

24 November 2015

Dear Sir/ Madam

We are a dairy farming family substantially affected by the Albion Park Rail bypass project. Our dairy farm lies within the Macquarie Rivulet floodplain and is bisected by the existing Illawarra Highway. Over hundreds of years our land has benefitted from the alluvial deposits left by successive floods to become the lush, fertile, productive ground that it is. Approximately 26% of the main carriageway of the new road goes through ours and our neighbour's property. On/off ramps located on our land (and land we lease) are in addition to this figure. The road destroys our dairy, associated sheds and our family home, in addition to taking 27 hectares of prime agricultural land.

We have been in negotiations with the RMS project team for almost two years. Throughout that time we have impressed upon them the need to minimise the impact to agriculture. We have tried to educate them that quality agricultural land is rare and needs to be protected. It goes beyond our current farming generation. There is no reason that this land could not continue to be farmed for hundreds of years into the future.

We were obviously aware of the road corridor announced in the mid 1990's. In this corridor the new road closely followed the alignment of the existing Illawarra Highway and took approximately 12 hectares of our land. The design presented in the EIS takes more than double that amount. We have tried to work with RMS to keep the alignment of the main carriageway along the existing Illawarra Highway, as was expected in the original corridor, but instead they have pushed it further into our paddocks. The existing corridor had the on/off ramps located at Tongarra Road. The new design has them well outside the corridor, right on top of our best quality land. We have offered them a significant number of alternative locations for these on/off ramps (most of which were still located on our property but in lesser quality land) but this has fallen on deaf ears. Reading this document makes it clear that their only priority is to push this road through, no matter the impacts to anything.

We are not experts in traffic, flood modelling, biodiversity or any of the other specialist areas that have been reported on in this document. We are experts in dairy farming however and have reviewed the document from a logical, practical, farming perspective. Our issues are presented below.

**Serious safety issues with Pedestrian and Cyclist facilities.**

The new main carriageway completely cuts through the centre of our farm, stopping us from our current practice of being able to walk our cows across the road from one side to the other, as permitted by a licence from Local Land Services.

RMS say that they have alleviated this issue by providing an underpass under the new twin Frazers Creek bridges. (page 474) In our negotiations with them they also advised that this would be a service road allowing RMS road contractors (or utility providers) to drive along the edge of the corridor to check that everything was ok with the road structure and utilities.

It is only upon reading this document that we find that this path is also to be used by the public as pedestrian and cycle way access. This is completely unacceptable, impossible and dangerous.

Cows are easily frightened. If the heifers (young animals) were crossing at that point and became spooked by a cyclist, they could stampede. This puts the public and our staff at an unacceptable level of risk of being crushed.

As cows are crossing that area it is inevitable that they will leave behind urine and manure. Depending on the season there will also be dirt, grass, and stones from their hooves. It will make the surface of the path unsuitable for the public. Will RMS want to bear the responsibility of a cyclist slipping in cow manure and injuring themselves?

Finally the area will be traversed on a daily basis by farm staff on motor bikes, tractors with farm machinery and silage trailers. Our farm operates with a high degree of occupational health and safety but in all industries accidents can happen. Should a 600kg bale of silage fall off the trailer as we are using this access it could kill a pedestrian.

There is absolutely no way a shared path can be located in this area.

### **Flooding**

Having a farm on a flood plain you naturally expect it to flood, which it does on a regular basis. Depending on the size of a flood, different impacts will be felt. There are the obvious impacts to fencing and any debris which may be left lying in the paddocks. However most people would not understand the impacts to farming practice. We are fortunate that when it floods the bulk of the water flows fairly quickly through the farm taking away the more obvious signs of a flood. However there is a huge quantity of water that has soaked the top layer of soil and remains there for quite some time. While the moisture and silt deposited by floods are beneficial to our land, the water that hangs around for a while is not. It kills the grass in low lying areas and makes it necessary for us to replant those sections. It prevents the cows and machinery from accessing the paddocks. Each cow weighs in excess of 600kg. Multiply that by 250 – 300 animals in a herd. If we allowed the herd into a paddock where the ground is waterlogged their hooves would rip up the grass in the paddock turning it into a bog and making a huge repair job. It also puts our animals at risk of injury.

