SUBMISSION TO INLAND RAIL NARROMINE TO NARRABRI.

I have lived in the Central West region of NSW since 1970's. Since 1992 I have had a strong involvement in regional Landcare activities supporting many local groups as an on-ground volunteer with activities such native plant seed collection, tree planting and wetland rehabilitation projects.

For 15 years I was a Senior Catchment Management Officer with the Central West Catchment Management Authority before leaving to pursue biodiversity and cultural heritage interests.

I object to the proponent's project proposal on the following grounds:

Biodiversity development assessment report – BAM 2020 Revision E

1. The PIR and Response to Submissions failed to address or even acknowledge any of the biodiversity EIS issues I raised. The miss identification of Eucalyptus microcarpa as E. pilligaensis in the BDAR will result in significant impact on listed EEC populations located along the alignment, burrow pits and other project sites. The original biodiversity submission is resubmitted below with key points requiring response highlighted.
   The IR Narromine to Curban construction footprint needs to be surveyed by repudiable ecologists for the presence of E. microcarpa and an assessment made of adjacent derived grassland regarding the grey box grassy woodland listing advice. Failure to directly address the issues will result in significant and potentially irreversible harm to the local environment and MNES.

B1. Biodiversity

I raise the following issues concerning the biodiversity assessment at Narromine. The following observation have quality assurance implications for the entire alignment:

To avoid irreparable damage to our indigenous flora and fauna the study conclusions along the entire alignment need to be independently evaluated.

Issues:

The EIS references the following ecological community as commonly occurring between Narromine and Gilgandra.

PCT 88 Pilliga Box - White Cypress Pine - Buloke shrubby woodland in the Brigalow Belt South Bioregion.

Eucalyptus pilligaensis Narrow-leaved Grey Box is an uncommon tree around Narromine. It is referenced by the NSW herbarium as 'Locally frequent, in sclerophyll woodland on sandy or light loamy soils; north from Gilgandra.' (see description extracts below). *E. microcarpa* and *E. pilligaensis* are very similar trees with many overlapping identification characteristics. *E. microcarpa* is common South of Gilgandra through to Victoria.

Key differences relate to leaf size and color plus flower and fruit characteristics (see NSW Flora extracts below).

On the 30th Jan, I sampled 12 specimens south of Narromine along the EIS alignment. I found the specimens to be characteristic of *E. microcarpa* with leaf color being a consistently concolorous dull green and leaf size being consistent to the species description of 8 to 15cm long and 1 to 2 cm wide. Median length and width being approx. 10 cm and 16mm respectively. Habit was also consistent with the species description. No flower or fruiting material was available on trees or in the surrounds.

No specimens having the distinctive characteristics of *E. pilligaensis* were seen near or along the EIS alignment.

Misidentification of the above species by the EIS will result in the incorrect PCT being selected. Ramifications include:

- Potential failure to recognize the occurrence of endangered ecological communities associated with E microcarpa, ie Grey Box (Eucalyptus microcarpa) Grassy Woodlands and Derived Native Grasslands of South-Eastern Australia (endangered) and Inland Grey Box Woodland in the Riverina, NSW South Western Slopes, Cobar Peneplain, Nandewar and Brigalow Belt South Bioregions (endangered).
- Potential failure to recognize derived grassland communities in close proximity to E. microcarpa as being derived grassland communities of the above mentioned EECs.

Extracts

NEW SOUTH WALES FLORA ONLINE

Eucalyptus pilligaensis Maiden

Description: Tree to 25 m high; bark persistent on trunk and larger branches, grey with whitish patches, fibrous-flaky (`box'), smooth above, grey, shedding in short ribbons.

Juvenile leaves disjunct, linear, dull grey-green.

Adult leaves disjunct, linear or narrow-lanceolate, **5–13 cm long, 0.6–1.3 cm wide, green or grey-green, glossy, concolorous**. Conflorescence compound; umbellasters 7-flowered; peduncle terete, 3–8 mm long; pedicels terete, 1–5 mm long. Buds ovoid or fusiform, 2–5 mm long, 1.5–3 mm diam., scar absent; calyptra conical, shorter than or as long as and as wide as hypanthium. All stamens fertile.

