

ARTC EIS RESPONSE

A stakeholder's response to Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd.'s Environmental Impact Statement
Application Number: SSI-10055, on behalf of affected residents

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Sensitive Receivers

What is considered a “sensitive receiver”?

“Predictive modelling indicates the increase in frequency and size of freight trains and the adjustments to the track may result in exceedances of operational rail noise criteria set by the NSW Rail Infrastructure Noise Guidelines. Two non-residential receivers, being the South Wagga Public School near the Wagga Wagga Yard clearances and the Kildare Catholic College near the Edmondson Street bridge, are predicted to experience operational rail noise exceedances.”ⁱ

From Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd (ARTC). Summary of findings: Albury to Illabo – Environmental Impact Statement. (2022). P. 24.

All other quotes are hereby referenced on page 11. Please follow superscripted roman numeral for context.

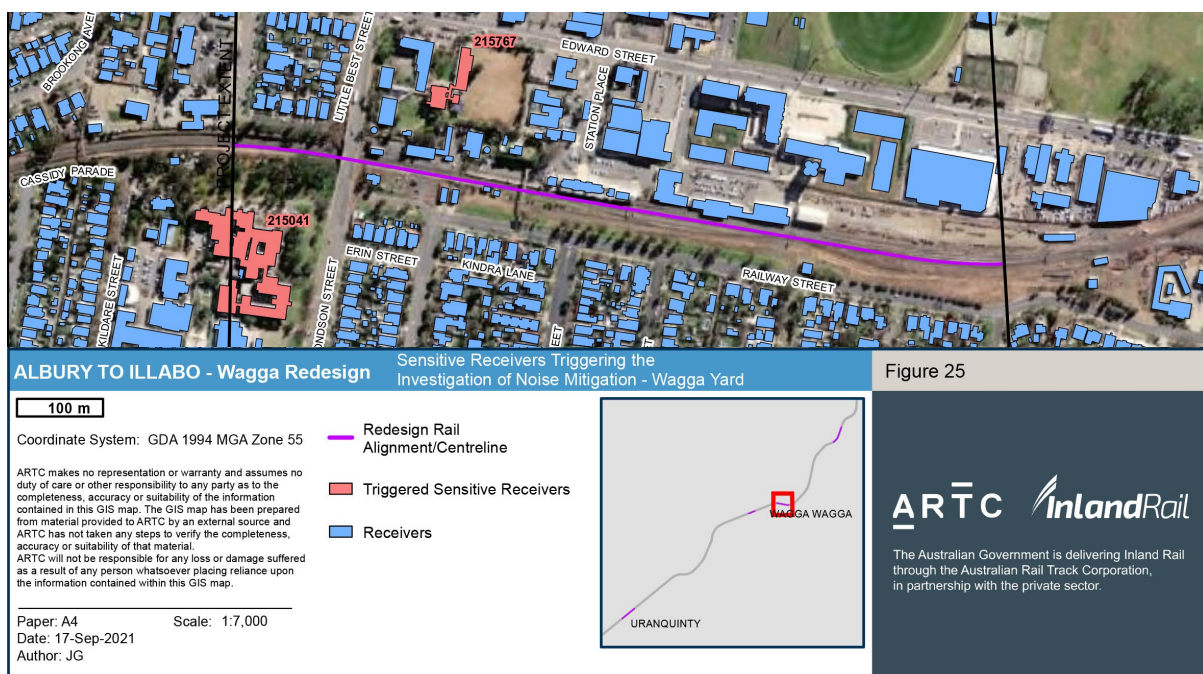


Figure 1 - figure 25 on page 63 of Tech Paper 7 Operational Noise and Vibration (Rail)

Figure 25 from [Technical paper 7 - Operational Noise and Vibration \(rail\)](#) identifies Kildare Catholic College as a "triggered sensitive receiver" with the nearest building being approximately 60m from the rail boundary. The houses along Donnelly Avenue (North of Kildare Catholic College) are only listed as receivers, and not considered *sensitive*. All the buildings on this street are residential and have an average distance of approximately 25m from the rail boundary.



