

5 February 2021

The Hon. Rob Stokes MP
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces
Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 5022
PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

Dear Minister Stokes

Submission to the Federal Parliamentary Inquiry into Inland Rail Project. Narromine to Narrabri.

My Husband and I are situated in the Tonderburine area along the proposed greenfield section of the Inland Rail, between Curban and Mt.Tenandra. My husband has lived here almost eighty years. This letter relates to the impact the proposed line will have on the region as a whole and in particular our property.

It is our strong view that the Inland Rail Project should run on the existing rail line on the west of the Castlereagh River. Local community feedback supports this option.

I would like to address the following:

- 1. The choice of the greenfield section in preference to the existing line.**
- 2. The proposed route is a major watershed area for the Warrumbungle Mountains**
- 3. Soils and erosion.**
- 4. Economic impacts.**
- 5. Tourism.**

THE ARTC STATES: THEIR AIM IS TO UTILISE EXISTING RAIL LINES AND ROAD CORRIDORS.

- Why was the existing line put to the west of the Castlereagh river? It was generally known, the volumes and velocity and damage that was caused by storm waters off the Warrumbungle Mountains. It now flows into the Castlereagh River.
- The community and landowners supported using existing line. This is fenced and crossings already in place. It will not cut off access. Paddocks are already configured and working.
- **Why** was the decision made to traverse highly valuable, small holdings of land. Agriculture supports the region. This decision will damage so many farmers livelihoods. These properties are all businesses.
- Please don't accept an answer of: It will be quicker, or the cost will be the same. We need statistics. They have never given a satisfactory answer to this question.
- Coonamble, a huge grain producing and receival area is desperate to have the rail come to them. Why not? This would be progress!

A 3.5 METRE LEVEE ACROSS THE BASE OF THE WARRUMBUNGLE MOUNTAINS WILL BE A DISASTER !!!

- The Area I refer to in particular is between the Yarrandale Road and Box Ridge Road. This would also apply to all areas along the base of the Warrumbungles.
- Was there any hydraulic modelling done in this area? If so where? What records were used? What portion of the proposal sight? Can we see the results?
- B3.2.2 Flooding was mentioned around Narromine, Castlereagh River, Marthaguy Creek, Merrigal Creek, and Bullagreen Creek. Then Narrabri. **No mention of the huge flows from the Warrumbungle Mountains. The Warrumbungles are very seldom mentioned.**
- **Extents and depths:**
ARTC Quotes: *"For the majority of the other catchments located along the proposal sight, flooding in the 1% AET event is typically characterised by widespread but relatively shallow overland flows, in smaller, more frequent events. Flooding is usually limited to the main channels and immediate surrounds."*
With heavy storms, the flooding water can be quite deep and widespread. Torrential rains in the Warrumbungles, sweeping down and hitting the 3.5 metre bank directly in it's path!! **A catastrophe waiting to happen.** Imagine the water building up on the bank. The depth. A risk to human lives and certainly stock. Now imagine the water being pushed through the culverts, the force scouring the land on the western side, until a creek is formed, cutting through properties.
- **Flood Hazard**
ARTC Quotes: *"Flood hazards associated with areas of overland flooding is typically low."* Once again they fail to take into consideration the Warrumbungles.
- **Roads**
We have one property, with it's only access cut off. This property will have a different owner. ARTC have planned causeways, that will flood this area. The area with electricity, bore, hayshed etc. Instead, planning to put a crossing across a paper road further to the south so new owner will have five or six double gates, including one either side of the 3.5 meter bank. This new entrance will also be impassable in wet weather.
Our own block has culverts planned through our front paddock, which will wash away our only access road, cause major soil erosion and potentially flood our homestead, gardens, sheds, silos, woolshed and sheep yards. We do not have a watercourse here.
- **Risks**
ARTC Quotes: *"Obstruct the passage of floodwaters and overland flow which **could** exacerbate existing flooding conditions and pose a risk to the public."* Agriculture is the main, perhaps only industry. The damage it will do to these business's will be devastating. ARTC do not understand the impact on the land.
- **Flooding – Key Risks**
ARTC Quotes: B3.41 *"Rail formation across flood plain which **could** interrupt overland flow. Downstream of and immediately near the rail formation, flow would be concentrated at bridge and culvert outlets. This **could** cause increases in velocities and peak flood levels at other locations."*
How can they say could? It definitely would to a very damaging degree!
- **Land Use**
ARTC Quotes: *"It is predicted that there would be a **redaction of inundation for all MAJOR LAND***

USERS. “ (Please Explain!!!) “*Water will be held up behind the rail formation, decreasing downstream inundation of land. As Such there are NO expected impacts on existing land users*” We would like an answer to the following question: What do they intend doing with the water (Please refer to the photos attached, showing quantities of water) that will be held up? Maybe leave to flood the landowner to the east of the bank. Maybe direct onto **MINOR LAND USERS.** In directing elsewhere, gullies and creeks will form behind the bank.

- **Buildings pg 28**

ARTC Quotes: “*There are likely to be localised modifications in existing ground levels and flow paths that could affect floodwater behaviour.*” (Would that include the positioning of culverts?) Are we to be told where the culverts are to be? How many and reasoning for them being there? What the Modifications to existing ground levels and flow paths are and where these will be? Previous maps have shown three lots of culverts in our front paddock, which **will** flood our homestead, gardens, sheds, sheep yards, shearing shed, silos and hay shed. Also will flood our **only access road.** How do we work out compensation for this?

How can the ARTC make predictions behind the Warrumbungles without records? They do refer to Gilgandra Shire records. We would like to see the records they refer to. Certainly not the town flooding records?

