

Submission - response to Inland Rail EIS, Illabo to Stockinbingal section.

Property impacts

1. The railway line

The construction of the railway line will completely dissect my property, line running north to south. The proposed connection between the two is a stock underpass, otherwise access is via the Old Sydney Road (**see Property Map attached and Front paddock to treeline copy photograph**) with new entrances on either side of the railway crossing. This will have create additional burden (time and manpower) of moving farm machinery/equipment to different parts or paddocks. Little consideration was given to providing an internal crossing over the railway line which could be used for moving such machinery and also sheep/cattle stock.

The extra effort and time taken to use the external railway crossing (Old Sydney Road) to enter my property from one to the other results from the dismantling some machinery to pass through the railway crossing and then re-assembling once crossed such as a harvester. Associated with this is the issue of traffic along the Old Sydney Road and the number of trains using this line each day (up to 11 trains per day) in which one can cross the line. This becomes a public safety concern.

2. Underpass

An underpass (3m x 3m) has been proposed (**see Property Map attached**) for the movement of stock and a vehicle to pass through. As it is difficult for sheep and cattle to move across railway lines created from light, noise and vibration, there is a need to construct holding yard on either side of the railway line and railings to direct stock.

The potential issues relating to a small underpass include:

- a. Creating a high pressure area through which sheep/cattle must move caused by train movements, noise and vibrations. This is intensified with the confined space to move stock through an underpass (tunnel) ie. 3m x 3m).
- b. There needs to be fencing and handling infrastructure in place to handle sheep/cattle to move through the underpass and to reduce stress on the animals particularly between train movements.
- c. The **width** of the underpass should be wide enough to allow several animals to be side by side so that there is a continual stock flow once the stock enter the underpass. It has been suggested by experts that a **width of 7 metres (one box)** more appropriate to allow a smoother flow or movement by stock. The **height** of the underpass **maintained at 3 metres** is sufficient. Backing gates would be installed to prevent stock coming back. **Winged walls** at the entrances would assist in directing stock towards the underpass.

3. Loss of Land

The amount of land required for the railway is approximately 20 acres. Construction will require an extra 6 acres of land for access etc. 100% of this land is arable and productive. The construction of the railway line passing through my property will affect how the farm will be operated. Currently the farm has 3 paddocks but this will to be changed or re-configured once the railway line is in place to allow for a more effective use of the farm. I am concerned that the farm will have two separate parts and not one complete farming unit.

With trees being removed this will impact the movement of stock for shade purposes and birdlife habitat.

4. Other considerations

a. Access to the property in case of **bushfires** occurring will impact on the movement of fire trucks passing through the property and accessing water will become more difficult to manage.

b. Biosecurity

During the construction phase, I have concerns with unwanted weeds/seeds that may come onto the farm. Also unwanted pests may enter the farm. The removal of trees means loss of habitat to particular bird species. Where trees are lost there will be a cutting of approximately 80m in width.

c. Fencing the railway line.

Is the standard Inland rail fence rabbit and pest proof! I would prefer a netting fence.

d. Water supply

At present there are two dams on the property each servicing two paddocks ie. the front two paddocks. Town water is connected to the property where water is run via pipe to tank near the sheep yards so that water can be used here and also to supply water to a trough in the back paddock for stock. There is no dam in the back paddock. My concern is will Inland Rail be using water from my farm during construction of the railway line! If so how much water would be used and if it is a drought year what are the consequences for stock etc.

e. Noise and vibration

Since there are no buildings or houses on the property there are no real concerns with noise and vibrations for the trains except when moving stock across the railway line via the underpass or over the railway line on the Old Sydney Road.

f. Compensation

My main concern is how will the future value of my farm be affected with the railway line dissecting my property into two, if I was to sell the farm. Since the farm is 540 acres in total, is it just as viable to have two smaller farm areas rather than the one area of 540 acres!