

**Submission  
No 32**

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

**Name:** Ms Barbara Deans

**Date Received:** 8 February 2021

# Submission to The Legislative Assembly Committee on Investment Industry and Regional Development

By Barbara Deans

## Introduction.

I am a Mum, farmer, Coonamble Shire councillor, Chair of the Coonamble NSW Farmers branch, and I am on the Gilgandra Inland Rail Community CCC.

I have worked closely with affected families to keep people informed and supported.

There is a better route through Coonamble which ARTC did not investigate. It is a requirement of the Sears that all routes to be explored.

ARTC Inland Rail proposed corridor is through the middle of our property "Kamira" in the Coonamble Shire. A mixed farming cropping and stock enterprise on deep black soil 15kms from the Warrumbungle mountains.

I want this N2N Route to change so that the next generation has a future.

This proposed corridor will take all and give nothing and let our towns and communities stagnate instead of giving us all a chance at growth and a promising future.

We are a family farm business. My husband and I are both 4<sup>th</sup> generation farmers with the 5<sup>th</sup> generation now involved with the business. A daughter and son and their partners. Between us is a wealth of knowledge of the land.

We are secession planning, but inland Rail has stopped this process because we don't know if we can be a viable farming business. The inland rail corridor will do untold damage to our farm and business and our equity. The flow-on effect will have a devastating impact on our whole farming business.

When farming equity is not strong enough, the farm business can't borrow money, and the farm business debts are unserviceable. This is another example of the hidden cost of Inland Rail which is transferred to landholders.

My husband and I have endured countless droughts, floods, losing whole harvests due to rain, sold breeding stock under duress because of drought, 23% interest rates, brain cancer, hard times, sheds blown away, and countless farming hurdles, you name it, we've jumped them. We are still here, as are the other farming families on this proposed corridor.

This Inland rail corridor is in the wrong place.

Freight cost and Climate change are our next hurdles.

To speak to your terms of reference I am referring to the N2N Narromine to Narrabri section this where I live and know.

## **A economic development opportunities from the project**

There are none for this section N2N.

Coonamble Gilgandra Gulargambone are not directly on inland rail. We are on a monopoly owned spur line. There is no benefit because our freight will always be expensive.

**B infrastructure required to ensure regional communities benefit from the project.**

On the Gilgandra to Coonamble line our 3 towns and 5 silos complex's will be stranded because we are not directly on the inland rail corridor the only way to benefit is to be on inland rail corridor directly.

**C engagement with regional communities to identify opportunities**

ARTC have been told by the community repeatedly "use existing rail line and main road corridors and put our towns and silos on this inland rail corridor and grow the biggest grain growing region of NSW". (950000 tons 2021)

What we have got from ARTC is a 307plus kms of greenfield line that goes to 1 business with a 20 year life span, Santos. Inland rail bypasses 1000s of farming and town businesses that have more than 100 year life span benefit.

A requirement of the SEARs that every route to be investigated this was not adhered too.

**D alignment of the project with the NSW Freight and Ports Plan 2018-2023 and state Infrastructure Strategy 2018-2038.**

The Coonamble, Gilgandra rail line needs to be of the highest quality because we have the largest amount of grain to be exported in NSW. Our existing line should not be allowed to play 2<sup>nd</sup> fiddle to inland rail. This line could be incorporated in inland rail therefor insuring a high standard of line forever to our NSW ports.

**E other related matters**

I have included 2 submissions to explain the bad planning and the waste of locals time trying to communicate with ARTC and a description of the routes that should have been investigated. As a result of the N2N we have a lack of trust for ARTC and Governments.

For the last 5 years the N2N section of inland rail could have given this region excitement about growth in the future but what we will get is a monopoly owned spur line that can only gave our region expensive freight prices.

I have attached my submission to **STATE INFRASTRUCTURE APPLICATION NO. SSI-9487 INLAND RAIL – NARROMINE TO NARRABRI 6/2/2021**

I have attached my submission **TO THE INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF THE INLAND RAIL PROJECT BY THE AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION AND THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT. 22 November 2019**

I thank you for this opportunity

Sincerely

Barbara Deans

**STATE INFRASTRUCTURE APPLICATION NO. SSI-9487 INLAND RAIL – NARROMINE TO NARRABRI**

I am against this N2N route proposal.

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Route Selection.