Fruit conical, cylindrical or ovoid, 2–5 mm long, 2–5 mm diam.; disc depressed; valves enclosed. **Locally frequent, in sclerophyll woodland on sandy or light loamy soils; north from Gilgandra.**

Eucalyptus microcarpa (Maiden) Maiden

Description: Tree to 25 m high; bark persistent on trunk and larger branches, grey with whitish patches, fibrous-flaky (`box'), smooth above, grey, shedding in short ribbons.

Juvenile leaves disjunct, ovate, dull green.

Adult leaves disjunct, narrow-lanceolate or lanceolate**, 8–15 cm long, 1–2 cm wide, green, dull, concolorous**. Conflorescence compound; umbellasters 7–11-flowered; peduncle narrowly flattened or angular, 3–10 mm long; pedicels terete, 1–5 mm long. Buds ovoid to fusiform, 4–7 mm long, 2–4 mm diam., scar absent; calyptra conical, shorter than to as long as and as wide as hypanthium. All stamens ± fertile.

Fruit cylindrical or hemispherical or ovoid, 3–7 mm long, 3–5 mm diam.; disc depressed; valves enclosed or rim-level.

Additional Issues with PIR

2. The EIS/BDAR/PIR has failed to identify EEC populations of Fuzzy Box on alluvial soils of the Darling Riverine Plains and Grey Box Grassy Woodlands located within Webbs Siding Reserve, Mitchell Hwy, Pinedeen Rd and the property ‘Craigea Lee’ construction footprint. These populations and any associated derived grasslands will be highly impacted by the project and must be included in the credit requirement calculations.

3. The vegetation mapping Webbs Siding Reserve is very coarse labelling most ecosystems as PCT 248 - Mixed box eucalypt woodland on low sandy-loam. The local community are aware of a minimum of four distinct woodland communities within this 100 ha reserve, three are EEC communities including two MNES. Mapping of vegetation needs to be meet BAM 2020 specifications to avoid significant and potentially irreversible harm to the local environment and MNES.

4. PIR Environmental baseline Map1 has a very large area categorised as “*0 - Crop and/or Introduced grassland”.* This mapping has failed to identify remnant derived grassland and woodlands communities

associated with E. microcarpa within this generic labelling. Mapping of vegetation needs to meet BAM 2020 specifications to avoid significant and potentially irreversible harm to the local environment and MNES.

5. The BDAR states *"1.1.3 Responding to submissions and proposed amendments. During the exhibition period, interested stakeholders and members of the community were able to review the EIS online or at display locations, participate in consultation and engagement activities,"*

   I attended an online ARTC EIS consultation webinar in early 2021 during which the community was invited to raise biodiversity issues and observations to be recorded by ARTC. I raised the sighting of several populations of diamond firetail finch and grey crown babblers on the Webbs Siding Reserve. The BDAR/Response to Submissions/PIR provides no reference to any of ARTCs community biodiversity consultation activities or community species sightings or information. Additionally, the BDAR document has not listed any credit requirement for the diamond firetail finch or grey crown babbler.
   Having taken the time to attend ARTC forums it is very concerning to find that ARTC failed to record a single N2N community biodiversity consultation observation. This indicates ARTC entered a critically important public consultation phase with no procedure or protocols to record or use community information to help inform the EIS process. As such the proponent has failed to meet SEARs requirements and the EIS should be rejected.

6. ARTC is an Australian Taxpayer funded corporation. ARTC's failure to address or acknowledge the above submission issues raises serious concerns regarding their corporate governance, transparency, integrity, accountability and probity obligations. ARTC has a identifiable pecuniary interest to reduce the projects biodiversity credit requirements and/or reduce the conservation status of lands impacted by the project footprint. The IR project faces significant financial difficulties evidenced by the business plans massive construction escalations on every alignment section. The N2N features significantly in these escalations with the following business case construction overruns easily identifiable.