ARTC Quotes: “*Floods can create hazardous conditions, including fast flowing shallow water or slow flowing deep water in which humans are vulnerable*”.

In the case of the Warrumbungles, we also have fast flowing **deep** water and more so as it is forced through culverts.

ARTC Quotes: “*The proposal site generally passes through rural land with land uses that are less sensitive to flood hazards, as there are less people and infrastructure with potential to be impacted.*”

These are business’s, landowners, stock, and crops that this country, and country towns rely on.

Once again, this proposal line (**levee**) across the base of the Warrumbungles, is a major hazard, when the existing line to the west of the Castlereagh River (Second fastest flowing river in Aust.) does not have these hazards.

- **Social and Economic Impact of Flooding.**

Social: “*Stress, restricted vehicular access, potential isolation, property damage, reduced access to supplies, clean up.*”

Economic: “*Financial impacts, damage to roads, buildings, yards, agricultural activity, stock, loss of wages, loss of production, and clean up costs.*”

Negative Impacts: “*Stock losses, crop damage, interrupted management, including damage to fences and roadways.*” These are from the ARTC. Plus the many more mentioned in this submission and others.

ARTC Quotes: “*The flood modelling shows that the overall changes in flood behavior across rural lands within the study area, would be minor and are therefore unlikely to significantly affect overall agricultural operations.*”

Once again, the Warrumbungles are not taken into consideration. How wide is the study area? 5kms? **Unbelievable.**

- **Geomorphology B3.4.2**

ARTC Quotes: “*An increase in water flowing through culverts and bridges has the potential to result in erosion and impact on downstream stability.*”

This is different from a river flooding and spreading out. This is great volumes from storms in the Warrumbungles, pouring down and across the countryside to be halted by a huge levee directly across the waterflow. Water forcing, in much greater volumes through culverts, causing creeks, cutting paddocks and properties in two. Cutting access roads and flooding buildings etc. Attached are photos taken after large rainfalls. The same as the Castlereagh River (Second fastest flowing river in Australia) . The water flows through quickly.

- **Soils B4.2.2**

ARTC Quotes: *"The soils in the proposal sight indicate dispersive characteristics, so would be susceptible to erosion and dispersion"*

Erosion of dispersive soils would be treated where exposed in "cut batters, culvert crossings and drainage lines" . In this area all the culverts should be situated on black dispersive soil as this is where the majority of water flows!!

ARTC Quotes: *"Erosion control devices would be installed in accordance with **Managing Urban Stormwater : Soils and Construction. Volume 1**"*

How does this compare with the force of flooding water off the Warrumbungle Mountains?

- **Flooding**

B 3.12 What is ARTC's definition of a watercourse? It was suggested that the watercourses were poorly managed. Could they explain this please? Could they also state which particular watercourses they were talking about? Did they mean they should be cleared out to allow the water to flow more quickly. Or perhaps slow the flow down. Could they please be specific, as we have swiftly flowing creeks, when it rains. Watercourses, and water flows are all the way along the Warrumbungles, and spread out, depending on the quantities that fall in the mountains.

ARTC Quotes: B 3.28 *"With the exception of Narromine and Narrabri, the Majority of the proposal site, generally passes through rural land, with land users that are **less sensitive to flood hazards** , as there are less people and infrastructure with the potential to be impacted"*

- **Topography.**

ARTC Quotes: *"The regional topography varies between flat to gently undulating terrain, with hill slopes and other more pronounced slopes associated with the Pilliga State Forest, and the footslopes of the Warrumbungle National Park"*

We say: Flooding and soil erosion (two of the major problems) come from flooding rain at the height of the Warrumbungles, pouring down the mountains. This water floods down creeks and spreads out over the countryside. Watercourses and waterflows are everywhere, wherever the country is slightly lower.

The force of this water has swept away **six, two ton cement causeways**, (as shown in the attached photos .) Large trees have been washed against bridges and tons of debris, that could block culverts .

- **Socio-economic**

ARTC Quotes: *"The majority of the proposal site extends through a sparsely populated rural area, dominated by large properties"* . These are not large properties. The majority are family properties, where family members adjoin. Small farms are very negatively affected.

Agriculture is the main industry, but put way down the line in importance.

ARTC Quotes: *"The proposal alignment has been designed to minimise impacts to local business and industry as far as practible, however, the proposal **may** result in the disruption of the **Agriculture and Tourism industries.**"*

Disruption is an interruption to the regular flow of ...(business)

This will be permanent not temporary.

Jacobs GHD estimated the loss in agricultural production from the loss of agricultural land would be \$1.39 million per annum. How many landowners are complaining about the amount of land the line would take? The losses are far more than this. The losses due to flooding, soil erosion, water laying on crops, extra travel time, lack of access, losses of stock etc. etc as mentioned throughout this submission

ARTC Quotes: *"Some visitors will see the proposal as **diminishing the rural character** while others will find interest in the proposed structure"*

Tourists come to the Warrumbungles for their beauty, remarkable landscape, spectacular views, peace and quiet, climbing, and star gazing in the black of night in the darkest place in NSW

The Warrumbungles are some of Australia's most unique mountain ranges with their strikingly beautiful ancient volcanic landscape.

ARTC do not mention the locals, who treasure their mountain view, and peace and quiet.

ARTC Quote: *"Potential impacts have been avoided/minimised at Curban where an alternative route location was available"*

ARTC survey found: *"**Landowners and the wider community supported the use of the existing line**"*

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our very genuine concerns.

Please do not publish the photographs or our name and address with this report on any media documents.

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