Submission No 11

INLAND RAIL PROJECT AND REGIONAL NSW

Name: Mr David Carter

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Submission to the Inquiry into the Inland Rail Project and regional New South Wales

By the

Committee on Investment, Industry and Regional Development

My name is David Carter and I live on a rural property at Illabo in Southern NSW. My family has been working our farm “Gerelgambeth” since 1932.

Our property is located adjacent to the Main Southern Railway Line which I have to cross every day to access the Olympic Highway.

I have been associated with this community for over 60 years. I am currently

- A member of the local NSW Farmers Branch, Chair
- Councillor Junee Shire Council
- Group Captain – Rural Fire Service

- Past President Illabo Show Society
- Life member Illabo P&C Association

I am writing this submission as an individual who knows the restraints, implications and difficulties of living next to and traversing a major Railway line.

I am also concerned with the Capital Infrastructure problems that may occur if Inland Rail proceed with some of the proposed Infrastructure projects within the Junee Shire associated with the development of Inland Rail.

David Carter

General Overview:

In writing this submission I will be concentrating on 'The infrastructure required to ensure the local farming community, affected by the 'Greenfield' addition for this project and regional communities benefit from the project' and 'any other related matters' within the Junee Shire although I feel that the problems associated in this area can be repaclated across the state.

This construction is only the third major (except for the coal and iron ore lines built in WA and QLD) built in Australia since Federation. The other two being the trans-continental line linking Western Australia and the new Adelaide-Darwin line. Both of these lines have been built in open country not closer settlement type country as this line is, especially the 'Greenfield' sections.

Basically I feel that Inland Rail (IR) are only concerned about building the line without any due regard to the people it will effect and the Federal and State Governments only concern is in funding the Bigger Picture projects that will help the project achieve some positive results (in my area the Bomen Regional Freight Hub in Wagga and the Junee to Griffith Rail Branch line upgrade) and are not looking at the smaller projects that need to be upgraded because of the interaction between Inland Rail and Road Infrastructure interface changes that will occur because of IR.

IR in this Shire, Junee, involves the building of a "Greenfield" section of rail line connecting the villages of Illabo with Stockinbingal effectively by-passing the Bethungra Spiral and Cootamundra. In building this Greenfield section IR will save both time, 30 min approx., and money. The cost of building the new section of line will be far cheaper than trying to rebuild the line through the Bethungra Spiral and Cootamundra in order to accommodate double stacked trains 1.8k's long, at this stage. They are projected to be 3.6k's long in 30 yrs. time.

Someone in an office has decided on this preferred route, it was chosen without any consultation with the producers who will be affected by any proposed route. The problems with the consultation process have only got worst since IR personal have started to liaise with the effected producers along the proposed route.

From Day 1 the effected producers have been asking the same basic questions. Three of these questions, compensation, fencing and access, have been repeatedly not answered because they didn't know the answers.

Compensation, be it either under the Federal or State Act, took nearly 2 years for someone to decide.

Fencing and access, for livestock and machinery, is still being worked out as the final design gets completed. It is going to be very hard to change configurations once we get to the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) stage, any changes need to be made before this stage.

It is becoming increasing apparent that they, IR, don't have a clue about how to handle many of the questions that are being asked of them. One would think that any new organisation would have these situations already resolved. There is plenty of information out there from the Dept of Primary Industries on stock crossing for roads/highways and the Dept of Transport for fencing requirements/designs for new roads, however it seems the IR wants to reinvent the wheel and invent their own requirements which are totally unsuitable to the situation at hand. An example of this is the possibility of replacing 'like for like' in fencing when the only solution is 'new of old' especially when it comes to fencing along the rail corridor.

Section 1:

State Significant Infrastructure Scoping Report (01-2200-PD-P11-DE-0003) June 2018

in preparing to design this route Inland Rail had to file a Scoping Report before any process to plan this new Greenfield route could begin.

It would seem that this report has been taken on face value as many of the statements within this report a very broad and it assumes that it, the report, is an accepted document that has local support. I have taken various sections from this report and address my concerns after each section.

1.2 Overview of the proposal

The proposal passes through agricultural and rural properties of central NSW and generally follows the existing cadastral boundaries and roads between the towns of Illabo and Stockinbingal. Further refinement of the track from Illabo to Stockinbingal and tie in works to the Stockinbingal to Parkes line will be required due to the complex crossing of Burley Griffin Way and potential property severance issues. The proposal site therefore includes a broad corridor to allow for an optimal alignment to be further refined during the design process, as shown in

Comment:

The statement that it follows 'existing cadastral boundaries and roads'. The only road that it comes near is a 5k section along the Dudauman Road near Stockinbingal. At no other point does it come near any boundary. The whole proposal has been restricted by the 2k wide aliment corridor given, by the government, to construct this 'greenfield' railway line.

2.2.2. Work undertaken to date

In November 2013, the Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development announced that the Australian Government had committed $300 million to enable the development of Inland Rail to commence. This process began with pre-construction activities such as detailed corridor planning, environmental assessments and community consultation.

Comment:

All the so-called community consultation in the early years was undertaken at the 'Government' level with no imput from the local community.

2.2. Key benefits of Inland Rail

It is estimated that, by 2050, Inland Rail will remove 200,000 truck movements from roads each year. The reduction in trucks using the interstate road network would improve road safety, ease congestion and assist local councils through reduced local road maintenance requirements.

