train. Some is trucked directly to port. Unless Narromine or Narrabri are currently your local site this will add extra handling which means extra time and every time it is handled it costs more.

c) One critical criteria used by ARTC for the operation of Inland Rail is the "24 hour Melbourne to Brisbane time limit". This is between the terminals, not the ports as many people believe. So starting in Melbourne: everything is loaded onto the train by truck, the rail line does not go to the port. It goes on a train until approximately 34 km's from the Brisbane port then is all loaded on trucks again to get to the port. If the train can be 1.8km in length, how many road trucks will it take to move all the freight from port to train then from train to port at the other end. The optimal train length is 3.6 km so this will double the number of trucks. Both ends travel through city streets adding huge maintenance costs and congestion to the road network. *"IMPROVES SUSTAINABILITY AND AMENITY FOR THE COMMUNITY Carbon emissions will be reduced by 750,000 tonnes and truck volumes will be reduced in more than 20 of our regional towns 1. Road congestion on some of Australia's busiest highways will be reduced, including the Ipswich Motorway, and the Hume, Newell and Warrego Highways."* Just not between terminals and ports where the most congestion is and the highest population centres that will be disadvantaged. *"John Fullerton, the chief executive of the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), ....told the ABC that "One 1,800-metre train, double-stacked, operating between Melbourne and Brisbane is equivalent to over 100 B-double [trucks]," he said."*<sup>1</sup> So when the train doubles to 3.6km it will double the trucks entering and leaving the terminals to 200 B double trucks per train. ARTC forecast 40 train movements per day by 2040. That will be 8,000 B double trucks per day. Elsewhere on the Inland Rail ARTC website it says peak trains will be 45 by 2040.

d) Consultation seems to be a joke. Materials such as sleepers and track have already been placed along the route such as at North Star. Are the specifications for general track upgrade the same as specifications for the Inland Rail track? We are told these stockpiles are for general maintenance as the route has not been confirmed yet. If the inland rail track is higher spec than the general track, is

- a) This work just up to the general specifications of normal track? In which case it will all need to be done again if that is the successful route. or
- b) If this maintenance is up to the higher inland rail spec then it isn't the successful route it will be overcapitalised and much money wasted.



The schedule states North Star to Yelarbon will be completed by the end of year 7. That means an awful lot of equipment is already on site.



There is also a stockpile sitting beside the current track between Narrabri and North Star which is scheduled to be completed by the end of year 5.

h) Is the track the same gauge from one end to the other? Dual gauging – how does this work? Do trains have 2 sets of wheels, axles? Does everything need to be transferred to another train? I couldn't find these details.

h) Will hazardous goods such as LNG be moved on the Inland Rail?

h) *"IMPROVES ROAD SAFETY Each year, there will be up to 15 fewer serious crashes, avoiding fatalities and serious injuries."* Where can ARTC possibly get this figure from? Is this all truck crashes along the route? Are there going to be no trucks on any road in three states? How do they calculate an increase in level crossing accidents?

h) ARTC is currently in the planning and approvals phase for the Public Private Partnership section. The successful proponent for the PPP will not be announced until 2012. If they are providing the engineering and construction solutions as well as designing, building, financing and maintaining this section of the rail line would they not be more involved at an earlier time? Why do they enter the planning so late?

I am not sure what this inquiry is aiming to achieve. There are stockpiles of materials along the track now which is still in the consultation phase. By the time this inquiry's report is finalised much of the work will be underway.

Sonya Marshall

1. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-12-11/inland-rail-what-you-need-to-know/9240946>