Figure 2 - Distances of buildings from rail boundaryⁱⁱ

*The locations where predicted rail noise levels exceed the RING airborne noise criteria consist of: Scots School Albury, seven dwellings in Henty, the Headlie Taylor Header Museum, Yerong Creek Public School, **Kildare Catholic College in Wagga Wagga**, **South Wagga Public School**, Junee Baptist Church, Junee North Public School and the Illabo Public School. These exceedances (for years 2025 and 2040) are driven by an increase in daytime LAeq rail noise levels due to increased rail volumes forecast for the day period (7am to 10pm). Night period LAeq noise levels are predicted to meet the airborne noise criteria.ⁱⁱⁱ*

Although the results indicate that a further review will take place during the detailed design proposal, further reviews are only being considered at the “sensitive receivers”.

*The operational railway noise and vibration levels will be verified through noise and vibration monitoring once the proposal is operational. ARTC will investigate additional reasonable and feasible mitigation measures where monitored noise and/or vibration levels at **sensitive receivers** are confirmed to be above adopted railway noise and vibration criteria.^{iv}*

To say that these residences are not sensitive, as statements like those included above, seems like a purposeful oversight. As stated in the [A21 EIS – Glossary and Definitions](#), sensitive receivers are defined as:

People and land uses in the study area that are sensitive to potential noise, air and visual impacts, such as residential properties, schools and hospitals.^v

It seems utterly absurd to me that houses are not being considered as sensitive receivers in the above statements, and I would suggest that maybe the ARTC have cut the corners on their data interpretation in these aspects. Where else have they not considered/hidden ongoing noise and vibration increases? During the online Q&A session, representatives of the ARTC agreed with the

above definition, and concluded that the residential buildings near the listed triggered sensitive receivers are also sensitive receivers.

A desktop survey was undertaken to identify sensitive receivers within a 2 km radius of the tracks within the enhancement work areas.^{vi}

How is this so? Looking at the map and at figure 25 on page 63 of *Tech Paper 7 Operational Noise and Vibration (Rail)* shows that residences were never considered as triggered sensitive receivers, despite the definition of sensitive receivers.