Comment:

Local councils will not see any reduction in freight as a result of IR because the freight generated by IR has to start at the 'local' level in order for it to get onto IR.

2.8 Options considered

The Illabo to Stockinbingal proposal involves developing a direct route between Illabo and Stockinbingal in NSW. During early alignment identification, undertaken as part of the 2010 Inland Rail Alignment Study, ARTC developed a Base Case option, which heads in a north easterly direction from Illabo. The Base Case as presented in the 2010 Inland Rail Alignment Study was developed to avoid the Bethungra Spiral and its grade and structure clearance constraints between Bethungra and Cootamundra while also offering significant travel time improvements. The Illabo to Stockinbingal route section is approximately 37 kilometers. It diverges from the Main South line between Illabo and Bethungra and continues north toward Stockinbingal.

In 2015, ARTC undertook an alignment refinement assessment. The assessment reviewed four options between Illabo and Stockinbingal, including the Base Case. From this, assessment improvements were shown to be shifting away from the 2010 alignment. Further engineering and environmental investigation in early 2016 resulted in an additional alignment option (Option 5) to be developed which was selected as the preferred option using a multi-criteria analysis (MCA) to evaluate each alignment in comparison to the 2010 base case. Option 5 provided better environmental outcomes and reduced property severance.

In late 2016 further flooding, engineering, environmental investigations (including additional field surveys) and community consultation were undertaken on the preferred option. The information obtained during consultation activities, field surveys and desktop studies fed into further options analysis and refinement. The analysis considered environmental, engineering constraints and property impacts as well as community concerns raised during consultation.

The additional options developed have been designed to:

- Minimise interaction with Ironbong Creek.
- Reduce property impacts.
- Improve road crossing locations.
- Improve earthworks balance.

As a result, a proposal site has been selected which will further be refined in the design process to a preferred alignment to achieve optimal tie in locations to the existing rail line, reduce environmental and property impacts and address community concerns raised during consultation.

Comment:

This proposed Greenfield section is now in the advanced design stage ready for the next phase in its construction, which is an EIS. The last part of the considered options talks about property impacts, improved road crossing locations etc. none of the issues raised through the community consultation process have ever been addressed to the satisfaction of the community.

3.2 Description of the proposal site

The proposal would join the towns of Illabo, at the southern end of the proposal, and Stockinbingal, at the northern end of the proposal. The alignment would branch out from the existing rail line north-east of Illabo and travel approximately 37 kilometres to join the Stockinbingal to Parkes rail line west of Stockinbingal (refer to Figure 1.1)
The route would travel entirely through undeveloped land predominantly used for agriculture.
The proposal site crosses through a number of local and private roads, creeks and privately owned properties.
There are no major towns located along the proposal site between Illabo and Stockinbingal.

Comment:

The description that the route will transverse ‘undeveloped land predominantly used for agriculture’ makes a mockery to the owners and indeed the local producers who tend to the land in this area. Of the whole greenfield site, I would say that maybe 2% of the route is what we would describe as ‘native’ i.e. unimproved country generally associated with hillsides that can’t, or very difficult, be improved. The remaining 98% of the country has been improved with the use of superphosphates, pastures (lucernes, clovers etc.) and is suitable to intensive livestock production and advanced cropping techniques.

4.3.2 Roads Act 1993

Under section 138, Part 9, Division 3 of the Roads Act, a person must not impact or carry out work on or over a public road other than with the consent of the appropriate roads authority. Construction of the proposal may impact on public road reserves under the control of various authorities. The proponent would seek the necessary approvals under the Roads Act. As noted above, section 5.24 of the EP&A Act provides that a permit under section 138 of the Roads Act cannot be refused if it is necessary to carry out a State Significant Infrastructure project.

Comment:

This may be the case but surely the roads authority needs to have some sort of overriding say into the type of road interface that needs to be required due to the impact of IR.

6.5.1 Existing Environment

A review of the Cootamundra and Junee flood planning maps have identified the area associated with Dudauman Creek, adjacent to Stockinbingal, as land at or below the level of a 1:100 ARI (average recurrence interval) flood event (refer to Figure 6.3). The remainder of the proposal site is not classified as being located on flood prone land.

Comment:

The Cootamundra-Gundagai and Junee Councils would not be required to produce flood prone maps for this area affected by the railway line because it does not affect residential communities. However, the proposed line does transverse some very wet areas and numerous creeks along its route which is prone to flooding, as was indicated by the flooding through this area in 2016.

6.8.2.1 Land use

The proposal would result in changes to land use from its current rural use to railway infrastructure. As the proposal site traverses private properties, full or partial acquisition of a number of properties would be required. Severance and access issues may also be experienced at these properties.

Comment:

Even though the land may have a railway line transverse through it will still be deemed to be Agriculture land. Just because the Main Southern Railway comes through my area dosen't change its 'land use'. To say that severance and access issues 'may be' experienced shows how little the writers know about the implications that are involved in building a railway line.

6.8.3.2 Socio-economic

A socio-economic assessment will be undertaken to assess the social and economic impacts on the community as a result of the construction and operation of the proposal. This assessment would include details of the local community, their nature and values, details of potential noise, vibration and visual impacts, likely traffic and access impacts to the community.

The assessment will also identify the nature of the community affected, the likely degree of impact and the necessary mitigation to minimise the impacts.

