

## **Name of Project:** INLAND RAIL - Narromine to Narrabri SSI 189487

<b>Location</b>	Land generally in a new north-south corridor between the towns of Narromine and Narrabri via Curban and Baradine. The southern end is located about 5.6 km south-west of Narromine and the northern end about 4 km north of Narrabri
<b>Assessment Type</b>	State Significant Infrastructure
<b>Development Type</b>	Rail transport facilities
<b>Proponent</b>	Australian Rail Track Corporation
<b>STATEMENT of OBJECTION</b>	We strongly <b>object</b> to the present indicated alignment of the IR.

**Full names** Kevin & Carmel Woolford, "Caraboo" 11171 Newell Highway, Bohena Creek 2390

### **Introduction.**

We have lived at 'Caraboo' on the Newell Highway for over 23 years and own and manage two businesses on our property. The proposed N2N



Inland Rail Alignment splits our land into two sections. Our two children have grown up here and visit regularly with their families to assist us in the management of the businesses. We grow meat goats and self-shedding sheep for the meat market and run alpacas for herd guards and production of saleable fleeces. Our soil has native and perennial grasslands, as well as fodder crops sown for animal consumption. We are developing an area of our property for the purposes of animal agistment.

As well as primary production, we operate a school bus company which provides 2 bus services supplying transport primarily for school aged children, but not excluding the public, as required. This is mainly operational for the working week but can be utilised on the weekends.

The N2N alignment dissects our property. It will cause several substantial impacts on our property.

Our reasons for objection are outlined below.

Key Issue and Desired Performance Outcome	Key Comments/ Questions and /or Recommendations:
<p><b><u>5. Socio-economic, Land Use and Property</u></b></p> <p>The project minimises adverse social and economic impacts and capitalises on opportunities potentially available to affected communities. The project minimises impacts to property and business and achieves appropriate integration with adjoining land uses, including maintenance of appropriate access to properties and community facilities, and minimisation of displacement of existing land use activities, dwellings and infrastructure.</p>	<p>The current alignment severs approximately 17.5ha of our land, putting public holding pens in its place and dividing the property in two.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This poses a significant biosecurity risk as the pens will be used by several stockowners. If Transmissible diseases, pests and noxious weeds were to get in, this will reduce crop yield and livestock production and increase farm costs. This is against our mandatory Biosecurity Management Plan.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Who will be responsible for the biosecurity, maintenance and weed control of these pens and the rail corridor?</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If we were to sell this parcel of land to ARTC, we would have a reduced area left to provide sufficient feed pasture and will not be able to maintain viability in our primary production.</li> <li>• Additional capital investment will be required to replace current infrastructure (e.g., laneways, forcing yards and watering points) to attempt to offset this additional time cost that will be incurred moving stock across the corridor and allow us to implement our low stress stock handling techniques.</li> <li>• An app could assist in timing movement of stock to avoid trains, however mobile service in this area is very poor and it is unlikely that the app will function effectively and reliably when needed.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>What solutions do the ARTC propose to improve communications on our property so that we may utilise this technology?</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stock in the lower half of the property will no longer have water access to the current dam. Water sources will need to be created and this infrastructure will add extra expense and personal stress especially in times of drought.</li> <li>• We incorporate low stress stock handling practices into our flock and herd management. With the proposed alignment, we will not be able to maintain this practice using only one person. It would require multiple people to navigate a safe, stress-free crossing for both animals and stock managers and additional infrastructure as listed above.</li> </ul> <p>The area of our property is 100 hectares and is currently zoned RU1 but will not meet this zoning criteria when split. <u>Reference Footnote 1.</u></p>