The ARTC EIS has divided N2N into small and separate sections. Our area comprises 6 large Shires, and is connected by the community, climate, water, the environment, wildlife, stock, crops, towns, and farmers. The ARTC EIS has let us down by not studying the area as a whole and appears not to be aware of the intricate links and connections. Due to the area's challenging climate, vastness, distance, the wealth of produce, our community relies on every section for support, economic and social benefit. My main focus is on the Curban to Gwabegar section because I know this section, but impacts over the whole of N2N are the same to a greater and lesser degree.

The proposal should be amended to have an independent investigation of the alternative Coonamble route. For the growth of the most significant grain growing region in NSW and positive flow on affects.

I refer to the SS1 18\_9487 Department of Planning. The Sears conditions have not been met on page 2, which states there must be "...analysis of any feasible alternate routes to the project...". The alternative Coonamble route has not been analysed. This Route would travel west of Narromine, following the Eumungerie Road (Greenfield) to Eumungerie then would join and stay on the Brownfield line to Coonamble and continue to the follow the Coonamble to Baradine road to the Gwabegar line, then Gwabegar to Narrabri. (Greenfield). It will traveling through flat country with slow, low water. It will be less disruptive, faster, safer and quicker to build and will take our area forward.

The alternate Coonamble route as a whole route has never had an economic analysis. ARTC have looked at the different alternatives sections and studied them out of context in relation to the route the community wanted. ARTC has been deceptive in its presentation of route choice. I request that this be investigated by an independent body.

If ARTC had undertaken a full and proper examination of this alternate Route, it would have highlighted both the sensible, buildable and affordable features of this alternate Route. The Coonamble route will cause minimal destruction to farmland and the environment. This Route would deliver affordable freight rates to 7 silo complexes (950,000 tons bulk grain in 2020).

This EIS proves the proposed Route by ARTC is not only the most expensive but the most disruptive corridor to build a railway line in and could prove to be unachievable and deliver nothing to the most prominent grain and stock producing area of 50000sq km in NSW.

The ARTC route selection is both disadvantageous and unsound for NSW.

The 2010 IRAS and MCA reports used by ARTC EIS for route selection contain incorrect and inconclusive information. Therefore, the proposed N2N route selection was based on inaccurate information.

The 2010 IRAS report on the N2N Greenfield section outlined that the railway line would travel through flat country with a good amount of water but at a very slow pace. **This is not true.** This could not be more opposite to the real situation on the ground as ARTC has found.

Inland Rail proposed Route will act as a levee bank around the Warrumbungle Mountains with multiple fast-flowing ephemeral creeks and waterways (over 120) that feed the fastest flowing river in New South Wales. The erosion protection surrounding the railway line will have to be of the highest standard and will be expensive and forever a high maintenance cost. This makes it essential for the railway line to be built to the specifications, not to budget, or else there will be irreversible negative impacts on the natural waterways. I challenge the count of waterways. ARTC have understated this figure.

Incomplete documents have been used to determine alignment.

In comparing critical factors relating to alignment, the MCA<sup>1</sup> documents contain 76 points marked 'To Be Announced'; 24 points that 'Assume similar impacts'; 64 marked 'Not Applicable'; 144 'similar'; 8 'unknown'; and 17 noted as 'not complete.' ARTC used Route comparisons in the N2N based on a remarkable lack of information, and these incomplete documents were used for this route selection. When will these inaccuracies be addressed?

The alternative Coonamble route needs to be independently investigated before any decisions made because the current route selection was based on false criteria.

ARTC didn't recognize landowners as stakeholders at the start. From the first day and for the next 5 years the farming community told ARTC that Inland Rail should come to our towns and silos and grow our region. We have so many stories of disrespect.

The consultation has been one sided from the start. ARTC took our good will and used it for their advantage ticking the boxes. At the big meetings the community told ARTC to keep it on existing brownfield and main roads corridors. People are fuming because this is where we live, and we want to have a say in our future.

I am asking NSW government please do not let ARTC and the Federal Govt get this wrong at this regions expense.

### Urban and Regional Economic Development.

The ARTC proposed rail corridor won't give us regional opportunities because it has no towns or silos on the route. The Greenfield route passes one business, Santos. Is the current proposed alignment solely for the benefit of one 20-year business?

I would like the Minister to amend the proposal to have the alternative Coonamble route studied so farming and town businesses can grow and be here for the next 100 years.

Parkes, Narromine and Narrabri are celebrating the economic benefits of being directly linked to the Inland Rail. Coonamble and surrounding districts are missing this once in a lifetime opportunity. Only because ARTC did not adhere to the SEARS.

ARTC's assumption that the construction and operation of the line along the Greenfield site will only be a minor inconvenience and will deliver benefits in the long term is wrong.