Comment:

I doubt that the Socio-economic values that these producers had before this line was announced can ever be restored after the treatment they have had to endure by the lack of knowledgeable inaction over their queries and concerns over the past few years. These values are going to be further tested by the 24mth construction timetable that they will have to endure along with years of readjusting their farming operations as a result of IR passing through their properties.

7.1.1 Overview

Stakeholder and community consultation for Inland Rail is an integral part of informing scoping investigations for the proposal EIS.

In 2010 the Australian Government completed the Inland Rail Alignment Study to determine if an inland railway line is required. In late 2013, the then Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Warren Truss MP, established an Inland Rail Implementation Group (IRIG) to develop a delivery program for the implementation of Inland Rail. The IRIG was chaired by former Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon John Anderson AO, with senior representatives from the Australian, New South Wales, Queensland and Victorian governments, and ARTC.

To support the IRIG investigations, ARTC was tasked with developing a Programme Business Case, including a ten year delivery schedule, cost estimate, development strategy and a detailed analysis of the economic benefits of Inland Rail. The Inland Rail Implementation Group took a consultative approach, engaging with a broad range of stakeholders including potential future users as well as individuals, communities and others who would live and work along the alignment to understand the breadth of issues associated with Inland Rail.

The IRIG delivered the Business Case to the Australian Government in September 2015. At this time, the 2010 Inland Rail Alignment Study was endorsed by the IRIG and is the base case for further work by ARTC.

Key stakeholders for the proposal include (but not limited to):

- Federal and State Members.
- Representatives of local council at Gundagai Regional and Junee Shire Councils.
- Australian and State government departments and agencies (e.g. Roads and Maritime Services, Country Trains), as well as the State Government appointed operator of the Country Rail Network.
- Business, freight and agricultural stakeholders (e.g. NSW Farmers Association, GrainCorp).
- Landowners within and surrounding the proposal site.
- Local Community.
- Environment stakeholders (e.g. Wagga Wagga Local Land Services, Rural Fire Service Region West).
- Community groups (e.g. Illabo Show Society).
- Peak bodies.
- Local Aboriginal Land Councils and cultural knowledge holders.
- Service providers (e.g. telecommunications, utilities, medical and emergency).
- Existing lease agreement holders (lessees) within the rail corridor

<u>Comment:</u>

It indicates above that all of these stakeholders have been ‘consulted’. Yes, the upper levels of these organization probably were consulted and I know some have given ‘their in-principal support’ however that does not mean that they will continue to be happy with the ongoing process once design and in the future construction will take place.

The local branches of the NSW Farmers, Junee Illabo and Cootamundra, are far from happy about the lack of cooperation that their producers have been receiving from IR Representatives.

The Illabo Show Society has never been approached for a comment or support but the list above indicates that they have given it.

This particular section of Greenfield Line goes through two Rural Fire Service Regions, South and West, but it appears that only the Western Region has been consulted?

Table 7.1 Consultation summary

Stakeholders	Activity
Katrina Hogkinson MP Michael McCormack MP	Proposal briefings have been carried out with individual representatives since 2015.
Gundagai Regional Council (previously Cootamundra Shire Council) Junee Shire Council	Briefings were held in February, March, April and October 2016 with each of the Councils.
NSW Farmers Federation Rural Fire Service Business Groups GrainCorp (and other ARTC customers)	Meetings and updates have been carried out with these groups at both regional and local levels since 2015.
Gundagai Regional Council Junee Shire Council Junee and Illabo Farmers Federation Wagga Wagga Local Land Services Rural Fire Services Illabo community group	Stakeholder workshop in May 2016. 12 people attended the workshop.
Landowners	One-on-one meetings with landowners with 55 individual meetings held ongoing since 2016.
Broader community (including Illabo, Cootamundra, Dirnaseer, Junee, Junee Reefs and Stockinbingal)	Mail out in November 2016 promoting community information sessions in November to the suburbs of Stockinbingal, Cootamundra, Bethungra, Illabo, Junee, and Junee Reefs. Advertising throughout 2016, prior to community information sessions in the following local papers: Cootamundra Herald, Junee Southern Cross, and Riverina Leader. Community information sessions in November 2016 • 7 November 2016, Illabo Showground Illabo, 2-7pm. • 8 November 2016, Cootamundra Civic Hall, Cootamundra 2-7pm. • 9 November 2016, Junee Public Library, Junee 2-7pm. There were 108 attendees at the sessions held in November 2016. Community information sessions in May 2016 (with 105 attendees) • 30 May 2016, Illabo Showground Illabo, 2-7pm. • 31 May 2016, Cootamundra Civic Hall, Cootamundra 2-7pm.
Roads and Maritime Services Wagga Wagga Local Land Services	Meetings were held in November 2016.
Young Local Aboriginal Land Council Wagga Wagga Local Aboriginal Land Council	Letter correspondence was sent in June 2016 providing awareness of the proposal and opportunity to meet face to face.

<u>Comment:</u>

The above Table indicates who has been consulted but it does not indicate who was against the proposal.

Section 2.

Inland Rail and Infrastructure Challenges along the existing 'Brownfield' section of the Railway Line – Junee Shire Section.

Guide to Road Design Part 4: Intersections and Crossings – General

Summary

The *Guide to Road Design – Part 4: Intersections and Crossings – General* contains guidance that provides road designers and other practitioners with information that is common to the geometric design of all at-grade intersections. However, Part 4 alone does not provide all the information that is necessary to design a satisfactory intersection and should therefore be used in conjunction with other parts of the Austroads *Guide to Road Design*, in particular:

- Part 4A: Unsignalised and Signalised Intersections (Austroads 2009b)
- Part 4B: Roundabouts (Austroads 2009c)
- Part 4C: Interchanges (Austroads 2009d).