Inland Rail 2015 Business Case

IRAS 2010 Appendix J (p.32)

Table 6-3 Narromine to Narrabri North construction cost estimates

Type of works – Greenfield **Contract type – Design and construct**	**Length – 306.8 km** **Duration – 112 weeks**
Earthworks Excavation: 915,000 m^3 Fill: 3,039,000 m^3	**Bridges and culverts** 15 – 50 m – 33 off, 855 m total length 51 – 150 m – 22 off, 870 m total length 151 – 300 m – 9 off, 1,975 m total length Culverts – 180 off, 560 m total length
Track and formation Class1C track –306.8 km Turnouts – 9 off Loops – 7 off	**Tunnels** None
Level crossings and road crossings Minor road crossing – 2 off Active level crossings –3 off Passive level crossings – 106 off	**Miscellaneous structure** Road re-alignments – 1.8 km Road closures – 15 off
Cost per km- $2,468,000	**Total cost - $757.3m**

Narromine to Narrabri
Base cost evaluation

Bridging Total: 3.7km
Culverts Total: 0.56km
Road re-alignment Total: 1.8km
Utility Adjustments: Nil

Project Actuals 2022

Bridging: 15 km minimum
Culverts: 13km minimum
Road re-alignment: 37 km
Utility Adjustments: 192

The projects construction cost escalations, combined with ARTC's potential pecuniary motivation to reduce biodiversity offset obligations and their complete failure to acknowledge and address the submission issues requires official investigation.

Castlereagh River

"Bridge design Issue

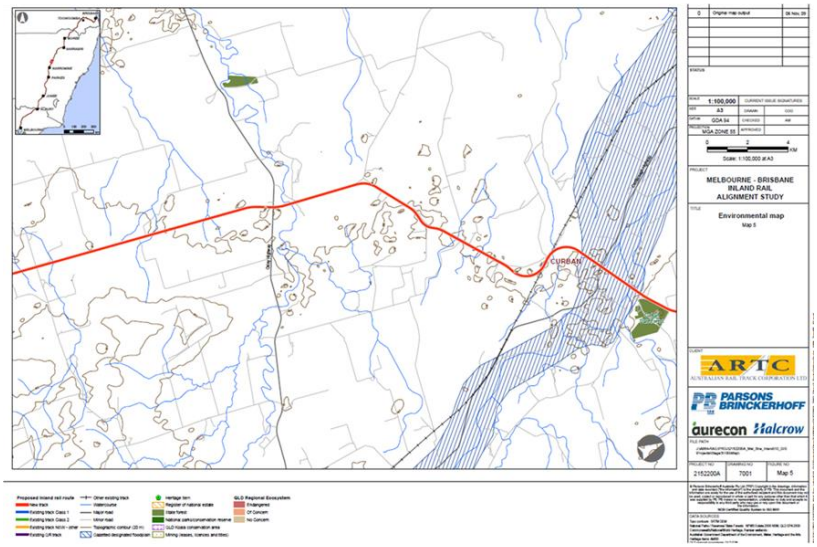
Submitters recommended that the Castlereagh River bridge at Curban should be larger to accommodate the predicted flooding from the 2010 Inland Rail Alignment Study report. Concern was also raised about the capability of other bridges to manage flow.

Response

The flooding and hydrology assessment is based on detailed investigations and modelling that has been undertaken since the Melbourne–Brisbane Inland Rail Alignment Study (ARTC, 2010) was prepared. Within the Castlereagh River floodplain, the proposal includes two bridges and numerous culverts to provide for the passage of floodwaters. Similarly, all bridges and culverts proposed have been, and would continue to be, designed with the capability to manage the flow of floodwaters at each location."

The above response does not address the issues raised in my submission.

1. The flood mapping in the 2010 IRAS (fig1 below) was taken by ARTC from the Gazetted Castlereagh River flood plan. This plan cites the flood plain to be 4km at the IR crossing point. ARTC's statement that their *"detailed investigations and modelling"* supersedes the gazetted plan is presumptuous and inappropriate. It is alarming that ARTC would discard a gazetted flood map which shows a 4km flood width for their 805m wide 1% AEP model without any referenced analysis or explanation. The gazetted flood scenario should be taken as the default flood risk and the precautionary principle applied until ARTC categorically proves their new 1% event is a valid replacement. Until then, 4km of bridging is required to ensure environmental, property and public safety concerns are address.
   Fig 1.



