

# Islington Village Community Group

history diversity community  
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Thursday 20 December 2012

Dear Minister Hazzard,  
Minister for Planning & Infrastructure

## QR National's proposed "Hexham Redevelopment Project"

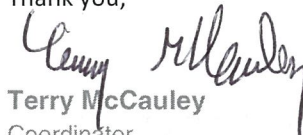
### Introduction

Islington Village Community Group (IVCG) is informed that freight forwarder Aurizon (formerly QR National) has applied to the NSW Government for approval to construct ten new railway lines at Hexham, parallel to the existing rail track. If approved, this development will significantly encroach on the internationally-significant Hexham Wetlands.

IVCG **opposes** such a development for many reasons but our primary concerns are:

- The proposal would have unacceptable impacts on the health of local residents, through increased noise, vibration, and air pollution from coal trains. Diesel exhaust was recently listed as a known carcinogen by the World Health Organisation. Coal dust itself is believed to have significant impacts on health.
- The proposal would encroach on the Hexham Wetlands, which provide important habitat for many migratory bird species. Recently, the endangered Australian Painted Snipe has been recorded in the wetlands.
- The proposal would clear an area of the Endangered Ecological Community *Freshwater Wetlands on Coastal Floodplains*, and an area of SEPP 14 Wetlands that are supposed to be protected by state legislation. The proposed development footprint is immediately adjacent to the Hunter Wetlands National Park.
- Hexham Wetland is important habitat to globally important bird species, and is recognised in international bilateral migratory bird protection agreements with Japan, China, and the Republic of Korea.
- The proposal would undermine the multi-million dollar tax-payer funded restoration program of the Hexham Wetlands, which is in its final stages. This is the largest wetland rehabilitation project carried out in the Southern Hemisphere.
- Hexham Wetlands provide essential habitat for economically important fisheries. In 1999 NSW Fisheries calculated a high dollar value per hectare per annum of \$19,580 on the Hexham Wetlands.
- The proposal would encroach into "High Hazard", "Very High Hazard" and "Extreme Hazard" Flood Zones.
- The proposal would encroach into part of "The Stockton to Watagans Conservation Green Corridor," areas put aside for protection by the NSW Planning Department in its "Lower Hunter Regional Strategy".
- There are alternative sites for this development. The proponent appears to have chosen this location due to convenience and cost factors, with disregard to the major environmental impacts. This is simply unacceptable in today's business engaging with community climate.

Thank you,

  
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