In addition, road designers should also refer to the Austroads *Guide to Traffic Management – Part 6: Intersections, Interchanges and Crossings* (Austroads 2007) which provides guidance on the traffic management aspects of intersection design and road users' requirements.

Road designers have to consider many factors and disciplines that may affect, or be affected by, the design of roads and intersections. Therefore, reference should also be made to all other parts of the Austroads *Guide to Road Design* as required by the situation.

Part 4 covers topics that are common to intersection design such as road design considerations, design process, choice of design vehicle, provision for public transport and property access. It also provides guidance and information on the design of pedestrian and cyclist crossing treatments.

In this part of my submission I would like to concentrate on Section 5 Design Vehicle with particular reference to 5.2 Design Vehicle and 5.6 Design Vehicle Swept Path and the importance it needs to play in Inland Rails delibrations in new infrastructure design.

The Township of Junee has two very important road-rail interfaces which need to be very carefully considered in any determination by Inland Rail on infrastructural changes. It is very important also that both the State and Federal Governments become involved in this process as both of these interfaces have regional freight significance which should be addressed in any determination of the proposed upgrade of the railway line.

As mentioned earlier the fact that in Part 4.3.2, Roads Act, in the SSIRS Report seems to exempt state roads from any involvement in the infrastructure design process is concerning due to the requirements of road design as described in Part 4 Section 5 of the Guide to Road Design Part 4 – as described in Appendix 'A'.

The basis of Section 5 refers to the design of intersections based on the types of vehicle movements as well as allowances for 'Checking Vehicles' that may use the new bridge.

Any design work for any new infrastructure change has to allow for the

- The movement of B-double trucks
- Agricultural machinery

Especially in the likes of country towns like Junee.

Kemp St Railway Bridge

Kemp St Bridge is located at the southern end of Junee. It links Kemp St (western side of Junee) with Ducker St (the eastern side) via a road bridge over the main southern railway line. The current structure is too low to cater for the new trains utilising inland rail and will need to be lifted by 2.5m to allow for the 7.4m clearance needed.

It also needs to be higher across all of the 4 tracks that pass under the current bridge.

This requires it to be replaced. It can't be removed altogether as it is an important link within Junee as the railway line cuts the township in half.

It is therefore extremely important that any new bridge will serve the township well into the current century. IR is only content to build a bridge that will suit its needs and is not concerned about how it might affect the future traffic pattens within the wider community.

As this bridge is linked to the Olympic Highway the NSW Department of Transport have been involved in these discussions on the bridge/road alignment but they only seem to be looking at the little picture and not what Junee's and the surrounding communities traffic patterns may be into the future.

The current proposal put to the community, in 2019, by Inland Rail will see a new bridge build next to the existing bridge (on the northern side) – see picture below.

This proposal is not supported by the agricultural and transport community because of

- Fails to address the future traffic needs of the wider community
- Lack of future pedestrian considerations
- Concerns about whether the new bridge will be B-double rated
- Whether the new bridge will be wide enough to take agricultural machinery

The approach off the new proposed bridge into Ducker Street, which is a narrow road, is too tight as determined by this section from PART 4 Guidelines

5.6 Design Vehicle Swept Path

5.6.1 *General*

Turning paths of design vehicles form the basis of the turning widths required at intersections. All intersection layouts must be checked to ensure that they can accommodate the turning path envelope

(swept path) for the design vehicle plus necessary clearances. The swept path is the dynamic envelope traversed by the outer extremities of the vehicle. Vehicle swept paths can be checked by using a turning path template or a computer program. A wide range of turning path templates, at various scales, is available in Austroads (2006) and Land Transport NZ (2007).

The fundamental principles in the development of turning path templates and designing for turning vehicles are:

- the design vehicle should be able to turn (left or right) from a marked lane without crossing adjacent marked lanes
- the tendency for the rear of articulated vehicles to move backwards at some point through the turn should be prevented. This may occur when turning on a small radius through large angles (i.e. greater than 120°)

all vehicles that are considered in designing the intersection can negotiate the intersection without the rear wheels of the vehicle describing a small radius such that pavement surfacing is damaged.

Also, no consideration has been given to the steepness of the new roadway travelling east off the bridge when it comes to pedestrian and disabled safety. These safety issues also extend to the western approaches as well.

A new alignment would see a better utilisation of the Olympic Highway through Junee with traffic then crossing the railway line at Kemp St, instead of the very tight turns at the central railway crossing which is being used more and more due to the current Kemp St Bridge being unsuitable.

This new alignment would assist in

- Through traffic not having to use the Cox St to Ducker St thoroughfare which has a lot of limitations
- More traffic using a State funded road – Olympic Highway
- Easier access to the Bowman Rd by semi-trailers, B-doubles, agricultural machinery and the general public. Especially for those vehicles that need to access
    - Junee Abattoirs
    - Harefield Container and Grain Terminal
    - Robe Oil Seed Crushing Plant
    - Wagga Sale Yards
- The ability for B-triples and Road Trains to access this route sometime in the future.