When floods go through we are well versed in the management practices we need to apply in keeping our stock on high ground, not just during the actual flood but until the paddocks are fit to traverse. Depending on the season this may mean the flooded paddocks are inaccessible for 5 days to 4 weeks. If the paddock in question was intended for silage then this causes concern as to how long it will take until we can get machinery back on the paddock to cut the grass. The longer it waits, the less the quality of silage as the grass gets too rank.

In the flooding section of the document RMS set themselves a flood level objective that they consider is acceptable for Agricultural areas. (Section 8.1.2 specifically page 208). This target has never been discussed with our family or been assessed whether it is suitable for the area in which we farm, given soil types and rainfall patterns.

They have no concept of the impact to our business from an increased level of flooding. They have taken the bulk of our high ground for the road project. With increased levels of flooding we will be forced to keep all our animals on a greatly reduced amount of high ground for longer periods of time. Our family does not accept that this 'flood level objective' is reasonable.

If their models are to be believed, the level of flooding over almost the entirety of our farm will be increased. This is unacceptable. The document states that the flooding is increased because of the way the road is designed. "Within the floodplain area, impacts are due to a loss of floodplain storage due to additional fill within the floodplain" (page 241). The models should be run with the road over the flood plain being bridged rather than a hard fill embankment. We expect that this arrangement would allow the water to run over the flood plain as nature intended it to. We anticipate that bridging the area, along with permission to graze our cows under the bridged section, would have a lessor impact on the farm. We have raised this with them on a number of occasions but they claim this is not a viable option as bridges are too expensive.

### **Scour**

We are disappointed to note that assessments relating to scouring have not yet been completed. We note that these assessments will be conducted as part of the detailed design (Technical Paper 3 Section 9.4 page 91). We feel that this assessment should have been part of this stage of the project rather than detailed design.

We are concerned that it sounds as though those assessments are limited to investigating scour issues on their structures. Scour of our paddocks is of great concern to us. In particular from water through culverts M2b and M2c. Any scouring of our paddocks may result ground being gouged out, removal of top soil and/or loss of grazing land. This will result in a loss of productivity for our farm.

The work being done at bridges BR09 and BR07 is also of concern to us. The embankment at bridge BR09 on Tongarra Road is designed to force more water under the bridge and through the creek bed. We are aware that scour protection work has already been carried out on this bridge prior to the embankment being built. Our concern is that the extra water being forced through Frazers Creek at that point may impact and erode the creek banks downstream of the bridge. The EIS warns that this impact may occur, "The project would also have potential to: Modify flow regimes within watercourses, which may cause bed or bank instability". (page 226)

A similar issue is noted with bridges over Frazers Creek (BR07) near the Illawarra Highway. By damming the flood plain and forcing the water under the bridges they will be changing the whole dynamic of the flood plain. Having not had experience of this arrangement, we don't know what will happen, but we have seen enough erosion on the Macquarie Rivulet to know that this is a very serious situation and one that is not easily remedied.

What do RMS plan to do if there are serious impacts to our paddocks or the creek banks? Will the design of the road change or is it too late by that stage?

### **Construction and flooding**

It is inevitable that during construction there will be several floods and yet this document hasn't assessed that eventuality. The document states "construction phase impacts on flooding were not modelled as part of the project design, but flood modelling would be considered during detailed design, if required." (page 223). Technical paper 3 makes a similar comment on page 79. We hear different accounts of how long construction will take and have no knowledge of the timeframe that they will be working on the central section of the road. It may take a year or two to complete our section. It is essential that we are able to assess how flooding on our farm will change over this period. Flood levels should be modelled at all stages of the project.