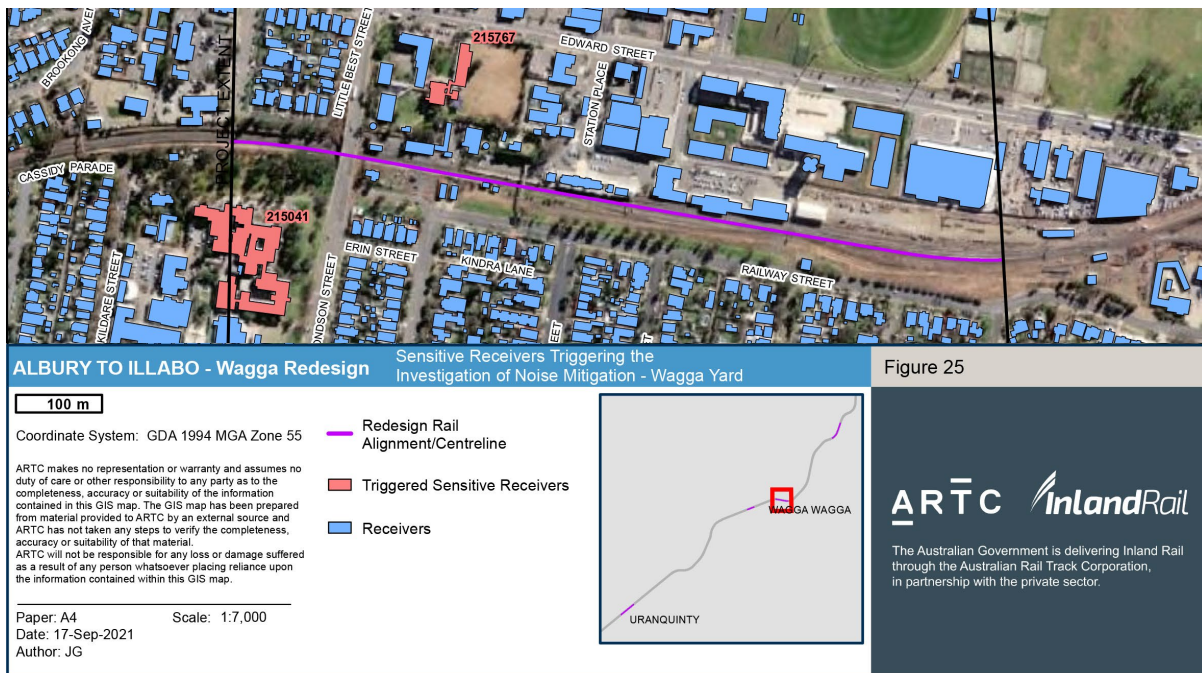


Figure 3 - figure 25 on page 63 of *Tech Paper 7 Operational Noise and Vibration (Rail)*

The operation of the proposal would potentially result in changes to amenity, such as noise and air quality, due to the increase of daily movement of trains, which may impact the health and wellbeing of sensitive receivers.^{vii}

When statements such as those above (found in Chapter 13 page 29 of the EIS) are communicated with the obfuscation of what makes a “sensitive receiver”, I am genuinely concerned about the health and wellbeing of myself, my family, and my neighbors if this proposal is successful.

Quoting again from page 24 of the EIS summary, “Two non-residential receivers, being the South Wagga Public School near the Wagga Wagga Yard clearances and the Kildare Catholic College near the Edmondson Street bridge, are predicted to experience operational rail noise exceedances.” Look at the diagrams and take note of the residential properties that are between those two non-residential receivers.

Decibels

This makes all data relating to decibels moot, as the modelling may not be taking into consideration a lot of affected properties, or rather the stakeholders (stakeholder defined in Appendix F 5.1 as *any individual, group of individuals, organisation or political entity with an interest in the outcome of a decision. They may be, or perceive that they may be, affected directly or indirectly by the outcome of a decision. Includes landowners and affected site neighbours^{viii)}*) affected in this project. This graph below for example, which is not collecting data or generating data in a fair manner (as stated above) does not make it obvious to stakeholders that decibel ratings are on a nonlinear scale. For example, on the decibel scale, the smallest audible sound (near total silence) is 0 dB. A sound 10 times more powerful is 10 dB. A sound 100 times more powerful than near total silence is 20 dB. A sound 1,000 times more powerful than near total silence is 30 dB.^{ix)}