Some farming businesses will not survive with an industrial site through the middle of the farms, with the devaluation of their properties, and with the negative mental health impacts due to construction and operation.

This proposed corridor has stranded our silos, so there is no economic benefit to our area.

**It was stated by ARTC at a Gilgandra CCC Meeting that there is "no benefit to this region".**

At the Senate hearing Moree Shire indicated they hoped for a saving of \$30/tonne on freight. Our region will miss out on this freight saving.

The EIS statement that it gives us "better access to Regional markets " is not correct. No studies have done on this for our region.

Every business that makes money out of the inland rail N2N ARTC proposed Route will be doing it at the demise our towns, farming businesses and the environment, and hard-working communities,

**Will the Federal or New South Wales Governments be subsidizing our freight from these stranded silos?**

For example, 950000 plus tons in 2020.

**The alternative Coonamble route needs to be independently investigated as it will promote growth in this region because we have exportable produce and can value add.**

Coonamble would be halfway on the alternate Inland Line. We have the space for a 12,000 container storage facility. Containers need a place to rest when not in use. We have affordable space and 950,000 tons of grain to put in them. This is just another lost opportunity.

The proposal should be amended to include a report on the negative result the Coonamble area will suffer because ARTC proposed route bypasses us.

#### Comment on ARTC Summery.

ARTC has stated "the potential for short-term environmental and social disturbance as a result of construction has to be balanced against the long-term benefit of Inland Rail overall. "

This statement is **incorrect** because Inland Rail does not come to our silos and our towns. We only have the long-term loss. Loss of farming income, loss of families, loss of community, loss of competitive freight rates, loss of commercial opportunities in the towns.

ARTC don't mention the farmers that produced 950,000 tonne of grain, and town businesses that will lose with high freight costs.

This opportunity is stolen from Coonamble Gulargambone and Gilgandra and the district. Because the Inland Rail corridor bypasses the whole region.

The proposal should be rejected and till other routes examined.

#### Mitigation.

The mitigation that ARTC speak about in the EIS has no design details, so it's impossible to comment on mitigation. ARTC and landholders and Community have a completely different idea about mitigation.

#### The Cumulative effect

Is negative because the corridor has taken a lot and given nothing to this area.

#### Farm Bank Debt.

Farmland will lose value and become depreciated, and properties will be unsaleable.

Properties will be damaged, less productive, less efficient, etc., and will not be able to be used as collateral for growing business or servicing debt that is in place. Banks will not have the security over loans that are in place now.

Depreciation of farms will destroy our equity farming businesses, possibly leading to bankruptcy.

Some farming businesses are a multiple business with other farms in different areas but are the one identity, and the farm that is directly affected could send the whole enterprise bankrupt.

How will bankruptcies be mitigated?

How will the equity be replaced and made enduring?

The proposal should be amended to have an independent Government Bank system that can lend money to affected businesses on an enduring time frame. So these affected businesses can stay financial and operating.

#### Loss of Farm Income.

During construction, paddocks will have to be destocked, the stock will probably have to be sold, crops not able to be sprayed or planted, which will mean a loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars to the farm. This will flow on to employees and businesses in the town.

The proposal should be amended to report on the loss of income to farms during construction and operation before permission is granted.

### Social Impact.

It seems to be that compensation is meant to take care of everything. Not true. There is no social license for this proposed route and there is opposition to it by the Community.

It is not financially viable to invest in a depreciating asset.

I think the social and mental grief and pressure on families and farming businesses will end families. Divorcing or separating. Wives and partners who work in town may use compensation to buy a house off-farm or move to where their grown children live. It won't be worth investing in the property, homestead and the gardens. The asset will be depreciated.

Partners not wanting to travel to a deteriorating farm/home and a cranky partner because a bulldozer just ripped up 50 years of hard work.

I can understand many farmers will not be able to cope with the destruction of their farm, which will play out in high-stress levels and depression.

The New South Wales Government cannot believe that the compensation will be a boon for the area.

### Noise.

Our noise is wind and birds, it is so quiet here. We have tractors, car and machinery noise at times. its seasonal and in the paddock. I don't think this noise would even rate on an ARTC noise logger.

Our area had 60kms of corridor with no noise logger testing by ARTC. The noise from construction and operation will be horrendous and our quality of life will deteriorate.

The proposal should be amended to include a report on the adverse effect on people's mental health.