2. ARTC's response claims *"the proposal includes two bridges and numerous culverts to provide for the passage of floodwaters"*. This statement is inaccurate. PIR references (*Map Book The proposal (design features) & Appendix A Structures and blockage factors)* lists no culverts anywhere near the Castlereagh River. ARTC need to be mindful of truthful disclosure requirements. Making unsupported claims which fail scrutiny undermines community trust and fails SEARs and corporate governance statutory requirements.

3. An unnamed creek crosses the alignment South of the Castlereagh chainage 651. No culverts are allocated to allow flood water passage.

4. ARTC's response statement, *"Similarly, all bridges and culverts proposed have been, and would continue to be, designed with the capability to manage the flow of floodwaters at each location",* is ambiguous and unsubstantiated. The community has seen no change in the bridging allocation for the Castlereagh River thus ARTC has completely dismissed all submission concerns. Please provide a clear definition and a detailed account of when and how the said '*designed with the capability to manage the flow of floodwaters'* action will occur.

2.4 Locational decisions made during phase 1

2.4.1 Selection of study area near Narromine – west or east?

The above mentioned SPIR report does not represent a truthful or accurate account of the process and data limitations of the alignment change to Narromine to Burroway. I raise the following issues:

1. ARTC's figure 2.5 was not used in any of the Phase 1 selection processes. It is not referenced in any of the three 2016/17 MCA's or the IRIG reports. Figure 2.5 was developed in 2020 as part of their MELBOURNE TO BRISBANE INLAND RAIL ROUTE HISTORY 2006–2019. ARTC presentation of this material as representative of Phase 1 processes is misleading. The lack of a citation reference on SPIR material misinforms the reader and makes cross referencing difficult. Right from the beginning ARTC's SPIR response is undermined by unreferenced claims and unprofessional conduct which fails the projects statutory and corporate governance requirements.

2. Consideration of flooding issues. The SPIR document then proceeds to reference Fig 2.6 'Flooding extents near Narromine'. Again, this material was not part of the Phase 1 MCA selection process or any other ARTC document. ARTC claim it to be an accurate account of the 1% AEP flood extent near Narromine, yet it cites no flood study or data reference. The map does not accurately represent 1% AEP flooding extent near Narromine as it fails to map the 1% AEP flood extent for the Backwater Cowal tributaries and Eumungerie Rd streams which impact the alignment. This uncited map misleads the reader by substantially underestimating the extent of flooding impacting the Eastern alignment option. ARTC's intent is potentially deliberate as the SPIR document text uses the map to justify MCA flooding claims and the sudden, unconsulted alignment change. ARTC use of flawed and misleading material in the SPIR undermines community trust and fails the projects statutory and corporate governance requirements.

3. The 2016/17 Phase 1 MCA process failed to cite any flood documentation or mapping. This was readily available in the 2008 Narromine to Oxley Flood Management Plan and local topographic maps. If it had the MCA would have cited these documents and disclosed:

    3.1. The landscape to the South and East of Narromine was dominated by the confluence of six streams resulting in an approximately 40 sq km mapped inundation area.
    3.2. The Webbs Siding landscape east of Narromine is a significant Macquarie River outflow where approximately 100,000 megalitres of flood water per day exited the Macquarie River channel, crossed the Mitchell Hwy, destroyed 2km of rail line before entering the Backwater Cowal in 1955. None of this important information was picked up by the MCA. The SPIR sect 4.3 claim that in 2016/17 "*Desktop assessments were undertaken, including database searches and review of previous studies, aerial photography and existing mapping held by Commonwealth, NSW and local government agencies"* is demonstrably false as all three MCA documents fail to cite a single document or topographic map reference. The reader is yet again faced with ARTC presenting false and misleading information as fact, effectively making an objective and informed review of the documentation untenable as the proponent claims cannot be trusted. The SPIR document needs to be rejected and ARTC's corporate conduct investigated by the appropriate authorities.

4. The SPIR sect 4.3 claims are additionally undermined by ARTC's failure to cite the 'Narromine Town Levee Concept Design', SMEC 2019. This document contains important information regarding flood behaviour relating to the Webbs Siding outflow area. I raised this issue in my original submission, yet the SPIR documents failed to acknowledge or address the issues raised. This is very concerning as ARTC's tendency to ignore research papers, maps, flood management plans which do not support their alignment position places the local environment, community and property in serious risk.