The document does not seem to address any risk to our property in regard to movement of material due to flooding during construction. In regard to stockpiles, Technical Paper 3 states "loose material stored within the floodplain has the potential to be mobilised during a flood, especially within the Macquarie Rivulet floodplain. Moving debris such as this can become a substantial hazard during a flood, and may also contribute to blockage of hydraulic structures." (Page 80) So what will happen *when* it floods during construction and portions of half completed road end up strewn over our paddock? Has this been considered and how will it be addressed?

### **Flooding and the impact of the Calderwood Valley project**

The Calderwood valley project will add 4,800 dwellings on an area which was previously farm land. Land which mostly soaked up the rain as it fell. The document states that "The [flood] modelling found the cumulative impacts of the project and the Calderwood development would not result in substantial changes in flood levels or extents." (page 566) The road project already admits to causing an increased level of flooding on the farm. (page 241) When you add in the runoff from those 4,800 homes, how is such a statement possible? Or is the key word here 'substantial'. It is inevitable that the Calderwood development will raise flood levels and this road project is only going to add to the problem.

We already have experience of the impact of housing estates on flooding. The run off from the housing estates in the Mount Terry area of Albion Park flows into Frazers Creek. Prior to the construction of the housing estate, the Illawarra Highway flooded much less frequently. Now we know that if that area receives around 70 mm of rain we can expect a flood in approximately 12 hours' time.

### **Flood Free Access to high ground**

We currently have flood free access to our high ground via the Illawarra Highway. Once the road goes through, RMS are unable to provide flood free access to our remaining high ground. RMS have proposed access via an underpass at Frazers Creek bridge and via Darcy Dunster Reserve. Both these routes are flood prone.

They note that the access at Darcy Dunster Reserve "would be suitable for farm machinery and herd movements." (Page 474). This is not true. The bridge height at this point is 3m. A tractor may be able to squeeze under this, but not a silage/hay wagon. It is impossible for

herd movements as a cattle truck could not fit under this height. We can't just somehow drive the cows under the bridge into the public car park and get them into a cattle truck, all without yards and a race. They also fail to mention that the gates to access Darcy Dunster Reserve are closed by the Council between 5:30 pm and 8am. Unfortunately farming isn't just an 8 – 5:30 occupation. We need to be able to access our animals whenever they require assistance.

The document discounts the impacts of not having flood free access "The project would sever access by road to high ground. Flood events are of short duration and stock would be inaccessible by road for short periods. (Hours) (chapter 8)". Whilst the actual water blocking the access might only be for a few hours duration, the soggy ground will last for days. Should our cows become stranded on the little remaining high ground it will be a few days before we can get tractors in with feed for them. In our current arrangements we can walk our cows to a wet weather loafing area where we can get tractors in on a hard surface.

### **Land Acquisition**

The document understates the loss of land to the dairy business. It is true that the land acquisition amount is 27 hectares. It is true that a simple calculation of land taken over the sum of lands that we own and lands that we lease results in a figure of 6.7%. However this figure is not indicative of the real nature of the problem. Our current practice of having two dairies on opposite sides of the farm enables us to use almost all our land for grazing of the milking herd. The remaining sections of the farm cannot be accessed by the milkers as they are too far away from either of the dairies. For each kilometre a cow walks she loses a litre of milk production. Longer distances cause sore feet and lameness issues which then impact on the cow's overall health. The destruction of our Illawarra Highway dairy is forcing us to milk the cows in a different section of the farm. Paddocks which previously formed key areas in their grazing rotation will now be inaccessible to them. The true loss of ground to the milking herd under the design presented in this paper is 23%. (Note that this figure is only achievable if RMS fund the construction of a new bridge crossing of the Macquarie Rivulet. If the new bridge crossing is not in place then the figure is far worse.) This figure could be reduced by the incorporation of an underpass toward the Albion Park end of the existing Illawarra Highway. We have made this clear to the RMS consultants on innumerable occasions and are disgusted by their lack of progress on this to date. The document states that "RMS is in consultation with the dairy operator to appropriately manage the impacts to the dairy" (page 406). Their definition of 'appropriate' and ours are vastly different.

