

John Shephard

6 Donnelly Avenue

WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650

Ph: 02 6921 2191 | Em: admin@RIVkids.com.au

25 September 2022

**Submission to Inland Rail Inquiry Background: The inland rail is
proposed from Melbourne to Brisbane.**

***This submission relates to the section from Junee to Albury—most
specifically the scope of works intended to occur within the City of
Wagga Wagga.***

I am a long-term resident of 6 Donnelly Avenue (since 1993).

In addition, I have operated a private psychology business from these premises since 2006. Further to this, it is of considerable significance that this psychology service provides ongoing psychological interventions, assessment and psychological support almost exclusively to children and adolescents who have either specific developmental issues, significant mental health concerns, or both.

Upon review of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) I wish to express my considerable unease regarding both the initial and long-term detrimental impacts (as detailed in the EIS) that this project is to have on the central residential/business areas of Wagga Wagga (an area incorporating numerous period/heritage properties).

My specific concerns include (but are not limited to):

- (1) ***Disruption to professional psychology services:*** the extensive hours of operation (i.e., estimated as being over an 11 month period, seven days a week, from 6am to 6pm) will create an unworkable and dysfunctional environment that would be completely at odds with the quality and nature of our psychological interventions, and wholly non-conducive to the satisfactory engagement/intervention of young people with mental health issues across a range developmental issues (e.g., Autism Spectrum Disorder; Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) or who may have a learning disorder or an Intellectual Disability.

It is of particular importance to note that this service is the only psychology service in the immediate Riverina area that is providing psychological interventions and mental health support exclusive to children (from 12 months of age through to ~25 years of age);

- (2) ***Restrict of trade:*** when considering the all-consuming nature of the works predicted to occur across 11 months—and reflecting on vehicle movements; the excessive operating hours of plant and machinery; the placement of barriers and additional fencing—it is hard to imagine that

this psychology service will be able to maintain operations in any functional capacity.

An important aspect of our professional service (i.e., providing psychological services to young people) is our convenient and close location to four major schools (and to the local TAFE). Our location allows many of our patients to simply walk to our premises from their respective school/high school/college or TAFE.

It is envisaged that the scale of the works planned (and for what would equate to being a full school year) will make it impossible for our young patients to access this psychology service. For many of these students, accessing our service has only been made possible because we are within walking distance of their respective schools (and therefore does not require their parents to bring them to their appointments).

An essential feature of engaging young people in effective and purposeful psychological interventions is having access to a location conducive to creating a calm, secure and supportive environment. The ‘old world’ nature of the central Wagga area, including the extremely low traffic flow along Donnelly Avenue; and the inherent charm of the older style homes located in Donnelly Avenue, are all identified as being relevant and necessary characteristics for providing appropriate mental health interventions for young people and their families.

It is noted that a frequent activity that has been made possible by the current location/environment has been walking various young persons—with the support of our therapy dogs—around the residential block (i.e., Donnelly Avenue-Little Best Street-Fox Street-Donnelly Avenue return). It would appear that this activity will become impractical, dangerous (or possibly impossible), during the proposed construction period;

- (3) *Perpetual disruption to trade/quality of life*: currently each morning there is a train that travels past Donnelly Avenue and that incorporates three (and on occasion four) engines. This particular train typically carries numerous carriages laden with rolls of steel and sheets of flat steel.

The noise from this particular train is significant and typically causes conversations to pause while the engines pass and the engines move some distance further along the line.

The predicted number of 45 trains each day, each carrying significantly more freight than is the case now, does not bode well for the quality and nature of the environment nor the future aesthetics of this relatively peaceful central Wagga locality;

Other areas I find of significant concern regarding this proposal include:

- Excessive and unreasonable disruption to traffic during the construction period—including the blocking of footpaths and cycle routes—and the significant redirecting of main arterial roads that lead into central Wagga (e.g., the increased and frequent blocking of railway crossing);
- Potential traffic safety concerns following the completion of the proposed works with regard to the approach to the Edward Street traffic lights from what will be a significantly higher / steeper bridge. A particular concern will be the nature of the access from Little Best Street to the Edward Street lights;
- The unappealing aesthetics created by the higher road bridge, and the horrific visual assault on the areas that encompass the two footbridges—the proposed monolithic approaches to these two new footbridges are unacceptable and, when considering these current locations and their numerous heritage buildings, presents as more akin to environmental vandalism;
- It is noted that the previously well-established trees located along Little Best Street have (apparently) already succumbed to the proposed development. In addition, I am very concerned that the works no longer allow for trees of a similar size to be re-planted along Little Best Street;
- I am extremely perturbed about the increase in noise and vibrations that will be generated by the proposed increase in daily train numbers, and that these trains are to be significantly heavier than those using the rail line currently;

For the reasons detailed above (in addition to multiple other concerns incorporating aesthetics; functionality; access; noise pollution; pollution in general; devaluing of properties; and loss of income) I must object in the strongest terms to the 'Inland Rail Project' proceeding through the City of Wagga Wagga as currently detailed.

It is my firm belief that this project is misguided, narrow-sighted, and ill-thought through. It is my opinion that there will be few benefits with this particular project as it currently stands, and that there exists the potential for significant and problematic long-term outcomes for Wagga Wagga and the residents.

Please contact me to discuss any of the information provided in this letter.



John Shephard
Clinical Psychologist (PSY0001286783)