    Specifically, the SMEC levee study cites the following flood behaviour associated with Webbs Siding SMEC 2019 Sect 7.10 Emergency Spillway ***"A significantly larger quantity of water breaks out***

from the river at Webbs Siding and discharges to the Backwater Cowal". "Downstream of Webbs Siding the Macquarie River is restricted to a narrow well-defined channel as it approaches River Drive. The width of the flow in the river is reduced to approximately 350m. The breakout over Webbs Siding is over a length of greater than 2km." Due to the Macquarie's main channel restriction and the outflows large spillway capacity the report states ***"the breakout at Webbs Siding will attract a significant portion of additional flow in larger events".*** This information reinforces observation by the WRM flood review commissioned by NSW Farmers and CWA which recommended the project "*Realign the rail away from Webb's Siding*". This view is reinforced by the local community with extensive landscape knowledge and experience dating back to the 1880's.

ARTC's positioning of the alignment in an area with documented frequent and extensive flooding issues combined with a Macquarie outflow that directs ever increasing volumes of flood water directly at the projects planned rail embankments is a fatal flaw. The precautionary principle needs to be applied and the project should be rejected.

5. ARTC SPIR 2.4.1 Flood extent data claims of 21km of the western alignment are misleading. The 2008 gazetted FMP map indicates 4km of the western alignment is impacted by significant flood risk. The draft 2018 (gazette in 2021) Macquarie River FMP flood mapping concurs with this observation. 4km of significant flood risk with other western alignment areas labelled as 'flood fringe' (i.e. areas of elevated floodplain which have limited exposure to flood waters, the flood velocity in 'flood fringe' is nil to minimal). ARTC claim that the western aliment would need 16km of flood mitigation structures is highly misleading and demonstrably false. The current 8km brown field component of the western alignment is positioned on elevated flood plain. It has four small culverts which has adequately serviced this alignment through every flood including 1955. In comparison the N2B Eastern alignment has approximately 18km of moderate to high velocity 1% flood exposure as referenced in the SPIR documentation and supported by local land managers experience.

6. ARTC reference to the 2020 Route Histories Fig 2.5 flow chart raises the issue as to why ARTC use outdated data in the SPIR flow chart analysis. ARTC cite 2016 assumption statements as a valid justification of the West to East alignment movement, however the increased Eastern green field alignment length, transit time, flood impact and project cost directly challenge the data used. Additionally, ARTC failed to disclose in their SPIR Fig 2.5 discussion points that the route history document concurrently ran a stop light analysis system with the flow chart. ARTC's stop light criteria were based on service delivery criteria, documented as Transit Time, Construction Cost, Distance and MCA Score. Green, amber and red lights were raised on each alignment analysis after consideration of the available information.

   The only green field alignment section the route history document did not run the stop light criteria analysis on was Narromine to Burroway (N2B). This inconsistency is very concerning because running the available data for N2B would have resulted in four green lights for the western alignment and 3 amber lights for the eastern alignment (transit time, construction cost, distance). This would have caused the alignment to revert to the west. ARTC have cited their route history document in every EIS, the senate estimates and senate parliamentary inquiry as evidence of a rigorous and transparent analysis alignment review process. This glaring anomaly requires immediate investigation at both the federal and state level. I also have evidence of other route history document issues impacting other alignment sections which require investigation.

7. ARTC's claims that the models meet ARR requirements are misleading. ARR requires the use of all locally available data in developing an accurate flood model especially when there are limited official meteorological stations, streamflow and depth records as is the case with the N2N alignment. ARTC presenting impacted landholders with coarse flood maps of their individual properties and asking if the flooding looks right does not represent due diligence in informing the flood model process. Several landholders informed me as a CCC member that ARTC refused to show flood maps of the surrounding landscapes citing 'commercial in confidence' restrictions, so they were unable to make an informed judgement. ARTC turned up to consultation events unable to properly investigate and utilise landholders local and regional flooding knowledge. ARTC also failed to provide a transparent and accountable process for the general community to engage in the flood model review. Issues raised at

consultation drop-in sessions were left unanswered and CCC actions were left hanging for 14 months while ARTC developed their SPIR documents. As such, the action which was directly related to local flooding concerns and the provision of local data for the Backwater Cowal flood model was unable to have any input into the SPIR flood model and structures design and as such ARTC has failed the local community. There is no evidence that ARTC's EIS flood modelling and structural design processes have met ARR consultative requirements for any part of the N2N alignment and considerable community concerns remain regarding depth, velocity, extent, and routing for all AEP flood events.