### **Use of Land acquired**

Throughout the entire negotiation process the RMS project team have assured us that they have made every effort possible to reduce the footprint of the road and minimise the impact to agriculture. We believed their assertion and then read the following sections of the document:

- Table 4.4 in section 4.5.2 Design Improvements (page 54)  
The alignment of the three on/off ramps at the Illawarra Highway was adjusted (ie: pushed out further into the paddock) "To improve the constructability of the design, as it would allow the Illawarra Highway to remain open to traffic during the

construction of the northbound entry ramp and the northbound Princes Motorway carriageway".

We are very conscious of the huge impact that closing the Illawarra Highway would have on the community. But we are also aware that this would be a short term pain in comparison to the loss of prime quality agricultural land forever. Once this land is under a road it can never again be used to produce food for our nation.

- Technical paper 10, landscape character and visual amenity Pages 54, 55 and 61  
We were astonished to see these diagrams showing the extra amount of land that is being taken, above and beyond that which is required for the road. What was it being used for? To plant a few trees to disguise the road. Page 61 shows a cross section of the road as it goes through our property. There is a "tree planting" section in excess of 20 meters on each side of the road. We realise that (according to their diagrams) some land on the side of the road is required for 'water quality basins' but apart from that use we should be able to graze our cows right up to the side of the road. It is insane to think that top quality farming land should be used to grow screening trees. No one will be taking care of that area and in no time it will become an over grown scrub area instead of being productive farming land. We know that some utilities will be located underground in some areas but there's no reason our cows cannot graze over those areas. They do it now on our current farming location. We allow service vehicles on our farm as necessary to inspect any issues.

The extra land taken as shown as section PM1 on page 55 is also excessive. It is essential that the amount of land taken be reduced to just be that which is required for the footprint of the road. If the public is concerned that the road is impacting their view then they should plant screening trees on their own property, not on valuable farming land.

- Section 5.9 Pedestrian and cyclist facilities (page 77)  
We were astonished to find that part of the land being taken for the road was to be allocated to a shared path for pedestrians and cyclists. This is no way in keeping with RMS' promise to minimise the footprint of the road. Whilst we enjoy outdoor pursuits ourselves this cannot be justified in the light of the impact to primary production. The cycle way in this area is a little over 1km long and 3m wide. This represents one third of a hectare in lost grazing land. Coupled with the 'tree planting' area as discussed above there are significant amounts of top quality pasture lost to production.

As stated above this access for farm machinery and dry cows and heifers can NOT be shared with cyclists and pedestrians. It is too unsafe.

#### **Access from one side of the farm to the other - the need for an underpass.**

The document notes that we have a stock-crossing permit which allows us to move our cows across the Illawarra Highway. (page 474) This permit does not just allow us to cross the animals at one particular spot. We can cross them at 5 points along a 1 km stretch of

highway. We use the gate entrances which are most convenient for the cows according to which paddock they need to be in. Both our milking herd and our dry cows and heifers use this access. Having one crossing point at Frazers Creek is completely unusable for the milking herd. The crossing is located in the wrong place and would result in them walking an extra kilometre each way, to and from the dairy. We have compromised with the RMS to allow this to be our primary point of crossing machinery but it is essential that an underpass suitable for cattle movements be located further south along the road. The RMS project team are well aware of the required location of the underpass but just keep stalling on whether they will deliver this or not.

### **Direct references to our farming business**

#### **Page 395 – Land usage**

The document states that "the land to the south of the existing Illawarra Highway, although not incorporated within either of the registered dairies, forms part of the business and is used for making silage and grazing stock that is not currently milking." This is not correct. We regularly take the milking herd across the road to graze the paddocks there. We don't know what they mean that the land is not incorporated within either of the registered dairies. It is a vital part of the grazing rotation of the herd being milked at the Illawarra Highway dairy.

