

**Submission  
No 39**

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

**Name:** Mr Lewis Lydon

**Date Received:** 9 February 2021

Dear Committee,

The comments below address 'other related matters' in the Terms of Reference.

Our community has put a lot of effort into reviewing ARTC route history documents over the last few years. They only became available well after the route change in late 2018. I am increasingly concerned about the significant fundamental flaws in the whole process.

It appears that despite an enormous amount of evidence to the contrary the ARTC Inland Rail machine is still well and truly aiming in a direction that represents potential disaster in terms of:

- Very real threat to Narromine township and its populace as well as surrounding properties and their owners through flood risk. As stated recently "Blind Freddie" could see from an aerial photo of the area surrounding Narromine that the higher, less flood prone country is to the West of town (not coincidentally with higher level of farming enterprises) vs. the Eastern aspects, full of various water courses, swamps, cowals etc. (again, reflecting completely different land use concomitant with more flood prone, lower lying country). Add to this the tremendous gravity powered threat of flows from the Sappa Bulga range to the Eastern/Southern aspects and of course the well-known local wisdom (historically proven in living memory on multiple occasions) that the greatest threat of flooding to Narromine town is from this direction. It is no coincidence that from the start a series of ARTC engaged engineers and hydrology experts have struggled to (i) first understand the Geotech factors then (ii) make plans for a safe and practical way to send this massive project through what is patently obviously a terrible route option...
- Economic impact on local, NSW and Federal taxpayers who will be footing the bill for generations for what seems to be an extraordinary amount of poorly calculated costings for various components of this project. Especially but not restricted to the amount of high-cost additions to the line such as Culverts, Crossings, Bridges/Viaducts etc. Obviously of great concern to local landholders is that there will be significant ongoing costs incurred through the splitting of their farms, an impact magnified the 13km of extra greenfield track required and 8km of extra track following the erroneous choice of the Eastern alignment.

Many additional families and properties were also impacted following "reworking" of the plans after the Ministerial "Green Light" to the route selection. It also appears that the improved eastern geo-tech conditions tabled in the MCA were based entirely on visual inspections of nearby public roads, no soil cores samples were taken. It is hard to express how negligent this is - ARTC advised the Minister that the east Narromine route has substantially improved geo-tech condition and less flooding than the 2010 western concept route but failed to actually get out into the field to do any form of groundwork to validate their new assumptions. To top it all off these new assumptions completely contradict the 2010 research which clearly referenced severe flood conditions east and south east of Narromine.

It can now be seen that in 2020 ARTC realised that these untested assumptions are baseless with the EIS burrow pit addendum document referencing massive shortfalls in suitable structural fill not just south and east of Narromine but north east as well - all along Eumungerie Rd. The lack of scientific rigor in the MCA recommendation to change the route is a scathing indictment of all concerned, especially the project managers who failed to QA the data collection and consultation work being undertaken.

To be frank the EIS is not ready to place on exhibition. The community east of Narromine was not consulted before the change and since then ARTC has refused to engage in any constructive dialogue either with the impacted community or our CCC to have the route selection assumptions thoroughly evaluated. I ask that our CCC is given time to discuss these outstanding issues with ARTC managers so community concerns can be transparently evaluated before the EIS is placed on exhibition. If they can show me the science, my concerns will evaporate.

Yours Sincerely,

Lewis Lydon