8. **Geotechnical Conditions**: The community would like to see the soil tests results used by the May 2017 MCA (soil pit and soil core sample results and locations). ARTC need to provide the test results for the Phase 1 alignment options with description of the collection methodologies.
   The community is very concerned that the MCA claims are not based on actual soils tests.
   The EIS Scoping Report cites "*Geotechnical assumptions are based on limited visual inspections" … "restricted to those areas that could be observed from public roads and access tracks*" (Ref Inland Rail Narromine to Narrabri SCOPING REPORT 2-2500-000-EPA-AP-0001 REVISION F JULY 2018, Section 1.4.1. Scope of surveys). Visual inspections are not valid Geotechnical data and will result considerable errors.
9. This concern is compounded as EIS field work conducted in 2019/20 now indicates entirely different Geotech conditions for the Eumungerie Rd option.
   ARTC's 'NARROMINE TO NARRABRI State Significant Infrastructure Application Report – Addendum 2-0000-250-EAP-00-RP-0020' states:
   "*Borrow pits A and B – a large volume of fill is required south of the Macquarie River where there are no cuts along the alignment to supply this material.*
   Borrow pit C – a large volume of fill is required in the area north of the Macquarie River where there are a limited number of cuts along the alignment to supply this material. Further, preliminary geotechnical investigations have identified a substantial shortage of structural fill in this area"

   The location and requirement for 3 of the 4 N2N Burrow Pits directly around Narromine indicates the 'win' of structural fill quoted in the MCA assumption tables has not eventuated.

ARTC own EIS findings confirm that the 2017 MCA geotechnical data was flawed and inaccurate.

10. The SPIR document has failed to acknowledge or address A6. Alternatives and options Issues 1, 2 and 3 raised in my original submission. These issues need to be addressed.

Flooding Issues

11. SPIR *Table 5.1 Local catchments and watercourses intersecting the proposal.* This table is misleading and very confusing as it omits many catchments and watercourses intersecting the proposal. This table needs to be an accurate and comprehensive collation of the catchments and watercourses. Presently information is scattered throughout the SPIR documents with inconsistency between catchment area quoted and creek systems omitted in some documents. The current erratic and inconsistent documentation make it impossible for the reader to evaluate the documents accuracy and undertake an informed review.
12. The SPIR makes the following assumption at E-1.13 Rail Embankment Overtopping. *"The railway embankment will be designed to be above the 1% AEP flood level. For floods higher than this, water could flow through the ballast and ultimately over the top of the rails. Bridges and culverts are provided at river and creek crossing and flood relief culverts are provided in flood plains.* ***Should overtopping of the rail embankment occur, it is expected that water levels would rise on both sides of the embankment and submerge the track."***

    This is very inappropriate assumption for Narromine as the topography of most existing and planned embankment declines downstream, on occasions appreciably. In these circumstances embankment scouring with increased failure risk would be expected. The precautionary principle must be applied to this issue inclusive of all planned and existing embankment structures located within and in close

proximation to the proposal footprint. Potential embankment failures pose serious risk to property and life.

13. Flow routing maps not provided by EIS/SPIR. The very coarse scale and sometimes complete absence of flow routing maps was raised in several EIS submissions and numerous times by the Narromine CCC. The issue has not been addressed by ARTC, the EIS or SPIR. This raises concerns regarding the accuracy of the hydrological modelling. Accurate flow routing significantly assists in the positioning of flood mitigation structures. This is an issue on which ARTC received local criticism related to the P2N brown field upgrade with concerns that some culverts were incorrectly positioned around Peak Hill and Narromine. This brown field upgrade squandered an opportunity to use local knowledge to comprehensively address the extensive inundation issues this alignment faces.

14. No guidance on the rainfall infiltration coefficients. The flood model predictions for Backwater Cowal floods continue to be underestimated in all AEP models.