### Safety.

We have women that manage and live on farms alone. These women have extremely low security risks now. These women will be exposed during construction with a predominately male workforce on our doorstep for five years and ongoing maintenance crews driving all over our area/ farms when operating. Inland rail corridor could expose these women and families to personal safety issues and robbery. By the fact that our homes are in the midst of an industrial worksite. This community has been isolated and safe and is now exposed through this EIS to outside observations. I feel we are at risk now.

How will you mitigate this? It is a real threat to us.

The Coonamble community has been working with police for years to stop farm theft and keep people safe. My area has always been safe. Now I don't feel safe.

The construction compounds like the Quanda Quanda Black Hollow section will expose the landholders to theft, personal safety issues, and insecurity we never had before. We will have no privacy and no feeling of safety day or night. Having a full workforce with everything associated with big infrastructure projects is a severe and threatening problem that ARTC has not addressed. The ARTC EIS is sharing our locations, it threatens our safety and peace of mind.



Most farms have excellent watchdogs, they bark and protect when someone out of the ordinary arrives. With 1500 vehicle movements and the workforce around, the dogs will be confused and ineffective guards, and families will lose security.

Some pets roam 2kms for home and are safe and return. Now they will be in the path of 1,000 vehicles with no hope of returning home safely.

How will ARTC mitigate the safety of everyone, including pets?

During harvest 2020 our business would have crossed 2 level crossing approx. 40 times a day (trucks, utes, heavy machinery etc). No study has been done about in-farm level crossings and the amount of traffic over them.

The proposal should be amended to include a study on how many times farmers will cross a level crossing each day.

### Biosphere and Environment.

This Route crosses and divides portions of Biophysical strategic agricultural land in the Curban to Gwabegar section. Approx. 1/3 of the area.

See planning & infrastructure NSW State Environment Planning Policy (mining, petroleum production and Extractive Industries )2007 map sheet STA\_020.

These areas need to be protected.

Impenetrable fences on either side of the train line will be dividing this area, blocking the natural migration of native animals, and possibly depriving them of feed and water and also becoming a fire trap. This will impact on endangered species.

I am concerned that the tree corridors from the Warrumbungle's to the Marshes will be cut off by Inland Rail. The EIS did not address this.

The proposal should be amended until these tree corridors can be mapped and studied and valued before permission granted.

Biosphere Desktop studies and 35 days in the field in drought are not good enough. B1-11 shows most of the studies were in the Pilliga. Constructing the railway will destroy a significant part of our environment of NSW and 35 days is not enough time for such a large area.

Money paid to fund Biodiversity Conservation Fund (BCF) is no substitute to the native animals, grassland, and trees.

The proposal should be amended to have all ecosystems credits be realised in "like for like" in Shires affected before permission granted.

The Black Hollow area has a Hudson Pear invasion. This plant is a Weed of National Significance. ARTC has not mentioned this in the EIS. This is surprising, as we spoke to ARTC staff when they were bore testing the water table and told them to pick it out of their tyres before leaving.

The LLS said they had conversations with ARTC about Hudson Pear.

High Priority GDE vegetation and ecosystems of Quanda Quanda creek are not mapped and acknowledged in chapter 55. Why not?

If the alternative Coonamble route is selected it will take the pressure of this very significant part of the environment.

The proposal needs to be amended to have detailed studies of significant Weed areas, and what mitigation will be used.

How is the NSW Govt going to rehabilitate and repopulation our rare and endangered animals and fauna?

The alternative Coonamble route is 120kms of Brownfield with 117 years of living with the ecosystems.

The LLS have established Threatened Species habitat enhancements in this area. We have one within meters from the proposed corridor.

How will this be mitigated?

### Tourism and other On-Farm Business.

There will be loss of rural farm tourist business. Opportunities like Bubble Tent Australia in the Mudgee area will not be possible.

Coonamble Shire helps the farming business expand into on-farm tourism as a drought survival alternative and to add wealth and employment opportunities. ARTC will take this opportunity from this area with the proposed Route.

Visitors come to our country area to escape the city/ industrial environment, and to see this beautiful NSW region. This area is untouched by big industrial infrastructure development.

The Warrumbungle National Park is Australia's first Dark Sky Park and the first in the Southern Hemisphere. Coonamble, Gilgandra, and Warrumbungle Shires joined in applying to UNESCO for the first GEOPARK, and it all stopped because of the proposed N2N section Inland Rail project. Another lost opportunity.

During the construction phase what will be the mitigation for the loss of tourists that typically come through the Warrumbungle National Park and travel on the Tooraweenah Road to Coonamble? The word-of-mouth in the RV world is important to where they travel.