#### **Page 406 – Milk Production**

The document states that "The enterprise currently produces 4.5 million litres of milk annually". That is an old figure. At our current herd level we will produce 5.4 million litres annually. We are in a growth phase in our business and expect that within 12 months we will have a herd size able to produce 6 million litres of milk annually.

#### **Page 406 – Direct Impacts**

The document states that "the direct impacts would potentially include loss of pasture....."etc. There is no 'potential' about this. We ARE going to lose our land, our dairy and sheds, and sustain significant loss of access to other areas of our farm.

#### **Page ??? – Our family home**

We would love to draw your attention to the section of the EIS that refers to the destruction of our house - but there isn't one! How can the socio economic report purport to be complete when it doesn't even mention that we are losing our family home? Maybe the loss of one family's home isn't considered serious by RMS but it is devastating to our family. We would expect that any sort of decency or professionalism would ensure that such an outcome would at least be mentioned in the report. What other things have been missed in the socio economic report?

Our neighbour's property is also destroyed by the road. The only comment about that in the socio economic section is that 'the project would directly impact the dwelling on this land parcel' (page 475). Destruction is a fairly substantial impact! The current family have lived there for over 50 years yet this isn't worth a mention in the socio economic papers. The fact that it is heritage listed (page 317) doesn't even save it. RMS will just take a picture of it before they knock it down.

This all adds up to RMS taking the easy way out on route choice. They know that only two family groups will be impacted by 26% of the road route and much of the other impacted land was in government hands. So it's easy to get through without too much public outcry. They make the motorist travel a significantly longer distance than the existing Princes Highway, they add to the congestion in Albion Park, but all this is irrelevant to getting the road built.

### **Ancillary Sites**

Section 5.20.1 Page 96

This section discusses the construction aspect of the proposal and suggests that a number of ancillary sites will be necessary to store materials and equipment. One of these sites (AS5) is located in our eastern most paddocks. We are insulted that many of the technical papers refer to this site yet the first time the family heard of this was when the EIS was presented. The Tate family farming business has been devastated enough by the impact of this road. There is absolutely no way that we will be yielding up our little remaining high ground to be a storage dump for the road project.

### **Impact on Frazers Creek**

We were astounded to read section 5.14 Creek Adjustments (page 88).

Throughout our discussions with RMS we have been actively pursuing any alternative location of the on/off ramps at the central interchange. A number of the alternatives we suggested would have had a minor impact on the more swampy land on our property. RMS were adamant that they could not consider these options as they might impact 'wetland' yet when it suits them they can divert the entire course of a creek! They admit to us in discussions that it all comes down to money.

- It is cheaper to divert the creek then bridge the section where it naturally flows.
- It is cheaper to leave the on/off ramps where they have designed them rather than deal with the soft soils in one of the alternative areas.
- It is cheaper to put hard fill on irreplaceable farm land than to bridge the flood plain.
- It is cheaper to swing the on/off ramps further out into our paddocks than build a longer bridge over the main carriageway.

This is all penny pinching, short sighted thinking that destroys both the environment and agriculture.

### **Biodiversity**

The land to the west of the Illawarra Regional Airport is used by our farming business to graze both our milking herd and our dry cows and heifers. This land was previously farmed for generations, then was bought by developers to create the Illawarra Business Park. As part of their development they had the swamp on that land turned into a SEPP14 wetland. In this way they would be able to palm off their flood prone ground to the council to manage while they continued with the development of the high, flood free ground on that area. At that time the people reviewing the area described the 'wetland' as 'degraded'.

(Reference [http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view\\_job&job\\_id=191](http://majorprojects.planning.nsw.gov.au/index.pl?action=view_job&job_id=191) .

Appendix 12 of the Environmental Assessment is a Waterways and Wetlands Report prepared by Whelans InSites. See Section 7). In this new study we note that this area has



been classified as 'moderate to good'. We do not have the financial resources to employ yet another consultant to act as a referee to these two groups to determine which study is correct. In the end the technical classification is irrelevant to us, we care for this land in the way it needs, the same as we care for all the rest of the land under our stewardship.