15. Local knowledge calculates the Wallaby Creek catchment at 165 sq km impacting the alignment location, 34sq km larger than quoted. The error maybe related to an unnamed creek crossing the alignment at chainage 553.2. This creek is not listed in the Table C-1 Peak discharges TUFLOW model. The public require the SPIR document to provide detailed catchment maps.

Consultation Issues

SPIR Claim *"8.2 Assessment and approval—adequacy of the EIS*

Concern regarding the adequacy of and detail provided in the EIS Issue.

Submitters raised concerns that the EIS was inadequate, had insufficient detail, omitted certain topics and was not based on the detailed design. Concern was raised that negative impacts were not properly investigated. Some submitters felt this prevented the community from understanding how and why decisions were made. It was questioned why the EIS contained uncertainty in relation to future impacts.

8-2 INLAND RAIL Response

As noted in the response in section 8.1 of this report, the EIS and supporting technical reports were prepared in accordance with relevant statutory requirements, assessment guidelines and policies. The EIS was deemed to be adequate by DPIE (now DPE) prior to being finalised and placed on public exhibition."

Issues

1. ARTC's 'Response to Submission' statement that DPE is responsible for the adequacy of the EIS documentation is highly inappropriate and misleading. This comment sets a concerning precedent for future projects where the proponent transfers qualitative responsibility to Government Departments. The comment requires detailed explanation, assessment and ruling.
2. Numerous N2N CCC members raised concerns regarding ARTC's EIS preparedness and unresolved consultation issues to the agency prior to ARTC's 2020 EIS release. These concerns were immediately found to be justified with numerous errors, omissions and inconsistencies identified in the EIS documentation.
3. NSW Farmers/CWA Special Counsel, Peter Holt described the ARTC's N2N EIS as "the worst State Significant Project EIS documentation I have ever seen in my decades of EIS review".
4. Contrary to the assertion at 8.2 ARTC have not met their statutory SEARs requirements as they completely failed to follow CCC reporting requirements for the N2N, NS2B & now the A2I projects. This is a very concerning precedent for all communities potentially impacted by IR or any future SSP projects. It effectively leaves the community unsupported and alienated.
5. ARTC's failure to provide EIS Quantitative Design Limits (QDLs) for Flood Impacts was raised by Brewsher Consulting P/L over 2 years ago in N2NS correspondence. Our N2N CCC members also raised issues regarding scour risk and the need for neighbouring lands to have protection 2 years ago. Lack of QDLs were also raised as an EIS failing for NS2B. It is an extraordinary situation that the proponent did not learn from these EIS failings and continued to ignore local community concerns by ploughing ahead with a massively flawed N2N EIS release. Serious consideration of ARTC's capacity

to plan, manage and implement a nation building project of this scale needs to undertaken by the Federal and impacted State Governments. From the impacted community's perspective, ARTC's repeated governance, procedural and statutory failures point to an organisation unfit to be entrusted with this responsibility.

6. The ARTC cite the provision of an 1800 number as an example of their engagement and communication strategy. I raised issue in my original submission that this 1800 service was not functional in 2016/17. This issue was not addressed by the SPIR yet all their EIS documentation continues to claim the service was available from 2016 with no acknowledgement of the known issue. On the 7th September 2022 I called the 1800 number and left a message requesting clarification of issues related to the SPIR. I received a response on the same day by an administrator who listened to my queries and assured me that they would be followed up by a relevant technician. I let them know that the issue related to the SPIR exhibition and would need response before the close of submissions. This was acknowledged. No follow up response has been received by the submission closing date and my questions remain unanswered. ARTC cited the 1800 number as a SPIR support number but have failed to establish protocols and procedures to ensure a timely response given their own SPIR submission deadline restrictions. The claims by the proponent that they have ensured consultation is "timely, responsive, inclusive, transparent … etc" and that they followed IAP2 core values is proven false. These failings are not isolated issues, they are long term and systemic dating back to 2016 with no discernible improvement apparent. ARTC CCC actions (see issues below) indicate ARTC consultation coordination has fallen to an all-time low. Community consultation is extremely important as it sets the scene for the implementation and operational phases of the project. This is shaping up to be disastrous for the impacted community.