From the Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils (REROC'S) Regional Freight Transport Plan 2019 on the condition of Byrnes Road at Junee *"The route is not compliant with required standards for A-Double turn paths. Heavy vehicles must negotiate two 90-degree bends within a short distance in an urban area".*

Note: A full copy of REROC'S Transport Plan is attached to this submission.

The above is the preferred design for the replacement of the Kemp St Bridge, as of late 2020.
Basically they are building a new bridge directly to the North of the old bridge but 2.5m higher
The approach into Ducker St (left hand side) will be steeper with Ducker St very narrow for large trucks to turn into.
The approach on the right is too sharp again for larger trucks turning left onto the bridge.

As I have been trying to say in this section IR are basically building ‘like for like’ and not thinking about the future needs for the wider community.

Junee's Road Underpass

This underpass is located on the Olympic Highway in North Junee. Again, this underpass is mentioned in REROC'S Regional Freight Transport Plan 2019

"The underpass is not compliant with Austroads/RMS standards for A Double turn paths. There is a height restriction and heavy vehicles need to cross over the centre line to navigate the road."

To accommodate the requirements of inland rail, the existing underpass must be widened, requiring reconstruction. Given the limitations of the existing structure, there is an opportunity to improve this infrastructure, potentially lifting the height of the overpass and widening the underpass, potentially improving the safety of the south-bound journey and better accommodating pedestrian and bike path crossings with improved safety.

At the moment Inland Rail's intention is to modify the track work across the bridge and then into Junee. This can be achieved by creating a single track instead of the double track that exists at the moment.

By doing this Inland Rail is still left with a road hazard that could potentially halt the movement of rail traffic for days if the current bridge structure is damaged by a truck colliding with the underneath section of the bridge.

If the roadway or deck height is not altered, we have the potential to have

- With the increasing number of trucks using this route to Wagga (via Harefield) the possibility of a major collision as trucks have to traverse the centre line to get around this blind corner.
- The possibility of over-height trucks colliding with the railway deck causing
    - A traffic blockage
    - Dislodging the railway deck

I contend that the cost of Inland Rails solution, altering the track across the bridge, would be very similar to the cost of rebuilding the bridge and would take the highly likely scenario of a bridge failure out of the equation. IR are taking the easy, for them, way out and again not looking at the bigger picture.

As with Kemp St governments need to be involved in these important infrastructural changes. This roadway underpass is on a major highway and has the chance to be substancanly improved at a far cheaper cost now than deciding to do it in the future.

This road/rail interface has severe problems which Inland Rail is not concerned about.

- The track is not suitable for the new trains – it's too narrow
- IR solution does not address the road problem, but does address theirs
- Could IR costs in improvement be better spent by improving the whole road-rail network with

government assistance?
- The roadway has a 4.5m clearance – unsuitable for a highway
- The footpath is too narrow and unsafe as you travel between the underpass

If this underpass was improved for the future, then

- The likelihood of a major collision would be reduced
- Agricultural machinery movements would be greatly enhanced
- The town's bike/walking path network through the current underpass would be better suited to its intended needs
- School Children who currently use the pathways would be doing so with better safety

Harris Gates

The Harris Gates level crossing is located on the Olympic Highway approximately 3kms east of Illabo. It is the only level crossing between the 'tie in point' of the inland rail to the existing main north-south line between Albury and Bethungra.

Again, from REROC'S transport study *"A right angled crossing in a 100 km zone requires realignment".*

- Many years ago, the level crossing road alignment was changed in anticipation of the installation of a grade-separated crossing. The re-alignment has, however, increased the number of accidents due to its poor alignment/design.
- I believe that with the increase in rail traffic that will occur with the new inland rail that this crossing should be improved to allow for the safety for all traffic, both road and rail, that will use this crossing.
- This crossing has a bad accident history
    - 50 accidents over the last 10 years
    - two deaths
    - two incidents of the 'gates' being taken out, with one resulting in a train colliding with the wreckage
- Downtime for both road users and the railway time-table

Although it is a comprehensive tool for the assessment of level crossing hazards, ALCAM cannot be applied in isolation and does not preclude the need for sound engineering judgement. Any risk assessment and treatment also needs to consider other factors, including:

- Collision and near-collision history
- Engineering experience (both rail and road)
- Local knowledge of driver or pedestrian behaviour
- Social and economic assessment
- Standards and international best practice

Under the current ALCAM Model there is probably no justification in improving this rail crossing however with the expected increase in rail traffic this crossing needs reassessing

Why it needs improving

- There are expected to be up to 12 trains per day operating between Melbourne and Brisbane along the new inland rail – this will be in addition to the existing rail traffic from Sydney to Melbourne. The trains using the inland rail will be up to 1.6km long, requiring an almost five-minute wait time for a train to pass at a level crossing
    - This equates to 1 hr. lost per day
    - Plus, time lost by the normal Sydney to Melbourne traffic
- The Olympic Highway is a major thoroughfare for freight in the South West Slopes.
- The Olympic Highway will play an important link in transporting freight to and from the community once the new inter-model freight hub is built at Wagga.
- Emergency Services travelling between Junee and Cootamundra, in particular Fire, Police and Ambulance, will have to wait longer, placing human safety at risk
    - This is an especially critical point for local Fire services having to attend fire or traffic accidents
    - And Ambulances under lights
- General delays to day to day traffic (tourism, heavy transport and local)
- Provision was made years ago to build a Road Overpass but has not been acted upon
- Major delays to railway traffic if the crossing is impacted by an accident
- The tie-in-point for the new 'Greenfield' section of the Melbourne -Brisbane line is only 500m east of this crossing. This could result in even greater down time at this crossing especially as these trains are projected to increase in length from 1.6k to 3.2k's within the next 20 or so years.

