

INLAND RAIL PROJECT AND REGIONAL NSW

Organisation: North West Protection Advocacy

Date Received: 7 February 2021



North West Protection Advocacy
PO Box 19, Coonabarabran NSW 2357

5th February

To: Inland Rail Project and Regional NSW Parliamentary Inquiry

ATT:

Emma Wood investmentindustry@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Inland Rail - Narramine to Narrabri – Route Alignment

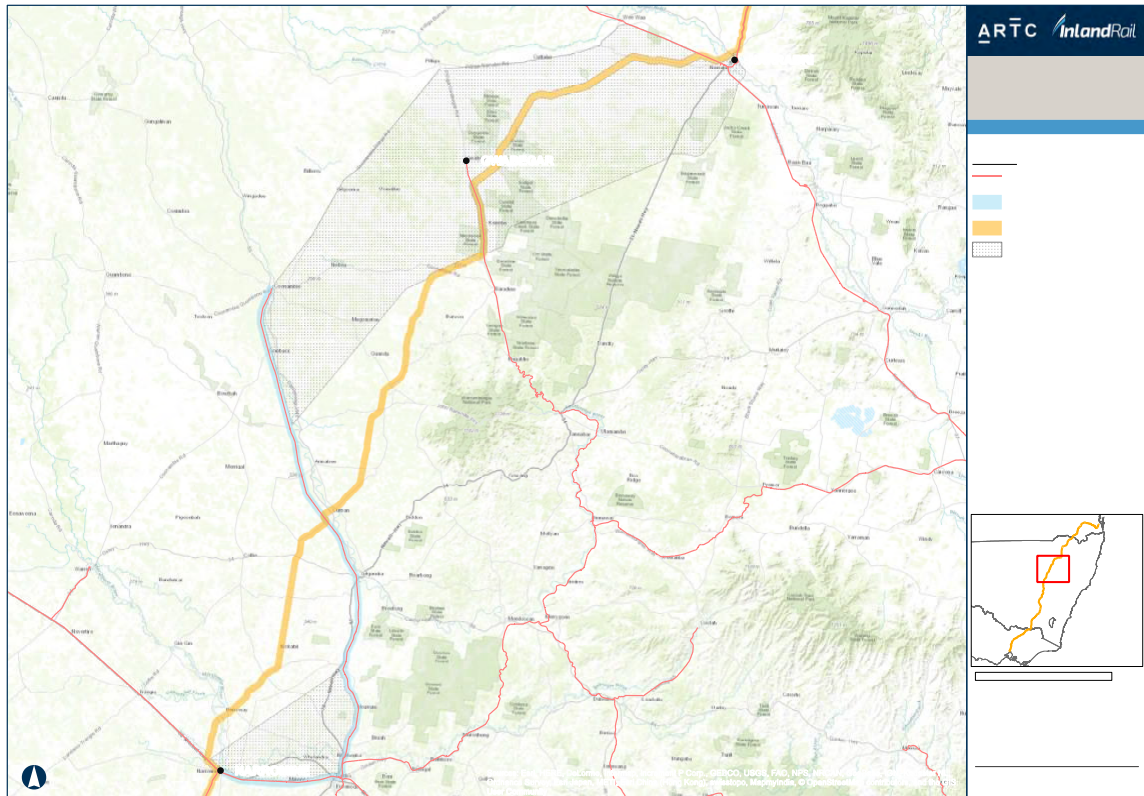
North West Protection Advocacy are a Coonabarabran-based grassroots advocacy group. We have a strong interest in ensuring that the Pilliga forest area is protected from inappropriate development. NWPA have been following the development of this particular section of the Inland Rail for several years. We seek here to inform the Parliamentary Inquiry about this alignment that benefits the private good instead of the public good. It is inappropriate for the sensitive environment through which it is proposed it pass.

We share the opinion of Everal Compton that the idea of the Inland Rail has been bastardised beyond recognition and nowhere is that more apparent than in the proposal to put it through the incredibly culturally significant and biodiverse Pilliga East State Forest and then onwards across a flood plain. The proposed route quite literally cuts through the heart of the Pilliga and goes straight to the Leewood Waste Water Treatment Facility owned by Santos.

Everal Compton states here: <https://everaldcompton.com/2020/05/23/the-vision-of-the-inland-railway-is-now-a-tragedy/> THE VISION OF THE INLAND RAILWAY IS NOW A TRAGEDY.

The Pilliga is a significant carbon bank and importantly is the recharge zone for the Great Artesian Basin. To industrialize the Pilliga any further is pure folly. Pilliga is a living and breathing museum that has profound cultural importance to the Gomeroi.

The Inland Rail MUST NOT traverse the greenfield Pilliga East State Forest and instead be reverted back to its original proposed route from 2010 (as pictured) that continued through on the original line, turning eastwards before Gwabegar.

