

The Inland Rail should not go through Wagga and Wagga Shire, Albury Shire, Junee Shire, Lockhart Shire and Greater Hume Shires in its present form.

The rail should not go through the centre of Wagga. It would have devastating results, creating an unlivable city. There needs to be an alternate route that bypasses the city, without putting people and their livelihoods at risk.

The Inland Rail Project (ARTC) as it stands, is not an efficient rail system that will strengthen regional areas. It has suffered at the outset from poor planning poor implementation and a major lack of consultation.

Feedback from community and business groups around Australia say there has not been sufficient consultation by ARTC.

There have been huge numbers of complaints about ARTC's lack of consulting and lack of transparency around Australia.

Wagga residents and landowners in the region have been left in the dark about the impacts of the Inland Rail project.

Whilst the Nationals say ARTC have consulted adequately, what detailed, verifiable proof do they have of appropriate and sufficient consultation by ARTC?

Around Australia and in Wagga ARTC are making decisions about where rail tracks are being laid, rather than making decisions based on what regional communities want.

Residents, businesses, farmers all want local knowledge to be used in where tracks and infrastructure are built, not to be told by ARTC where they should be laid, which is what is happening.

ARTC are making decisions based on their budget not what is best for towns.

It is not best for Wagga to have twenty, 1.8 kilometre, double stacked trains coming through town every 24 hours.

This would cause intolerable noise pollution and stress to all the residents of Wagga.

Wagga is not a big place and everyone will be negatively impacted, **and this cannot be mitigated against.**

This large number of trains rattling through Wagga day and night will have a major impact on the amenity and livability of Wagga.

ARTC's plans are budgetary based. They are not consulting with stake holders. Where is their social impact statement for Wagga and the Riverina?

Businesses and residences within 500 metres of the train line will be especially affected by noise pollution.

Real estate values for these residents and businesses will naturally decrease because of their proximity to 24 hours of noise.

Likelihood of bankruptcies for these people, and poor untenable tracts of Wagga, will be devastating for Wagga.

There are potential safety risks, to be considered, from allowing double-stacked freight trains to traverse paths that are in close proximity to Wagga residents and businesses.

And what are the traffic plans? Major railway crossings will keep cars waiting for up to 15 minutes while longer trains pass. There are several level crossings in Wagga and it is unlikely the road network would cope.

The ARTC would also have a huge negative impact on road access to the Wagga Base Hospital.

The rail should not go through the centre of Wagga. There needs to be an alternate route that would bypass the city and not put the town and people in harms way.

But this alternate route needs to ensure that Wagga and Wagga Shire, Albury Shire, Junee Shire, Lockhart Shire and Greater Hume Shire towns do not miss out on potential benefits that would provide everyone easier access between domestic and international markets.

ARTC should not exploit its position to intimidate farmers when acquiring land in Wagga Shire, Albury Shire, Junee Shire, Lockhart Shire and Greater Hume Shires.

Regional farmers around Australia have expressed alarm as prime farming land is being ruined by ARTC.

Properties are being split in half because of the track, and farmers will struggle to move their equipment and stocks from one side of the track to the other.

NSW Farmers' claim the ARTC has not done adequate consultation with affected landholders and farmers. Wagga Shire, Albury Shire, Junee Shire, Lockhart Shire and Greater Hume Shire farmers must have control over where tracks are laid.

One of the worst impacts of the Inland rail, as it stands, is that it will not save, in fact, will contribute to the death of all the dying, tiny towns along its route.

Instead of being the saviour of the bush, the Inland Rail will contribute to small town genocide.

High speed rail would cut people off from the natural environment and from rural communities.

Other countries, with fast rail, ie, France have shown that connections between two cities benefit the larger of the pair with the smaller suffering.

And in Australia where settlements are too widely dispersed it will be even harder for the fast rail to benefit current regional towns.

Improved transport infrastructure will decrease trade revenue in both regional and metropolitan centres. But as large cities are more productive economically they will benefit from trade at the expense of regional towns.

The strain on infrastructure and services will be proportionately greater in regional centres than cities.

And regional businesses will become less efficient than metropolitan competitors, leading to regional business closures, employment losses, wage decline and further regional economic disadvantage.

ARTC must ensure the Wagga Shire, Albury Shire, Junee Shire, Lockhart Shire and Greater Hume Shire regional centres don't suffer.

It needs to ensure the right specialised high-value jobs for regional towns to accompany fast rail investments, so they remain competitive and productive. Such as public agencies, regional targeting of university-based research and development spending, boosting services such as schools and hospitals, and providing incentives for

innovative private companies to relocate to regional towns.

ARTC's current performance across Australia is not only not benefiting regional Australia, but in fact contributing to its decline.

The Inland Rail should not go ahead in this region, in its current form.

It needs:

an alternate route, and NOT to go through the centre of Wagga;

to ensure farmers, land owners and other towns in the Wagga Shire, Albury Shire, Junee Shire, Lockhart Shire and Greater Hume Shires are 100% on board with where rail tracks are being laid;

genuine, verifiable consultation with all stakeholders;

to find ways to ensure that regional businesses and towns don't suffer, as will be inevitable, without effective strategies to bolster their economies; and to ensure natural habitats and native species are protected at all costs.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Webb

Wagga

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