	<p><u><i>When the property is split, will the zoning be changed to Rural residential so that we may subdivide in the future?</i></u></p> <p>Our property is a sought after rural lifestyle property in the real estate market. It is close</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to the town centre,</li> <li>• free from river flooding,</li> <li>• and an ideal size, being large enough to gain income from the land.</li> <li>• The rural lifestyle that our property can offer is a selling point. If the proposed alignment goes ahead, the division of the block, noise pollution and degradation of visual amenity will significantly reduce the value of our property on the market and therefore our financial position heading into retirement will be impacted.</li> </ul> <p><u><i>How will the ARTC calculate appropriate compensation for the stress of financial insecurity that the ARTC has created with the proposed alignment?</i></u></p>
<p><b><u>8. Transport and Traffic</u></b> Network connectivity, safety and efficiency of the transport system in the vicinity of the project are managed to minimise impacts. The safety of transport system customers is maintained. Impacts on network capacity and the level of service are effectively managed. Works are compatible with existing infrastructure and future transport corridors.</p>	<p>We operate two school bus services that deliver daily transport to the community. We are under obligation to maintain a strict, regular timetable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The inland rail will impact on our ready access to and from our depot due to the number, frequency and size of construction related vehicles (passenger, commercial and heavy vehicle) using the rail corridor on our property.</li> <li>• This could cause issues with us maintaining our contract obligations with the Ministry of Transport.</li> <li>• Traffic management measures will need to put in place to allow us to operate our business without disruption during the construction phase of IR.</li> <li>• Our timetables and drive times will need to be adjusted to allow for train times. This increase equates to higher cost of driver remuneration.</li> <li>• Extra traffic from heavy vehicles along the corridor during Construction Phase will increase dust levels in the vicinity. This will alter air quality and affect living conditions at our residence and depot.</li> </ul> <p>The proponent states that they will be reverting our main driveway into a public road.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A public road that close to our dwelling will have adverse effects on noise levels, our privacy and security levels.</li> <li>• The road must be an all-weather, heavy vehicle access road to our depot.</li> <li>• It must be maintained regularly to a high standard to allow ready access for our heavy vehicles and reduce vehicle damage and down time.</li> </ul> <p><u><i>Who is responsible for the maintenance on the proposed public access road?</i></u></p>

	<p>The road construction will destroy the nature corridor and windbreak on both sides of our existing driveway.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This will lead to degradation of our land due to surface erosion from wind, flooding and rain.</li> <li>• It also degrades the visual amenity and reduces the selling appeal of our property if we were to sell.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Will the green corridor be replaced? How does ARTC plan to address this issue or at least will we receive any compensation for their loss?</u></b></p> <p>We currently have two access points to our property to allow us to access both the front and rear of the property independently in case of emergency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the public road is blocked or inaccessible this is a concern for public safety in the instance of medical emergency or fire as well as causing issues with maintain our timetable for runs.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>How does the ARTC plan to address the loss of one access point to our property in the interests of access during an emergency?</u></b></p>
<p><b><u>9. Water - Flooding</u></b></p> <p>The project minimises adverse impacts on property, public safety and the environment resulting from alteration of the water flow characteristics of watercourses and overland flowpaths. Where feasible, the project includes remedial measures to mitigate any adverse water flow impacts, geomorphological impacts or flood safety risks caused by the existing rail infrastructure within the project area. Construction and operation of the project avoids or minimises the risk of, and adverse impacts from, infrastructure flooding, flooding hazards, geomorphological impacts or dam failure.</p>	<p>The proponent has stated that the public road will need to be built up to meet the crossing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building up the road will impede the flow of water and lead to localised inundation.</li> <li>• This will reduce our remaining usable land, create erosion across other sections of our property and damage fencing, further reducing our stock carrying capacity and viability.</li> <li>• We are concerned that the runoff into our existing dam will be obstructed, which is the only water source for stock in that paddock.</li> <li>• With the construction of IR, all water from the west will be diverted through one rail culvert. How is the flow of water through the culvert being addressed on the eastern side to alleviate erosion?</li> </ul> <p><b><u>How is the flow of water through the culvert being addressed to alleviate these issues? How will ARTC address the water source issues if the runoff into our dam is impeded?</u></b></p>
<p><b><u>15. Noise and Vibration</u></b></p> <p>Amenity Construction noise and vibration (including airborne noise,</p>	<p>Our dwelling is less than 400m from the corridor and will be adversely impacted by noise disturbance and vibration.</p>