An aerial picture of 'Harris Gates' showing the sweeping corner and the sharp left angle bend as you leave the rail crossing.

Section 3.

The New Greenfield Section I2S Illabo to Stockinbingal.

At no time during any preliminary discussions about the preferred route through this area were the producers asked “What they thought” about this proposed line, until it was too late.

The first thing they really knew about the proposed new Greenfield section of this line was after the route that been ‘cut and dried’, by bureaucrats, which by then was too late to try and start altering any scenario.

The affected producers were told that a 2k wide assessment corridor had been drawn on a map and they, Inland Rail, had to find an acceptable route, for them, within this corridor.

From the first community consultation session a series of basic questions were asked, like

- What type of compensation was being offered
- What type of fencing is IR going to supply?
- What type of access am I going to have through my property?

It took nearly two (2) years to get an answer to the first question, the last two are still forthcoming. In the Northern part of the state the last two are being answered, however the answers are ad hoc and far from satisfactory for the producers.

In all of my correspondence with Inland Rail I keep getting the same/similar answers. No answer or we haven’t decided yet. I find this approach very unsuitable for any project. How can you possibility build something this major not knowing the ramifications of what you are building?

Some examples of this are

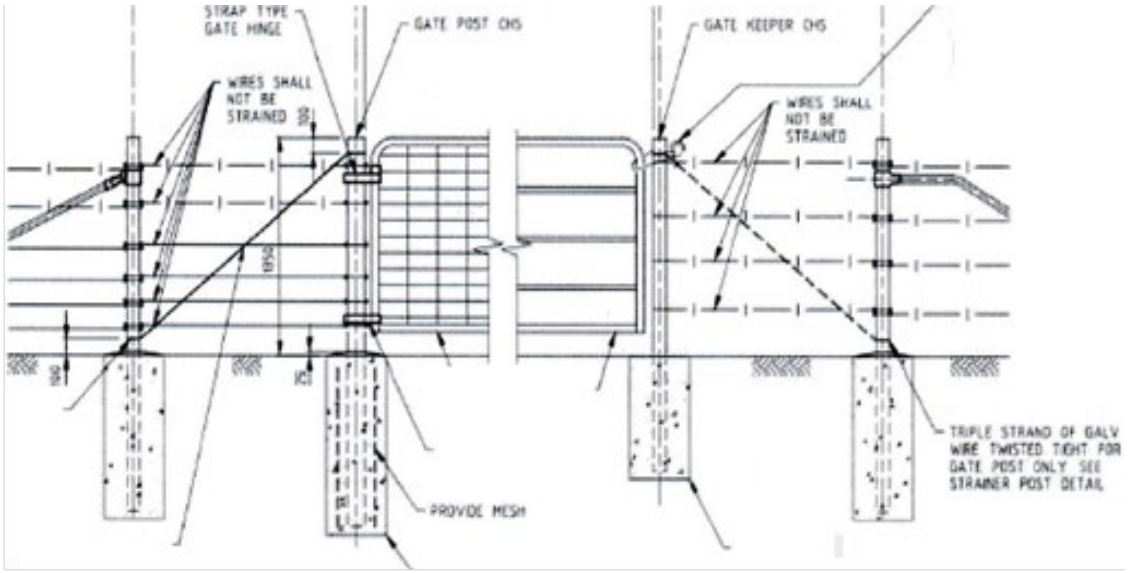
1. **Fencing**

In a conversation with IR, a few years ago now, they indicated that they didn’t know what type of fencing was going to be required. I sent them a suggested fencing plan that was based on farming industry standards. They have come back with something complete left field which is a combination of the standard railway fence from 100 years ago to a design which is not really practicable and then to add insult to the whole affair a ‘like for like’ scenario. With this last one a producer may be willing to tolerate stock getting through an internal fence, but this would be totally unacceptable along a railway line which needs a boundary configuration fence build. This type, and design, of fencing is available in fencing charts from our leading fencing suppliers.

Will stock holding areas (yards) near and on each side of the line be provided for marshalling the mob prior to a quick and efficient crossing of the line.

Will extra gates be provided along the railway corridor fence to retrieve strayed stock from the alignment. Stock cannot be left too long ; they will become traumatised and may injure themselves.

Inland Rail must build fences to a professional standard.



Who builds fences with loose wires next to a gate post as is drawn in the picture above??

Picture taken from IR's Fencing feedback form.

The following information was taken from an Inland Rail 'Managing rail corridor fencing' Fact Sheet

Committed to public safety

Inland Rail is a fast freight backbone from Melbourne to Brisbane that will transform how we move goods around Australia. It will better link businesses, farmers and producers to national and global markets and generate new opportunities for industries and regions.

We appreciate that landowners may have some concerns about how the rail corridor will be fenced and what, if any, impact this may have on their properties.

As part of our commitment to protect public safety and ensure secure property boundaries for landowners, we will be installing new fencing along the railway corridor in some areas and replacing existing fencing in others during project construction.

We will consult individual landowners during detailed design to address their fencing needs in relation to gate widths and

accessibility for stock crossings, machinery and vehicles

What can I expect?