When it is known that a major construction site is close to the park entrance, I don't think tourists will travel this way, and Coonamble will lose a vital part of income for Coonamble and district businesses, therefore leading to a lack of employment.

Coonamble Shire intends to build a Bore Bath Complex in Coonamble, and its profitability will rely on the tourist trade as a big part of its success. With the drought, good years, and Covid 19, our community has put a lot of effort into building a rapport with traveling caravans and tourists. Coonamble will suffer significant losses if tourist don't want to travel from Coonabarabran to Coonamble via the Warrumbungle National Park. We have the Coonamble Rodeo, Lightning Ridge (opals), Macquarie Marshes (birds), Pillaga bore (RVs), and so much more. Coonamble is the gateway to Hebel, St. George, and outback Queensland. All this potential is lost.

The alternative Coonamble route needs to be independently investigated because it is nowhere near the National Park so that the park will flourish, and the Inland Rail coming to Coonamble will grow our region. How will NSW government mitigate?

### Archaeology and Fossils.

The Warrumbungle National Park area is an ancient area, and there will be fossils unearthed that need to be investigated and protected. There are fossils in the Coonabarabran Visitors Centre. The giant wombat, a Diprotodon. Petrified trees that are 3 meters long and a radius of 75cm have been unearthed in this area.

The proposal should be amended to have an independent archaeological team on-site to protect these discoveries for all Australians.

### Negative Visual impacts

ARTCs proposed corridor is 12km from the Mountains. This proposed Route will have a negative visual effect because the Warrumbungle mountains are a dominating feature that stands out in this Section, Curban to Baradine. None of the EIS photos face the mountains.

Viewpoint 11 photo was taken with the photographers back to the mountains. There are no photos of the Warrumbungle's in the report. I find this deceptive and very unfair on the people that can see them every day. The mountains are so beautiful and so visual from so many different areas. The mountains are a jewel of NSW and should be protected.

I believe that the Warrumbungle mountain range is a threat to this project, and the mountain range's significance has been deliberately underplayed in ARTC EIS reports. It would be prudent for the Minister and the Department of Planning to visit this area to get a clear perspective.

It will have a very high negative visual effect for landholders when it cuts through their paddocks, and for tourists waiting at a level crossing when coming and going to the National Park.

The proposal should be rejected till a visual effects reports is independently done. No report on the visual loss of beauty to the Warrumbungle mountains to locals, the tourist industry, and future generations.

### See photo Beautiful Warrumbungle mountains

The visual impact of lighting for night-time work is significantly underestimated. When construction is taking place at night the site will be excessively bright. All this light is next to Australia's first International Dark Sky Park, the Warrumbungle's Dark Sky Park (12km away.) Maybe construction cannot take place at night.

We are 15kms from the National Park, and have lights on our tennis court. Siding Springs Observatory asked us to keep lights face down and not too bright, and rightly so. The proposed corridor is 2kms closer, with a construction camp (Quanda Quanda ).

The private homes that are 500 m and 2 kms away from this work site will not be able to tolerate night work. It will be unacceptable.

Is this camp going to work at night under lights?

Will bright lights night after night will have a negative effect on the Observatory? This camp should not run at night under lights. How will this be mitigated?

How will the Dark Skies Park be protected?

The alternative Coonamble route should be investigated because it not near the Dark Sky Park. It is on Brownfield 60km away.

Ref: Table B13.4 Chapter 25

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### Flooding hydrology and Geotech.

The EIS states that 3,400,000 m<sup>2</sup> can be reused as fill. I challenge this because there were only 24 soil boreholes tests for 307 km. Geotech not verified.

The EIS soils reports are very ambiguous. Geotech is everything to a railway line.

We have deep black earth soils. Cut and fill will not be correct for this area because comprehensive Geotech is not done.

The Proposal should be amended and include that every section should be tested to a very high standard before permission granted.

The 600m of bridging for the Castlereagh River at Curban is underestimated in the EIS. In 2010 IRAS shows that the flooding on the Castlereagh went to 3 to 4 km, so therefore the bridge should be 4 km

Modelling is not available to us to verify. Noting the GHD Jacob take no responsibility for the reports.

These are 3 samples of our rainfall events. These are irregular events. Our rain events that bring the creeks down do not have to be storm events to cause blockages to take fencing and cause erosion. Our section might have no rain, and the mountains have rain, and the creeks run.

4/1/2021 These are actual rain events 90 mm 70 mm 59 mm in one catchment above the proposed corridor in 1-hour result flooding very fast water lot of debris, loss of fencing, heavy road damage.

2020 rainfall March/ April broke the drought. Creeks came down, took fences, damaged roads.