7. The SPIR states *"ARTC also notes that, as part of the financial year 20/21 Federal Budget, the Australian Government allocated $150 million for additional grade separations in NSW, with the NSW government contributing an additional $37.5 million. This will be additional to grade separations that are already included in project scope. The specific projects to be implemented with this funding are being identified by the Australian Government in conjunction with the NSW Government."*

   I raise concerns with ARTC's cost shifting of N2N rail/road grade separation infrastructure to a 2021 Federal and State black spot level crossing removal program. ARTC's N2N SPIR document clearly state that they intend to transfer multiple planned IR road/rail crossing to another Federal/NSW State project. The community raises concern that this IR cost transfer will compromise the Federal/NSW State project's ability to address the removal of existing regional 'black spot' level crossings and will unnecessarily burden the NSW tax payers with 20% of the IR infrastructure cost. Transport NSW's original 2020 EIS submission clearly stated that ARTC would be required to provide grade separation structures at these significant road rail interfaces. Inland Rail has clearly documented corporate requirements for transparency, accountability and probity. Cost transferal of IR project infrastructure requirements to other government safety programs fails the transparency, accountability and probity test.

N2N CCC Issues

ARTC has made no attempt to address or acknowledge the 'N2N CCC issues' raised in my original submission. The original 'N2N CCC issues' require detailed answers as ARTC CCC conduct has fundamentally eroded trust in the SSP consultation process and established several concerning precedents.

1. I challenge the SPIR assertion that ARTC has met their statutory SEARs requirements as they have completely failed to follow CCC reporting requirements for the N2N, NS2B & now the A2I projects. This is a very concerning precedent for all communities potentially impacted by IR or any future SSP projects which decides ignoring SEARs CCC requirements is permissible conduct.
2. After the 2020 release of the N2N EIS ARTC conducted no CCC meetings until March 2022. This extremely large break in continuity caused a back log of community issues. When the March meetings were conducted, ARTC's PIR presentations took up most of the meeting time leaving limited opportunity for community issues to be addressed. ARTC's failure to call the required CCC meetings during 2021 directly contributed to and compounded the projects consultation deficiencies. Given ARTC had received over 100 project EIS submissions, the proponent had an excellent opportunity in 2021 to clarify issues and inform the EIS/PIR processes with coal face community consultation. Instead, the proponent closed shop and disappeared for 16 months while they developed the SPIR in isolation without any CCC input or consultation. At a foundation level this is disrespectful to the CCC community who volunteered several years of their own time to the process. Regular CCC meetings to inform and engage the community is part of the CCC SEARs requirements and as such ARTC 2021/22 CCC conduct fails to meet SEAR requirements.
3. The final March 2022 meeting commenced with the chair warning community members to be careful about what they say in meetings and emails. When asked to cite examples the chair responded he had none. When asked if he had specific issue with any comments by community members at Narromine, he said he had none. I found this commencement to a CCC meeting very disturbing. ARTC hide away for 16 months then commence their community consultation before the SPIR release with a stern warning to the community. The chair is required to be independent and balanced and if he thinks issuing warnings is appropriate, then warning should be directed at all parties including the proponent. I personally think threatening people is a poor way to start a meeting especially when the chair had no identifiable issues to raise. Right from the start this overdue CCC meeting was tainted with community told to 'watch what you say'. This is disturbing behaviour on the part of chair and if it was undertaken at the behest of the proponent, it represents unconscionable conduct from both parties. The chairs conduct and ARTC's potential influence needs to be officially investigated.
4. Annual reporting requirements: The ARTC formed the N2N CCC in Feb 2019 and has failed to engage the CCC membership in the reporting consultation activity. This was brought to the proponents attention in my 2021 submission yet no attempt was made to rectify the issue. The chair was informed in March 2022 before the CCC meeting, where he made it a chairs minute, and stated he would discuss the issue with DPIE after the meeting. No attempt was made to include CCC membership in this activity even though the proponent's reporting failure had removed all opportunity for the N2N community to engage in the annual reporting benefits the process was designed to provide CCC's as per DPIE CCC web page. Subsequently, the 3 years of outstanding reports were then posted on the DPIE CCC web page. Please note, all reports were developed without consultation or review by members. These reports contain several glaring errors and anomalies. A combined N2N CCC meeting needs to be organised so issues can tabled and concerned members can be provided fair hearing.