We note that in other areas of the road project they find themselves unable to avoid a site that does have flora of significance. This is a serious issue and it is right that there is legislation in place to ensure that remediation is made in the form of an offset. But we would like to know, where is the agricultural land offset that must be found when scarce agricultural land is taken? Why is the land that feeds us considered of lessor value than an endangered species? It seems that agriculture is the endangered species here not just the Eastern Flame Pea.

27 hectares of our land is gone. 58 hectares of our neighbour's property is gone. His land may be overgrown at present but that is only because of neglect. With proper management that land could be as productive as our own. Where is the state government going to find 85 hectares of rich soils with regular rainfall to replace what they've buried under a road?

### **Soil Types**

We chatted with the Geotechnical contractors while they were taking samples on our farm. One of them joked that he wouldn't want to build a road here as the ground was too soft. The EIS document notes that in our section of the road, "bedrock was reported at depths of between 9 and 20 meters below ground level" (page 490). Surely someone other than the Geotechnical people (and ourselves) can see that this is not a good place to build a road. There is so much land around this area that is perfect for building roads and houses. Don't put a road on the limited amount of land that our nation can use to feed itself.

### **Water quality**

Page 503/504 also page 508

In this section the document discusses construction phase impacts on water quality. It is disappointing to note that it doesn't detail the risk to agriculture. Instead it states "it is noted that most agricultural users of surface waters are located upstream of the project, and are unlikely to be impacted." We use water from the Macquarie Rivulet for the needs of the dairy, to provide water in the water troughs for our stock and for irrigation. Any adverse change to water quality would be of serious concern to us. Impacts to the quality of water in Frazers Creek would also be concerning as it may lead to a build-up of sediment and greater flooding issues. Water downstream of where Frazers Creek joins the Macquarie Rivulet is also used for watering stock. It is critical that there is no contamination of this water supply.

### **Minor points**

#### **Flooding and Road closures**

Section 3.2.2 (page 26) states "The Princes Highway floods three times a year south of Station Road. It is closed on average for half a day a year."

Then at the bottom of the page it contradicts itself and states "Floodwaters close the Princes Highway three times each year on average, typically for 1.5 days on each occasion. This sums to a total of around 4.5 days each year during which the highway is closed to traffic".

In the last 10 years the Princes Highway has been closed due to flooding on three occasions that we are aware of. While there may have been one or two other isolated incidents, it is certainly not the case that it is closed 4.5 days each year. However it would not be unusual for the Illawarra Highway to be closed three times in the year.

In a document relating to such an important matter we feel that it is not too much to ask to get the names of the roads correct.

### **Business Closures**

Technical paper 9 Socio economic, Page 142

This talks about the loss of the nursery "The wholesale nursery would be subject to acquisition. The business, while requiring visibility and accessibility, is not site specific and could relocate into new premises elsewhere. However, its acquisition might have an indirect impact on the outdoor garden business and shed building business located next door, and they may attract patronage due to their proximity to the nursery."

All the businesses in that area will be acquired. Did the socio economic people even look where the road was going?

### **The Environmental Impact Statement Overview document**

This is the summary document that most of the public will see. On page 3 it states "The proposed new motorway is forecast to cut morning northbound travel times by almost 65 percent, from nine minutes down to five and a half minutes." Fortunately later in the document they get their maths correct and state "When the Albion Park Rail bypass is open to traffic it is forecast to cut morning northbound travel times by almost 33 per cent, from nine minutes down to six minutes."

There are many other typos and inaccuracies throughout the main document. We cite these references, not to be petty, but to show the haste that is endemic in this whole planning process. RMS are racing to get this project approved and don't care what is sacrificed along the way.

### **Access to the Illawarra Regional Business Park.**

Page 569

The land to the west of the Illawarra Regional Airport, which we currently farm, was previously approved for a subdivision for commercial and light industrial lots.