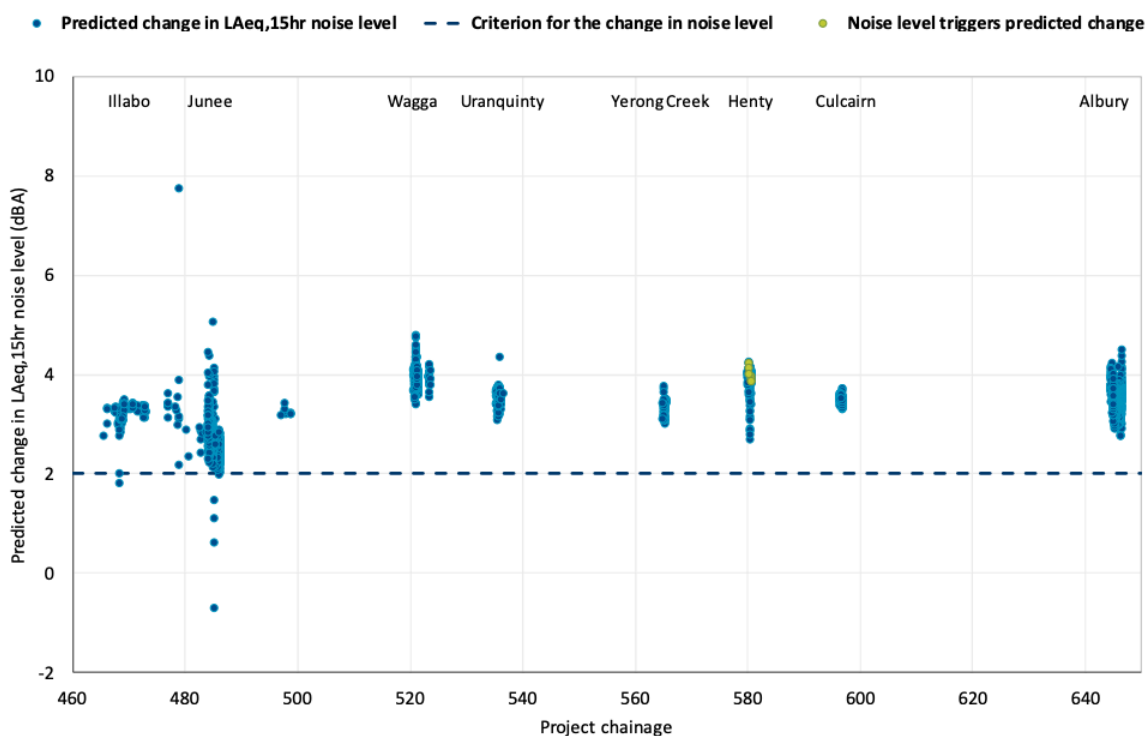
| | Receiver ID | Receiver Use | Distance from A2I alignment, m | Rail noise level with project, dBA | | | Existing rail noise levels, dBA | | | Change in noise level, dBA | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|--------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|-------|---------------------------------|------------------|-------|----------------------------|------------------|-------|
| | | | | LAeq (15hr) Day | LAeq (9hr) Night | LAmaz | LAeq (15hr) Day | LAeq (9hr) Night | LAmaz | LAeq (15hr) Day | LAeq (9hr) Night | LAmaz |
| 2 Donnelly Avenue, Wagga Wagga | 215704 | RES | 811 | 41 | 39 | 64 | 37 | 39 | 65 | 3 | 0 | -1 |
| | 215708 | RES | 62 | 62 | 60 | 89 | 58 | 60 | 90 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| | 215717 | RES | 164 | 54 | 53 | 80 | 50 | 52 | 81 | 4 | 0 | -1 |
| 4 Donnelly Avenue, Wagga Wagga | 215724 | RES | 65 | 61 | 60 | 89 | 57 | 59 | 90 | 4 | 1 | -1 |
| 6 Donnelly Avenue, Wagga Wagga | 215725 | RES | 61 | 61 | 59 | 89 | 57 | 59 | 90 | 4 | 1 | -1 |
| 8 Donnelly Avenue, Wagga Wagga | 215731 | RES | 50 | 60 | 59 | 89 | 56 | 58 | 89 | 4 | 0 | -1 |
| 12 Donnelly Avenue, Wagga Wagga | 215732 | RES | 822 | 42 | 40 | 66 | 38 | 40 | 66 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| | 215736 | RES | 831 | 38 | 37 | 61 | 35 | 37 | 63 | 4 | 0 | -2 |
| | 215746 | RES | 63 | 59 | 57 | 89 | 55 | 57 | 89 | 4 | 0 | -1 |
| 10 Donnelly Avenue, Wagga Wagga | 215750 | RES | 65 | 58 | 57 | 89 | 55 | 57 | 89 | 4 | 0 | -1 |
| | 215760 | RES | 113 | 53 | 51 | 81 | 49 | 51 | 82 | 4 | 0 | -1 |

Page 301, Technical Paper 7 - Operational noise and vibration (rail) ARTC

An increase in 4db is equivalent to greater than 250% increase

This means, in actual fact, that for my address 12 Donnelly Avenue Wagga Wagga, a change in 4dB during the day is equivalent to greater than a 250% increase in noise (using the formula $P = (10^{X/10}) * 100$).