<p>ground-borne noise and blasting) are effectively managed to minimise adverse impacts on acoustic amenity. Increases in noise emissions and vibration affecting nearby properties and other sensitive receivers during operation of the project are effectively managed to protect the amenity and well-being of the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are responsible for the safety of children and the public daily. It is imperative that we comply with a 'Fit for Work' declaration. The possibility of sleep disturbance from noise and vibration due to the proximity of the alignment is an issue. <u>See Map reference in Footnote 2</u></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Will the mitigation plan be put in place before construction work begins? What are the guarantees to its effectiveness? If the glazing of windows is not effective at mitigating the noise pollution, what will the ARTC do to fix this issue?</u></b></p>
<p><b><u>18. Visual Amenity</u></b></p> <p>The project minimises adverse impacts on the visual amenity of the built and natural environment (including public open space) and capitalises on opportunities to improve visual amenity.</p>	<p>Our view currently is an unimpeded rural scene with Mt Kaputar and the Nandewar Ranges in the distance. Being a rural property should not mean that we are treated any differently from urban residential regulations. We have not been presented with any mitigation plans for this issue.</p> <p><b><u>What is ARTC proposing to put in place so that our rural outlook is maintained?</u></b></p>
<p><b><u>Summation</u></b></p> <p>In summary, our objection to the N2N alignment proposal is due to its impact on our property and businesses in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a primary producer our business viability is under threat: biosecurity risk, increased stock and pasture management costs including water and fencing, and reduced stock carrying capacity.</li> <li>As a business that requires road access: during both the construction and operation phases our bus timetables/ run times and running costs will be adversely impacted and disrupted.</li> <li>Property value: the inland rail corridor will significantly reduce the value of our property due to reduced access, division of the land, noise pollution and reduced privacy. The buyer appeal of our property will be adversely affected. This has a direct impact on our financial security before retirement.</li> </ul> <p>We strongly object to the present indicated alignment of the IR. It will have a disruptive, adverse impact on our well-being and physical and mental health. It will reduce our viability in the primary production, and impact on our future development plans for this property. Both visual and noise impacts are major areas of concern, as we specifically purchased this location for the lifestyle it presented and its ease of access to the township. Now, with the proposed addition of a public crossing and road access less than 400m from our dwelling means that we will be continually affected by the noise and as well as increased traffic from other road users. Our privacy and security will be adversely affected.</p> <p>During landowner meetings with ARTC representatives, we have continually requested that the IR alignment be moved closer to Newell Highway so the proximity of the corridor and the issues it creates can be lessened. Each time, we have been given a different reason why this is not possible. If the route can not be changed from the current N2N option, we request the easterly movement of the line be considered.</p>	

At this stage, mitigation details provided in the EIS are not detailed nor specific enough in relation to our property. This makes it very difficult to be move forward to the acquisition stage of the project, and to have confidence in the project outcome for us.  
Should the Governing body have a mind to retain and approve this current IR alignment, then we have serious concerns in many areas and desire to achieve a fair and equitable compensation for the impact it will create for us.

We declare that we have not made any reportable political donations in the past.

## **FOOTNOTES**

1. Taken from Narrabri Shire Submission to ARTC-

*'Due to the resultant lot size of residual land it may be necessary to limit future uses. For example, a small lot size may not be commercially viable and therefore it proposed to be used as 'lifestyle/rural residential in an area not suitable for such development. Council therefore may require such lots to be amalgamated and/or rezoned before being made available for sale. Accordingly, all resultant lot sizes must comply with the zoning and approval must be sought from Council before any non-compliant residual land is made for sale.'*

- 2.