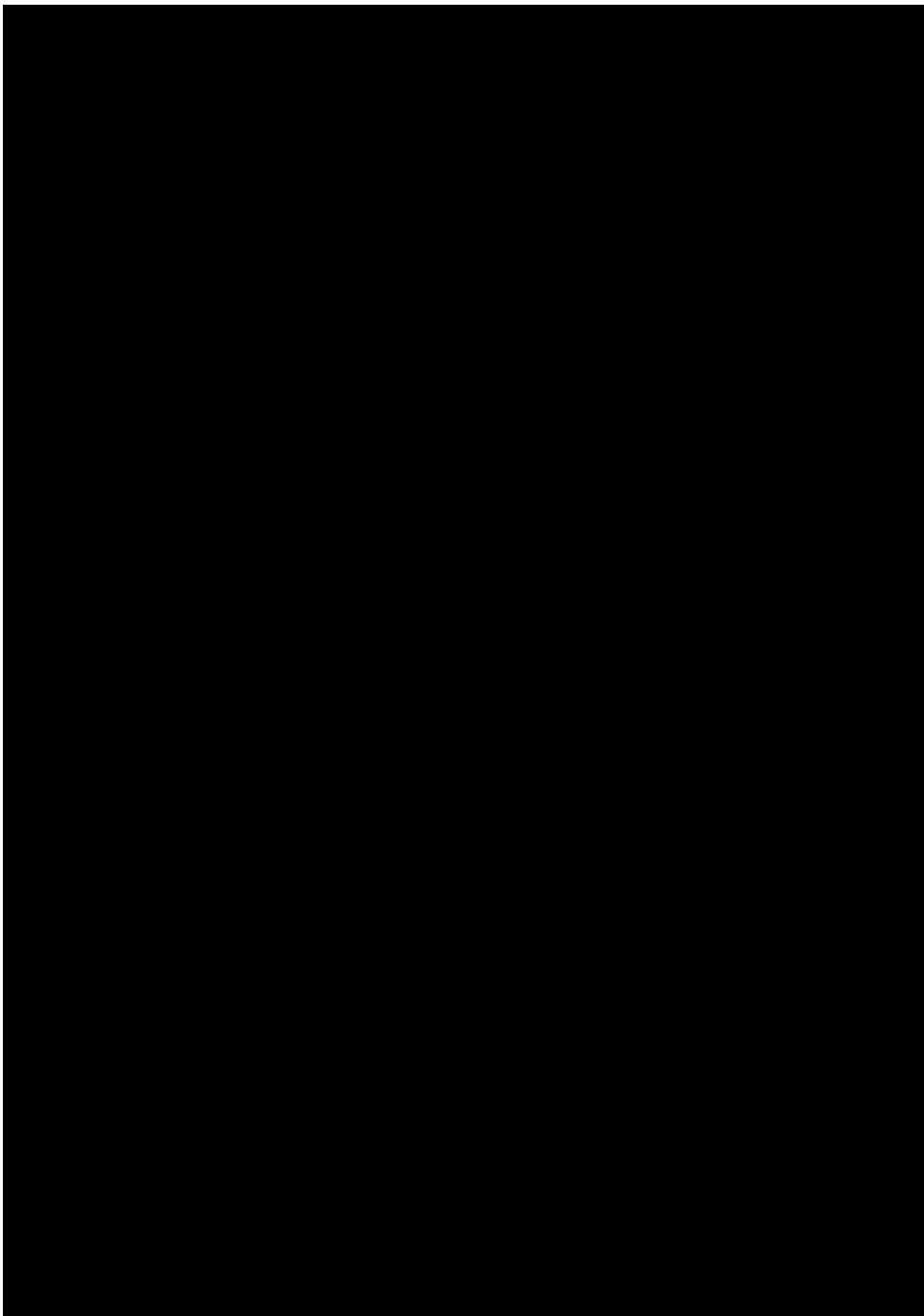


The change to the alignment was like a slap in the face to the majority of people in the region who oppose the coal seam gas industry in its entirety. See report by People for the Plains:

<https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/lockthegate/pages/6447/attachments/original/1583284899/Assessment of Social Acceptance of NGP.pdf?1583284899>

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]



[Redacted text block]

- **To directly benefit the gas industry (in particular Santos and the Narrabri Gas Project and their contractors)** one of these contractors is on the CCC for this section.

The gas sector has provided three of the directors for the Inland Rail, not counting John Anderson (Eastern Star Gas), who it seems has stepped back from a prominent role following delivery of his implementation report. These directors are Graeme Findlay, ex-BG Group and Origin; Rebecca Pickering, ex Origin (land access) and Neil Burlison, big player in energy sector, also ex-Origin and BP.