Figure 8 Predicted change in daytime LAeq(15hour) noise levels- Year 2025



This information buried in technical papers makes the EIS and EIS summary less approachable for a lot of stakeholders. Understandably the information needs to be presented, so no comments on that aspect necessarily, but if real information is being obscured by cherry picking data, then I would think that this needs to be investigated a lot further and deeper. I have quite limited time to read a 4000+ page series of documents in the limited feedback window. I can only scratch the surface on these documents, and if erroneous errors and omissions such as the ones above are found by me, then surely there are a lot more where that came from.

Consultation

Principals of engagement

In appendix F, the ARTC states that their approach to communication and engagement is to ensure engagement activities meet the needs of community and stakeholders. Section 3.2 lists reasons and principals of engagement such as inclusivity, transparency, equitability, accessibility to name a few. ^x

It seems ARTC have skipped a few steps in their "spectrum for public participation" figure. (figure F3-1IAP2).

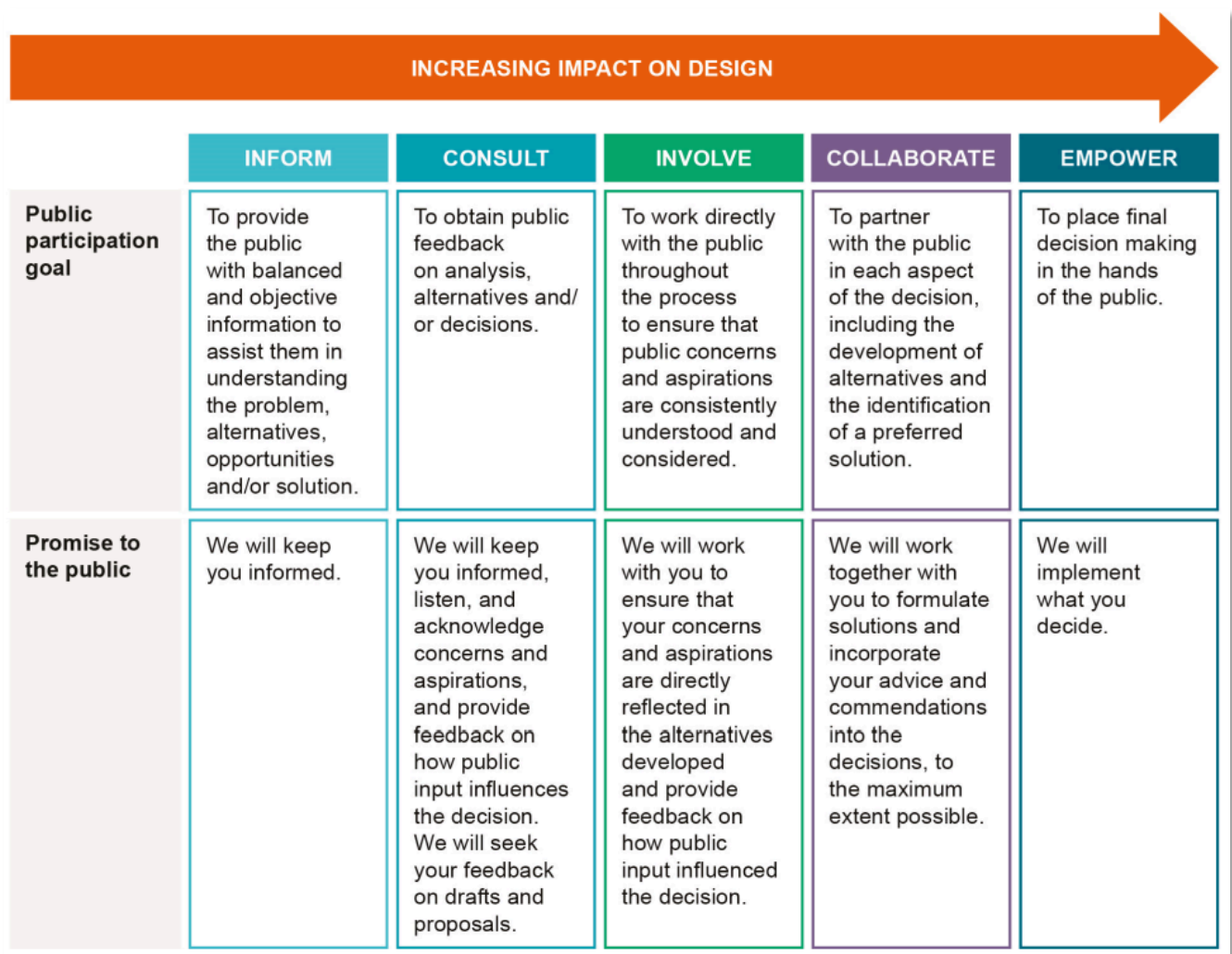


FIGURE F3-1 IAP2 SPECTRUM FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

I reference this table, as the Landowners and site neighbours summary of engagement for Wagga Wagga (F5.1.4)^{xi} contradicts the table and Section 3.2 of appendix F. I'll summarise:

The fourth point in F5.1.4 as an engagement activity is written as follows:

Landowners and residents in proximity to enhancement sites were geo-targeted via online and social media platforms to receive advertising for the 30 per cent, 70 per cent and 100 per cent community information sessions.

How are geo-targeted online and social-media ads *equitable* (F3.2)? This was the *only* way that ARTC decided to communicate with stakeholders regarding the 30 per cent, 70 per cent and 100 per cent community information sessions. This is NOT equitable, inclusive, or accessible. This goes against the ARTC's own engagement principals outlined in section F3.2.

In January 2022, a formal letter was sent to six residential stakeholders that were identified as sensitive noise receivers inviting them to an information session. No responses were received.

I am unsure of the six residential stakeholders that are identified as sensitive noise receivers (as stated above, according to ARTC's own glossary the six residential stakeholders in Donnelly Avenue *are* sensitive noise receivers), but no response does not mean agreement. Silence is *not* a form of acceptance. How did ARTC go about communicating with these residents after no response was received? There is no evidence in Appendix F that shows that any sort of follow-up was undertaken.

