This submission concerns the proposed construction and operation of a new section of significant rail infrastructure currently being considered between the NSW towns of Illabo and Stockinbingal(Inland Rail I2S southern section). Overall, this proposal intends to provide a new and enhanced capability for freight transport utilising double-stacked trains of 1.8km length and 6.5m height. The intention also exists to provide design flexibility to ultimately accommodate longer trains up to 3.6km in length at a future date. This document principally centres on outlining concerns related to an area affected by this proposal to the immediate west of Stockingbingal.

As cited by the published Environmental Impact Statement(EIS), within the aforementioned area, the proposed design describes the intended construction and use of both a bridge-over-road configuration(Burley-griffin way realignment) to better facilitate traffic flow, along with a track layout connecting a Cootamundra/Lake Cargelligo rail line offshoot to the Stockinbingal/Parkes line; the latter incorporating an initial bend to the south and then to the north. Currently, this bend is proposed to begin well within the limits of the village raising the very high likelihood of exposing nearby residents to; 1) significantly increased construction noise and vibration discomfort for an extended period, and; 2) given the expected **multi-fold increase** in train numbers when fully operational, an expanded noise and vibration envelope persisting for most of the day. The EIS also describes how this design was not the original, but the result of an optimisation cycle which moved the proposal further eastward (closer to the village) raising this concern. It appears this decision was fundamentally based on improved construction/capital costs requirements with the cited impact described as Neutral (Table 6.9 - Summary of implications). From personal experience, this finding is disputed. Further consideration of the design is therefore requested to more closely align with the original for the following primary reasons;

1) Noise modelling has been presented as viable based on limited case validation. The implications for nearby affected residents would be significant if these results are ultimately proved unreliable. Additional independent noise modelling tools should be employed as well as more robust validation efforts conducted to improve prediction fidelity confidence.
2) Noise measurements are taken over a brief period(approx. 2 weeks). Given the agricultural bias of rail (and road) movements, discomfort levels tend to be seasonally correlated. Measurements during these periods should be made.
3) No direct vibration measurements were taken near proximate ‘sensitive receivers’. This information would better inform the design as to level and extent of the ground-based vibration impact from actual train movements.
4) Decisions made on meeting relevant noise (and vibration) standards within the EIS are quite often based on, at best, marginal differences(i.e 1-2dB). Such differences could be easily overwhelmed by predictive uncertainty. Ultimately, adversely affected sensitive receiver numbers may prove to be significantly underestimated requiring additional mitigation efforts. Greater prediction confidence and more robust model validation could enhance confidence.
5) Revising the design further towards the east as originally proposed would be a natural inherent risk limiting strategy to nearby residents being exposed to unforeseen adverse impacts and modelling uncertainties. This methodology would also reduce the likelihood(and extra costs) of extensive noise mitigation measures being required after the fact, not to mention the excessive and extended discomfort predicted during the construction phase.