In 2019 March 250mm, 175mm, 78mm in 5 hours damaged roads fencing and put houses in danger of flooding and filled the weir in Coonamble. Gilgandra and Warrumbungle shire received flood damage repair grant of \$900,000.

**See photo** (debris that will cause blockage)

Parkes and Forbes shut down for eight weeks in 2016 with flooding. When Coonamble gets a big flood, this Inland Rail will have enough problems upstream and downstream of Coonamble. The Coonamble region will be the least of ARTCs worries when the big ones hit.

Dr Watts made a presentation for ARTC by GHD at the CCC Gilgandra committee. He showed us the map of how the hydrology of the Warrumbungle mountains was to be modelled.

I understood the whole Warrumbungle's mountain range was to be in modelling and GHD were very keen to hear from landowners what the area's rainfall amounts were because there were so few weather stations, and flood gauges for the section. It was noted the modelling might show that it might not be a feasible project.

The next time we saw ARTC GHD modelling, the model had been cut down to 2 km above the line and 4 km below the line. We never saw Dr Watts again. The catchment is a lot larger than is the EIS has studied

I don't agree on the catchment area allotted to Quanda Quanda creek I am sure it's wrong.

Can the Department of Planning tell me how ARTC can ignore a mountain range and just do 2 km above the proposed alignment?

Could this lead to catastrophic outcomes?

Only a few people's opinions have been asked about flooding in short meetings without all information in front of them. Not good enough for a project this big with this much water and climate change.

The alternative Coonamble route needs to be independently investigated. It is on the other side of the Castlereagh River. On the watershed line, the flood waters are slow moving.

The proposal should be amended. The hydrology modelling must be independent and all-inclusive of all the Warrumbungle mountain range catchment with actual readings.

### Scouring erosion.

The scouring damage on properties will make farming impossible because you cannot cross deeply scoured gullies with farming equipment (\$500,000).

Every culvert and bridge will need a tremendous amount of mitigation on both sides of the line because of soils and water speed. **Figure 7.4 multi-pipe box culvert scour protection** would be useless in our country. It will fill up with silt in the first decent rain and achieve zero mitigation.

ARTC is building a levee bank perpendicular to the feed of the fastest flowing river in New South Wales with a whole mountain range behind it.

Living here for 30 years, I do not think ARTC can do the water mitigation, so will parcels of productive land have to be abandoned to erosion?

How is ARTC going to mitigate the cost of loss of production to the landowners in the years after?

ARTC will have to take financial responsibility for the after-effects for years to follow.

NSW Govt should set up a fund in perpetuity for the future cost of land degradation from scouring fencing and flood damage to building repairs etc.

Will NSW Govt commit to this?

The proposal should be amended to have this requirement so that NSW and its land and people are protected.

The proposal should not go ahead till the detailed design is done and fully peer-reviewed, and the appropriate budget applied

The alternative Coonamble route needs to be independently investigated because soil erosion on the flat country can be mitigated.

### Flood heights.

Table 5.5 shows no homes in flooding danger. That is incorrect. If the height of the flood water rises from the norm by a few millimetres my house will be inundated. There is no room for error where we are situated.

The Quanda Quanda creek is 100 meters from the house.

The only way my family can exit this Farm for an emergency under flood conditions is where the access road is now. The Inland Rail passing lane will cut off this access. If ARTC's assumption/design is wrong, we will face dangerous condition and insurance costs will go up.

EIS B4.2.1 is not entirely correct in how they describe the rainfall. It is well underestimated.

How is this going to be mitigated?

All reports should go to an independent Hydrology expert for review, and local content should be included.

### Water for construction.

In our CCC meeting, Mr. Ericsson advised that water would be delivered by truck to the construction site in a 20 to 30 km radius from the water source. My question is, how will you drive the trucks to the construction site when you have soft black or sandy loose soil without suitable roads for these heavy vehicles?

ARTC noted there could be a metre drawdown of the water table. This is completely unacceptable to our community.

Our farm is completely reliant on Bore water if our bores go dry or the vibration collapses the bore it will be a catastrophe.

What is the emergency water replacement plan?

If deep bore water is not suitable, what is the alternative?

At what depth is the drawdown? This fact is unknown?

If the drawdown occurs to farm bores across the region and a lot of bores go dry, what is the mitigation?

The EIS had no detail about water, only assumptions.

The proposal needs to be refused until the water need is fully detailed and peer reviewed.

Can the project be built without water?

ARTC informed our CCC meeting a railway line can be built without water.