The advertising of ALL of the community sessions leaves a lot to be desired. I signed up for email information four times and received nothing. I have searched all folders in my inbox for anything related to ARTC, with only one recent result for the online session (13th September 2022). I signed up early on at the Wagga Marketplace when I stumbled upon a community information session (I was not informed of this session even though I live and work 25 meters away from the railway), I signed up online via a QR code that was sent to our house that took me to an online form. After receiving nothing, I signed up again on said online form and have given my email address, name, and residential address to an ARTC spokesperson on the 18th of August 2022 at the EIS launch/session in the Wagga Wagga Library. After bringing this up again in the online session dated 13th September 2022, Nathaniel Boehringer sent me an email the next day that reads:

Hi Tim,

Thanks for your attendance last night.

I checked our system to find that you were not on our e-news distribution lists. If you had previously signed up, sorry that there has been a technical error.

I have since added you, so please be reassured you will receive all A2I community e-news going forward.

Regards,

Nathaniel Boehringer

Stakeholder Engagement Advisor – NSW

There was no attempt to directly contact stakeholders prior to the EIS session held on the 18th of August 2022 (a Thursday I might add), and luckily, I heard about it from a college *and* already had the day off work so I could attend. How are those who work full-time able to find out about and attend these sessions? ARTC is making minimal attempts to inform and involve stakeholders.

Public exhibition

ARTC state in [Chapter 5 Engagement](#) that a range of consultation and communication tools will be used, including:

- advertisements in the local media giving information regarding the proposal and display of the EIS
- making the EIS available for viewing on the Inland Rail website (inlandrail.artc.com.au/)
- issuing of newsletters to the community (council newsletters, e-newsletter, other)
- briefings to key stakeholders, including councils
- community information sessions
- the public will be able to register to have a copy of the EIS on a USB mailed to them when the public exhibition period begins.^{xii}