The majority of Inland Rail corridors will be fenced so that it is safe for people, property, domestic animals, wild fauna and agricultural needs.

ARTC's fencing standards aim to align with general fencing standards in each district, unless there are specific circumstances that require alternate solutions.

Where required, the replacement of fencing and gates will be on a like-for-like basis.

Where new fencing is required, we will consult with adjacent landowners during the detailed design phase to confirm fencing requirements.

ARTC is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of rail corridor fencing once each section of Inland Rail is operational.

Standard fencing specifications

Rural Fencing along the alignment

The minimum standard for rural fencing along the project alignment will be rural barbed/plain wire fence (4 strand).

Comment:

It refers to

- a minimum standard of rural/barbed/plain wire (4 strand) – that type of fence existed 100 years ago when we didn't have intensive grazing and improved pastures.
- It refers to consulting with 'adjacent landholders' during the design phase – at no time in any phase have they even considered talking to adjacent landholders'
- It says that 'we appreciate that landholders MAY have some concerns' – I would say that landholders have a lot of concerns about fencing standards.
- Ongoing maintenance of these new fences
    - At one stage IR said that this maintenance was going to be the owner's responsibility
    - Now they are saying it is going to be theirs
        - How long after a producer rings to say that they have a problem will it be fixed
        - A producer probably hasn't the room (paddocks) to move stock out of the area waiting for a fence to be fixed
- How long will this maintenance period last – 20 years, 30 years, 40 years?
    - Will they then build a new fence in 60 years when it needs replacing??
- It aims to align with general fencing standards in each district – why is there a need to 'aim to align' when it should be aligning to each district standard?

When the Department of Transport/local councils build new roads/freeways, they seem to get it right why can't Inland Rail.

Even this picture of a fence near what looks like a floodway is not built right.

2. <u>Stock/Transport crossings.</u>

This question has been repeatedly asked with the latest answer being, we will negotiate with each individual property owner. Again, their seems to be no standard set as to - we are considering these types of crossing what would you prefer? Again, Freeways and new roads seem to get it right. The Department of Agriculture has recommendations as to what they could look right, but no Inland Rail wants to reinvent the wheel again.

With some of the new Inland Rail being built on 'Greenfield' sites the problem that we as producers will be faced with is access for livestock and machinery across the line.

NSW Transport who will own the line after it is built would like to see NO private level crossing at all. The main reason for this is purely safety for the train and the people who want to gain access across the line.

They have relented and will allow, if practicable, a crossing to be installed for each property effected.

Each property owner effected by the new railway should get a crossing that will satisfy their ongoing farming operations; however, they (ARTC) may decide/or

- If your property is adjacent to a public road (which will have a crossing on it) then they may want you to use this. This is very impracticable for unregistered vehicles and livestock bio-security purposes

- If your property has more than one title, then you can claim 1 crossing per title i.e. You may have bought the neighbouring property and you wish to sell it - it needs its own crossing.
    - Note: even though you may be able to claim 2 crossings they can't be put anywhere along the line, they still have to satisfy site and safety issues.

As you know there are 3 types of crossing that could be built.

1. Under the track.
    a. This type of crossing does not require any site distance along the railway line; however, it does require an elevated line in order to gain access.
    b. This 'elevation' can be achieved with a larger creek crossing or the culverts that will be needed under the line being made larger.
    c. The size of this type of crossing needs to be a min height of 2.5m (livestock only) up to 5m for agricultural machinery and a corresponding width to allow for the safe transfer of livestock/machinery under the line.

2. Across the track or a level crossing as we know it.
    a. This type of crossing can't be put anywhere. It requires a minimum site distance (being able to see the train) so it can't be built on curves or hills. It could possibly need up to 400m of straight track, each side of the crossing.
    b. If Inland Rail/ARTC/NSW Transport were going to install (which they should as a matter of safety) warning lights etc then these site distances should change.
    c. The crossing would have to be built to a standard to allow for the ease of movement of livestock and machinery (road train rated)

3. Over the track with a bridge or by putting the train through a tunnel if the line is being dug through a hill.
    a. Again, this type of crossing does not require any site distances although one would assume that it would be the most expensive option.
    b. The structure would have to be wide and strong (road train rated) enough to satisfy the current and any future farming operations.

2 examples of livestock crossings under roads. These have been around for years, but IR has no examples to at least say this is what we might be able to give you, but no they are saying that they are going to have to design each one individually.

3. Private Rail Crossings.

Unlike stock crossings farmers are going to have to get their machinery across the line in order to manage their farming operations. We have come a long way with technology over the last 100 years from 'maned' gates to satellite communications. This last step, blue-tooth and wireless communications does not seem to be anywhere near the radar with Inland Rail.

The Department of Transport wants to eliminate level crossings as much as possible, which has its merits for a whole lot of reasons, however we are having a Greenfield railway line built through our producers livelihood and they need a crossing of some type in order to conduct their business. They can't be asked to take a detour around the public road network to get to their back paddock. They need a suitable and effective crossing.

This crossing may be used once a day or 50 times a day dependent on what the farming program is. They can't afford the time to stop and open gates (if that is the requirement) or ring train control (if that is the requirement) to see if a train is coming. Modern technology is available it needs to be used.

To put it another way, how many times, a day, do you walk out your back door. How just imagine you having to either unlock and then lock the door again each time you went out or come back in. That is what it's going to be like for those famers facing the prospect of having a level crossing on their property. Their has to be a better way that we, as farmers, can achieve an easier outcome with communication on train movements??