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- **To directly benefit Narrabri Shire Council**

Narrabri Council are pro-industrial development. They are outspoken supporters of the Narrabri Gas Project and with the development of the industrial Inland Rail Hub which will support heavy industry, coal and gas mining, fertilizer and explosives production and potentially LNG transport.

There are few perceived benefits of this route choice to farmers and many, many negatives. The route was changed to benefit Santos after this meeting (see images below) and is justified by saying “many local landholders have a strong preference for the corridor option through the Pilliga State Forest and then adjacent to the Newell Highway” but in all the documentation, minutes of CCCs and FOI’ed papers NWPA have been unable to see any proof of this statement.

12 May, 2017: Meeting in John Barilaro’s office

Agenda	Attendees	Notes
12/5/2017	Mr Sal Petrocitto The Hon John Barilaro MP Deputy Premier Minister for Regional NSW, Minister for Skills and Minister for Small Business Australian Rail Track Corporation John Holland Rail Narrabri Shire Council Santos	Roundtable discussion on intermodal Inland Rail
17/5/2017	Nathans Truck & Trailer Smash Repairs and Motor	Heavy Vehicle Safety

May 2017: New Greenfield study area through the Pilliga appears - The 2016 alignment no longer being considered⁴⁶

- Inland Rail preferred route now to pass through ecologically sensitive Pilliga forest and straight to Santos facility Narrabri.
- Limited cost saving (circa 5%) or time saving (circa 6 min) warrants route change – only mooted benefit is “avoids Farmers”.
- Rail corridor potentially can host gas pipeline which facilitates project.
- **NSW LNP Govt had to be involved in route change negotiations re State Forest impairments? Santos would have to had input due to potential impairments?**
- ARTC deny they had spoken to Santos in relation to re-alignment
- **If so then impairments would not have been budgeted for in assessment process?**

May 2017 – Inland Rail moves into “Phase 4”

May 2017: Darren Chester announces “...additional \$8.4 billion to build the Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail”⁴⁷

22 May 2017 – Albanese notes that Joyce appeared to have “seized control of this (Inland Rail) project from Darren Chester”⁴⁸

May 2017: DIRD release PWC study on the future of intermodal terminals⁴⁹

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ARTC were talking to Santos about the alignment (see image below from the Phase 1 Narromine to Narrabri Preferred Corridor Report: see Documents relating to the inland rail route from Narromine to Narrabri (FOI 18-058)
<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/departments/ips/log.aspx>

- Option D intersects the proposed Santos Narrabri Gas Project adjacent to the Newell Highway. In discussions with Santos they have advised their preference for the rail alignment to be on the west of their proposed facility. The highway road corridor in the same vicinity narrows which reduces the ability for a rail alignment to go on the east of the proposed Santos plant footprint, within the road corridor. Discussions with Santos are ongoing in relation to the alignment and the progress of their proposed development.

ARTC claim that the preferred route has the support of landholders and stakeholders but the CCC was not convened until after the preferred route through the Pilliga was chosen. The CCC is stacked with representatives who are pro-gas, some of who could be seen to have a conflict of interest and have not declared pecuniary interest?

There is no transparency on who is in the Sponsors Group. FOI requests have returned multiple heavily redacted documents on this issue (see image below). Why is there secrecy around who is in this group? Can the ARTC detail who comprises this group?

From: s22 (irrelevant)
 To: [REDACTED]
 Cc: [REDACTED]
 Subject: RE: Narrabri to Murrumbidgee questions and clarifications - ARTC Response [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
 Date: Tuesday, 26 September 2017 11:27:47 AM
 Attachments: image001.jpg
 image001.jpg
 image001.jpg

Hi s22,

We are going to propose that consideration of the NZN paper be held over for consideration until the next Sponsors Group meeting on 11 October. The overall thrust of the minute to our Secretary, as chair of the Sponsors Group, will be that while the difference between the NZN concept corridor and the preferred corridor is marginal, there are differences within several of the five sections that make up the NZN corridor that warrant additional advice before a preferred alignment can be endorsed.

In particular, we will be focusing on

- the Narramine to Burroway section – cultural heritage; stakeholder sentiment; technical and construction matters
- the Curban to Mt Tenandra section – stakeholder sentiment v service offering and cost
- the Barradine to Narrabri section – advantages and potential risks of traversing State Forest.

s22 (irrelevant)

Please let me know if I can assist further. I would be grateful for information as to what advice you are proposing to provide to your Secretary that may be in addition to or different to the above, eg. Whether or not you will be incorporating advice around ARTC's advice around possible additional costs.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

s22

Stakeholder Engagement | Inland Rail Unit
 Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development
 GPO Box 594, Canberra ACT 2601

s22 (irrelevant)

www.infrastructure.gov.au

s22 (irrelevant)

<https://www.infrastructure.gov.au/departments/ips/log.aspx>

The business case in regards to this preferred route option has not been made publicly

available.

Johanna Evans – North West Protection Advocacy