### Soils.

In the Quanda Quanda section ARTC are putting this rail corridor over volatile, deep, black high plasticity sodic, manganese soils which crack significantly and swell when wet. Sodic/manganese soils break down in water, and do not combat turbid run off during rainfall. This area has a big catchment with high runoff.

The EIS maps indicate our hills which are black soil rise from a base of 275m to a height of 381m. This is very steep there is always high-level erosion here.

Our levees are black soil and only need a tiny crack and water and rainfall will erode a 2-metre hole through a 5 by 3 metre levee.

In the Residual Assessment Table B4.5 ARCT has no detail to support their conclusion of low impact on the construction area and during operation. I strongly disagree with ARTC conclusions.

Geotech completed before project can go ahead

Alternative Coonamble Route moves it away from fast water, hills, and Vertosols soils

### Spoil.

The black soils in the Quanda Quanda area will be unusable spoil. How will it be moved and to where? We seem to have 5m cut in black soil for a good length on this section, very interesting!.

ARTC figures on managing spoil are confusing and impossible to reconcile. How can the spoil be calculated without soil testing?

Will ARTC pay the Farmer for the spoils that are mined from the farms?

Have the vehicle movements for transporting spoil back to the pits been counted in total vehicle movements?

### Fencing, Insurance, Stock movements, Property severance.

Fencing is very unstable in black soils and can spontaneously come out of the ground.

Will trains stop running when the fences are damaged and stock are on the line as landholders attempt to get them out? If not, fence failure may mean people in the corridor which could have a catastrophic outcome.

How are ARTC going to fence culverts and bridges? They have to be done for us to operate.

Repairing fencing along the line will be difficult where there is poor access. I don't think ARTC are going to be able to fence this corridor safely because of the combination of water soil and blockage so will the outcome be some properties will never be able to run stock?

Will ARTC have cameras / weather stations at intervals along the fence line to monitor conditions?

Will ARTC set up an automatic compensation system for animals hit by the train so that it is easy for farmers to claim?

Will auto stop for rain events be in place till checks done?

What is the acceptable level of death to people and stock?

### **Stock movement:**

Level crossings need to be safe and suitable for stock to cross. In reality, this will not be possible.

It will be dangerous and difficult moving stock over a train line with oncoming vehicle traffic, boom gates, flashing lights and bells. Stock are very sensitive to unusual noise and movement. It will be impossible for landholders in the Quanda Quanda area to avoid crossing this line with their stock on a regular basis. The option to truck is expensive compared to a walking permit.

Will ARTC stop the trains so that we can move our stock over the crossings?

Will there be dedicated yards on either side at every level crossing?

Will ARTC subsidize the freight?

**Property severance:**

It is stated in the EIS that access arrangements for affected properties would be developed in consultation with landholders during detailed design.

ARTC will effectively hold landholders to ransom in a no-win position, with landholders at the mercy of ARTC or the proponent. This is unacceptable.

Every farming business needs access to the main roads and primary connections and access to its paddocks. The cost, complication and loss of profit because of the loss of efficiency due to access roads being rerouted, often through other farming businesses, are underestimated.

Rerouting access roads through neighbouring properties presents enormous problems

.

Who will maintain these fences ramps gates on new roads in perpetuity?

Will these new private access roads also be forcibly acquired?

Will ARTC maintenance staff be using these roads to access Inland Rail corridor?

Will ARTC travel these roads in wet weather and if damaged, who pays?

If ARTC maintenance crews leave gates open and stock get into neighbours and do damage, who is liable?

If there are hostilities between neighbours because of these monumental changes, how will this be managed?

Will the Department of Planning and the Minister meet the farming community and understand the significance of this vital part of our farming business?

Will NSW Govt appoint an independent Ombudsman for Inland Rail?

Haulage roads, public and private roads.

The haulage roads in the Curban to Gwabegar section of the N2N will have to cross 35 bridges and the 2188 culverts if they stay in the rail corridor.

The proposal should be amended to include detailed design haulage roads.

The EIS has underestimated the effect Inland Rail traffic will have on the road surface. This is of great safety concern. None of the gravel roads in the Quanda Quanda area are up to taking one day of 40 trucks. Our roads will deteriorate to a very unsafe state in a very short time.

The edges of most of the roads are poorly maintained, and the roads narrow, which makes passing traffic hazardous. When the traffic is a constant stream of heavy trucks hauling gravel to Inland Rail it will be dangerous. On sandy, dusty, dirt roads it will be suicidal. It's unrealistic to think local people will be able to put up these conditions without the possibility of a catastrophic vehicle accident.