4. Procurement process

This is indeed an artform of deception and trickery. Yes, I know each case is different, but they should at least be able to get it right and have a small degree of understanding and fairness.

In a conversation, I had, with an affected landholder the discussion went something like this

> *I had a visit from the Properties Dept of IR [the land purchase Dept]. We had over three hours of discussion. I was not provided with business cards with their details and I was to receive a summary of the meeting within two days . This eventually came ten days later after numerous phone calls and three emails of prompting. They had seventeen maps to show detail of purchases and lease areas of our land for the final alignment and extra maps for construction laydowns etc. 'A total shamble' especially when they could not follow their own mixed-up maps, they did miss some maps, and even argued 'I did not own [such and such land]', when I did...*

It would appear that after all this time they still don't have a clue. It even begs to wonder if they have a clue on 'how to build' the railway line as well.

5. Construction within the 'Greenfield' area

The 37km's of new line construction between the Villages of Illabo and Stockinbingal has been very interesting. The only thing that, I believe, they have got right is the now current road-rail interchange of the Burley Griffin Way at Stockinbingal. It is by far a better design then had been proposed originally.

However:

- The first proposal for the southern 'takeoff' point near Illabo was for a new rail bridge and a cutting through a hill in order to straighten the line. This was on, then off (budget overrun I believe) and now its back on. Basically the curve was too sharp for the longer trains.
- A rail bridge over Ironbung Road was on and now it's off (budget again). However we now have a level crossing to contend with
- Access to the western side of the Bethungra Range, for firefighting purposes, is now going to be limited due to the rail line. Reasonable access is needed for Fire Fighting purposes and the safety of our crews. A request for a service road to be build for this purpose has been refused, principally because they don't need it.
- The line was going close to a farmer's principal place of residence. The original talk was that they were going to build a new house. But now a sound barrier is going in instead.
- A neighboring farmhouse, close to the line, can't get any consideration for sound abatement because it is on adjoining land and not on affected lands.
- After the first draft for the proposed line the majority of the affected landholders were somewhat satisfied. However, after a rethink by IR to adjust the line to allow for better curvature, gradients and a more even cut and fill ratio this satisfaction disappeared. Basically the line was moved off the hills onto flatter country.
- A suggestion to drastically alter one section of the line through the Dudauman Range was rejected – no costings given only an argument
    - It would be too expensive to blast – although the fill could have been used else where instead of buying it.
    - Too many trees to knock down. They can plant new ones and are they going to be there in a 100 years anyhow.
    - Some of the line will be outside the original 2k study corridor and 'that can't happen' Why?

Section 5

In Conclusion

In all the consultations with Inland Rail we kept getting the same result, no result. My strong belief is that Inland Rail's mission statement is to build a freight link between Melbourne and Brisbane at no matter what the cost, and especially to those farming community members affected by the line going through their properties.

Inland Rail and the Government has to consider how this major project is going to affect the community in the long run. It may be building something for the future, but they have to consider how it will impact the farming community and the towns it passers through as well. This they are not doing.

- They don't seem to want to listen to any of the community's suggestions which would have eased the tensions between us, the affected producers and Inland Rail.
- They may hear but do they listen - no
- The Government's, Federal State and local, are only looking at the bigger picture projects. The smaller ones need help also and you could be surprised how these little projects will help to make the bigger projects work more efficiently.

Inland Rail is being promoted as the freight line for the future.

The future viability of those farmers being affected by the 'Greenfield' sections of the railway line is also uncertain due to the ad hoc approach being taken by the management of Inland Rail.

Our local community along with transport operators are also being short-changed due to the lack of vision being shown by Governments in looking after those smaller infrastructure projects that will be beneficial to the wider community necessitated by the building of Inland Rail.

The agricultural community still wants to be known for its agriculture and not as "Railway Infrastructure" as portrayed in section 6.8.2.1 Land Use in the Scoping Report – June 2018.

6.8.2.1 Land use

The proposal would result in changes to land use from its current rural use to railway infrastructure.

From another ARTC Inland Rail Fact Sheet.

Want to know more? ARTC is committed to working with landholders, communities, state and local governments as a vital part of our planning and consultation work, and we value your input.

If they did that, we wouldn't be needing any inquiry, we would all be on the same page and the whole process would be smooth sailing, so to speak.

Over the last couple of years, I have written many letters to Inland Rail, Governments and I even sit on a Community Consultative Committee. In all the correspondence I get back, which can take months, I always get fed the same story – we are consulting, we are listening or it's the states responsibility or it's the Federal Governments problem.

The last lot of correspondence however the story has changed with references to all the answers will be in the upcoming Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which the community will be able to provide feedback to.

I put it to you "How hard is it going to be to change an EIS" the answer would be very hard. All the planning and costings etc will have been done by then.

That is what we have been trying to do over all these years –

> **Make changes that will help to accommodate Inland Rail's occupation of our farming lands which will try and satisfy all of our needs and**
>
> **Make changes to the Communities Infrastructure, road-rail interfaces, that are going to be beneficial to the community for our next and future generations.**

With such a major project like this we will only get one chance to get it right.

It needs to be got right for the sake of our future generations.

It will be VERY hard and expensive to try and fix these problems if they are left unchecked and not altered now before the EIS comes out and construction starts.

I thank you for your time and wish you well in your deliberations.

Regards

David Carter