From a survey of my neighbours, ARTC have not attempted to contact anyone in our neighbourhood (Donnelly Avenue, Little Best Street and Fox Street) which sits around twenty-five meters away from the rail boundary. The only notification of the “community information session” was in the local paper **on the day of the session**, which was not able to be attended by quite a number of residents as it fell on a business day. The last-minute “notification” (see earlier spectrum for public participation accessibility issues) means that *many* residents missed out. There was no attempt to reach out to stakeholders after the initial EIS launch (until the 6th of September), and it has landed on me to notify as many of my neighbours as possible. The online information session was held two weeks prior to the amended response submission date, which gives those residents who were unable to attend the in-person information session two weeks to read a 4000+ page document and form a response. This is by no means equitable, accessible, or inclusive and therefore contradicts ARTC’s own principals of engagement found in Appendix F, section F3.2.

I am incredibly disappointed in ARTC’s “attempts” at communicating with stakeholders, landowners, and residents in proximity to enhancement sites. They contradict their own principals scattered throughout Appendix F.

Conclusion

As stated earlier, I only have a very tight window to read a 4000+ page document and then swiftly respond. I understand that this may be common practice with significant infrastructure projects such as this, but with the omissions I found that were directly pertinent to me from ARTC in the limited time I have, I can only imagine what else may be discovered if others had adequate time. Hearing from local councillors that according to ARTC a bypass wasn’t even in the scope of the project is quite frustrating, as that is something I cannot respond to as it isn’t part of this EIS. The communication alone from ARTC has been inadequate, and I have very little faith in them as a corporation that flaunts their own values so flagrantly.

I hope this response is genuinely considered and responded to, without being brushed under the carpet. From my reading and understanding of the EIS, I do not feel that due diligence has been equitably and fairly applied to the genuine concerns of stakeholders and residents. In fact, I would go as far to say that the ARTC's consultation and engagement principals are a sham, and they just want the project pushed through ASAP.

I am more than happy to be contacted and am willing for open discourse on the above matters. Regrettably, due to time constraints (ie. family, work, etc) I could only scratch the surface of a handful of the documents listed on the website. Given more time and *honest* consultation and discourse, maybe we could reach a realistic agreement. However, ARTC's actions so far have shown that they are not interested in this kind of outcome.

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Timothy Crutchett
12 Donnelly Avenue, Wagga Wagga

On behalf of

Tracey – 6 Little Best Street, Wagga Wagga
Malcolm – 4 Little Best Street, Wagga Wagga
Dennis & Jenny – 4 Donnelly Avenue, Wagga Wagga
Kris – 10 Donnelly Avenue, Wagga Wagga
Tim, Cat & Charlie – 12 Donnelly Avenue, Wagga Wagga
Trevor, Judy & Colin – 3 Fox Street, Wagga Wagga

References

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- ⁱ Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd (ARTC). *Summary of findings: Albury to Illabo – Environmental Impact Statement*. (2022). P. 24
- ⁱⁱ Public data from Intramaps (<https://maps.wagga.nsw.gov.au/intramaps99/>)
- ⁱⁱⁱ Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd (ARTC). *Technical Paper 7 – Operational noise and vibration (rail)*. (2022) P. 4
- ^{iv} Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd (ARTC). *Technical Paper 7 – Operational noise and vibration (rail)*. (2022) P. 5
- ^v Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd (ARTC). *A2I EIS – Glossary and definitions*. (2022) P. 6
- ^{vi} Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd (ARTC). *Technical Paper 7 – Operational noise and vibration (rail)*. (2022) P. 29
- ^{vii} Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd (ARTC). *Chapter 13 Social*. (2022). P. 29
- ^{viii} Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd (ARTC). *Appendix F – Engagement Support*. (2022). P. 12
- ^{ix} Howstuffworks. *What is a decibel and how is it measured?* (2021).
- ^x Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd (ARTC). *Appendix F – Engagement Support*. (2022).
- ^{xi} Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd (ARTC). *Appendix F – Engagement Support*. (2022). P. 15-16
- ^{xii} Australian Rail Track Corporation Ltd (ARTC). *Chapter 5 engagement*. (2022). P. 8-9