These roads are used not only by private vehicles, but school buses, mail runs, large trucks carrying stock and grain and large machinery possibly towing wide implements, (passing involves a lot of careful manoeuvring). Stock are regularly walked on these roads.



It can take over an hour to get help from Ambulance and SES with over a 2 hour drive to a major hospital. If a helicopter is called it is over an hour to get to the accident site and, over 500km to fly to John Hunter or Sydney. Therefore, a person in a catastrophic accident will have little chance of survival. The odds say we are going to lose family or neighbours. This will have a terrible ripple effect.

This is a route used for going to Dubbo for the locals in this area. Dubbo is one of our main hubs for medical, shopping and goods.

Therefore, the roads in this area will have to be upgraded and properly sealed to the highest standard to accommodate the level of traffic that will be on our roads to maintain safety, well-being and keep us economically stable.

I believe the many dangerous situations Inland Rail will be creating on our roads and farms will mean the catastrophic incident rate in the N2N section will surpass the death rates on highways that the EIS claim will be saved due to freight on Rail.

What will be the catastrophic vehicle accident rate for N2N?

The alternative Coonamble Route needs to be independently investigated because it uses main roads. Therefore, the roads can be managed, repaired, and safety can be controlled to a higher standard.

Will any damage to private roads caused by ARTC be repaired at their cost?

The proposal should be amended to have the detailed design of forced easements?

### Thumping.

My information is that thumping could occur in the Pilliga because it's sand. When there's clay underneath and the sand is wet, the train vibration and the thumping causes the sand turns to quicksand

.

Has this been investigated? How are you going to mitigate it?

### Construction hours.

ARTC told the community that they would be working in regular working hours, but in EIS they're going to be working 6 am to 6 pm seven days a week with a break every second week for half Saturday and Sunday.

This will be too hard on the surrounding community because of our roads and farm interaction.

### Insurance.

Do landholders have to take on the \$250,000,000 million Public Liability insurance to cover derailments? Who will bear the cost?

We don't know who is liable for the different situations that can arise. I have asked this question many times in the CCC meeting and still can't get a straight answer from ARTC.

e.g. Who is liable if my bull gets through ARTCs fence because he can and causes a derailment?

Will ARTC pay for the replacement of the bull?

Will I have to go to court and bear the cost to prove ARTC let a fence deteriorate and my bull got in?  
The proposal needs to be amended to have legal rights and protections to landowners and Shires, and the Community very clear?

### Budget.

Because the Geotech and the flood modelling is inadequate, there is not enough information to budget. So no budget can be presented. Has ARTC kept the Department of infrastructure informed along with the changing situation? I challenge this. Where is the transparency? We were told at the CCC meeting in December 2020 that the Government told ARTC to be confidential about the budget.

### Where is the transparency?

Will the Federal Government give the proponent that builds N2N an open cheque-book because that's what they are going to need because of all the missing information on Geotech, Hydrology, Compensation and Environmental costs which are all unknown.

If there is not a big enough budget for the proposed Route, the Alternative Coonamble Route should be investigated. It is already half-built.

### Budget construction table.

A8.8

States that Rail will be 612 lineal kilometres. Where are the passing loops, the extra 25.2 lineal kilometres, the sleepers, and the concrete culverts, etc. and the fill and the cut. Was it left out of budget?

How much else is not counted in the budget?

How can the public and the community have confidence in how this proposal is budgeted.

The tone of ARTC from the very beginning of 2015 has been, "we will give you money and you'll be fine. You'll get used to it. Don't worry about the mitigation we got that covered" The community was told at many CCC meetings the answers would be in detailed design in this EIS. There are no details in the EIS to answer the community's questions. ARTC either don't have the answers or won't give us the answers. The devil is in the detail!!

Nearly every paragraph in the EIS quotes will be detailed design later. The ARTC have not delivered what they said they would in EIS.

No land should be acquired till the detailed design is done.

No compensation can be negotiated till a detailed design is done. Because landholders have no information to work with.

The proposal should be amended and not go ahead until all the detailed design requirements/mitigation detail/are fully disclosed and budgeted.

ARTC will have to take responsibility for the after-effects, not the landholder or Shires councils. We have given warnings of what can happen if engineering/planning is wrong.

**Trust in the ARTC and the Government is at an all-time low because this proposed Route is a political decision and not an economic well-planned one.**

Sincerely

Barbara Deans

Photos attached

1 Warrumbungle Mountains

1 Water at my Garden gate at my house

2 Debris in creek after water flow