The document states that "the motorway design maintains access to the business park via the Illawarra Highway...." This is not true. In fact there has never been access to the Business Park via the Illawarra Highway on any of the approved plans.

The document further states "The motorway would provide cumulative positive impacts due to the improved network efficiency....." (page 569). Had the motorway been built as per the original corridor the on/off ramps would have been located on Tongarra Road. This design *would* have improved efficiency for the business park. The current design will just force commercial traffic through the already overburdened intersection at Terry St and Tongarra Road.

### **Farming Heritage and Future Value**

Aboriginal Heritage receives a whole volume of its own, while agriculture receives a few pages plus a paragraph here or there. We can never fully understand the connection that Aboriginal people have with their land, yet we can assure you that farmers have a very deep connection with their land. There has been farming here since the 1820's. Our current generation will continue to farm here for another 20 years. Our young children want to be farmers and should they continue that desire as adults, they will be here for another 50 years. Whether it is our family here or another, there is no reason that this valuable fertile soil cannot be farmed for hundreds more years. We cannot take the short term, quick fix approach that this is the cheapest place to put a road. The loss of this precious, fertile soil will cost NSW forever.

The report tries to downplay the importance of this farm by stating that it's not shown on the BSAL maps and it's not listed as a strategic direction for this area (Draft Illawarra Regional Growth and Infrastructure Plan, page 392). These are both red herrings. BSAL mapping was started to protect agriculture from mining interests. It is at a high, state and regional level. Mining is never going to happen on our flood plain. Our region, whilst once a strong farming area will never again be a designated farming area as the bulk of the old farms are now under houses. We are a precious fertile farm surrounded by suburbia. We can never have houses built here as it is a flood plain. Our farm is well on the way to producing 6 million litres of milk annually. This is a significant volume of milk for NSW dairy industry which is already experiencing a shortage of milk.

Later in the document there seems to be a change in how our business is seen. We site these references so that you can appreciate the importance of the farm, both to the local area and to the NSW dairy industry:

Page 396 - "Agricultural businesses, and particularly dairying, are important contributors to the regional economy, and the continued viability of farms and farming is important to the region."

Technical paper 9 sites a reference from the Illawarra Regional Plan on page 111, stating that the agricultural lands "are strategically important for long term food production that is close to market."

Technical paper 9 Socio-economic impact assessment Appendix 2 (page 27) states: "It is understood that the business is a highly successful dairy enterprise, with performance well above industry averages. It has been stated that the farm would appear to be one of the better managed and profitable dairy enterprises in NSW". It further notes that NSW is experiencing a milk shortage, and the prospects are good for expanding production as planned.

Aside from the value to the NSW dairy industry, our farm is highly prized locally for its rural views. We often have people stop by the side of the road to take photos of our cows. In fact a local photography competition was won by someone taking a photo of our farm. The document notes that "views over rolling farmland are still highly valued" (page 412) by the community. Views that they will no longer get to see from the road because they are using valuable farming land to plant screening trees.

### **Sustainability and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act**

The design fails the test of sustainability. The document notes that "the present generation should ensure that the health, diversity, and productivity of the environment are maintained or enhanced for the benefit of future generations." (page 579) This road project is having a direct detrimental impact on future generations being able to feed themselves. The NSW milk market is already desperate for more milk and this project will directly reduce the amount of milk able to be produced by current and future generations.

It does also not meet the objectives of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act (page 612) "to encourage the proper management, development and conservation of natural and artificial resources, including agricultural land.....". This road design does not properly manage, develop OR conserve agricultural land. Instead it takes the best quality land and buries it under a road. This is a terrible outcome for future generations.

We ask the Department of Planning and Environment to reject the current design of the road. We ask that RMS carefully and creatively review the design to reduce the impact to irreplaceable agricultural land. These impacts go beyond the current generation and will affect our nation's ability to feed itself into the future.

Yours sincerely

Craig Tate  
Philip Tate  
Nicole Tate  
Karen Tate