

## **Review theme 1: ARTC governance and management arrangements for the delivery of the Inland Rail Program.**

- *How could ARTC improve its management arrangements and structures to better facilitate the delivery of the Inland Rail Program? And:*

## **Review theme 4: The effectiveness of ARTC's community and stakeholder engagement processes, and opportunities for improvement, including ARTC's approach to addressing community concerns.**

- *What has ARTC done well in engaging with communities, including addressing community concerns?*

### **Response to themes 1 & 4:**

I would like to bring to your attention that ARTC lied to me.

On August 3rd 2017, during an ARTC Information Session at Soul Food Café Narromine, I approached them to be informed of route selection developments. I was told that the route was definitely going west of Narromine using the concept alignment. With reference to ARTC maps, staff showed me where it would go, indicating that landholder agreements were being put in place. They categorically stated that the preferred route was to the West and were no longer considering the Eastern option.

This information correlated with the "Inland Rail - Parkes to Narromine Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)" which used the alignment all the way to the west of Narromine and a substantial upgrade (timber to concrete) of the existing Backwater Cowal rail bridge had just been completed. This feedback was a big relief to me and I shared this information with other concerned landholders. It has personally left me devastated to discover on 14th December 2017 that it was all lies. I believe this was deliberate misinformation and ARTC's conduct needs to be investigated.

Since the alignment alteration ARTC's commitment to consultation declined as they faced mounting concern regarding the alignment change which materially impacted many more families and businesses. Landholder's questions regarding the incorrect data and unconsulted change were met with comments such as "It was a ministerial decision, it's out of our hands" and "it's historical, part of phase 1 and we're now in phase 2".

They have threatened us with statements such as, "*If we think the best place for this rail is straight down High Park Road then this is where it will go*". A statutory declaration can be provided if required.

I went to the first CCC meeting and sat quietly at the back, pen and paper ready for notetaking. I was approached by the Chair before the meeting and was told to leave. The chair making the statement "*this is not about landholders and I have the ultimate say in who can attend*".

At a 2018 'Study Area' meeting ARTC were very pushy trying to get us to sign forms. After thoroughly going over the document, I consider this was another attempt of ARTC at manufacturing evidence of public acceptance. I did not sign the document as they were asking landholders to sign a Land Access Agreement which referred to an Annexure attachment that was not supplied. I asked for these annexure documents to be sent to me and received no response. In discussion with other landholders, I found ARTC's harassing behaviour to be consistently repeated. This and other issues resulted in NSW Farmers instructing landholders to refuse ARTC access and saw the formation of an historical alliance between

NSW Farmers and the Country Womens Association to help struggling community members deal with the pressure and misinformation ARTC were using on impacted individuals.

ARTC also threatened landholders with statements implying that they should comply immediately otherwise negotiations would be compromised and they would not receive the best outcome or value for property acquisition.

ARTC have used taxpayer funds to run a small grants public relations program knowing full well they have insufficient funds to cover the requirements of the project. This deliberate ploy to buy community support divided the impacted community as ARTC and the shareholder minister actively used the media to alienate and ostracise impacted individuals attempting to raise project management concerns. The support of NSW Farmers and CWA was our lifeline during this dark period and as we continued, we connected with other concerned landholders along the entire alignment.

ARTC have alienated community members and some councils along the entire alignment to the point where they collectively sought legal representation.

This is only the tip of the consultation iceberg.

**Review theme:** *In what ways could ARTC improve its communication and engagement processes with communities and stakeholders?*

**Response to theme:** ARTC need to tell the truth about the sudden route change at Narromine and other areas. ARTC changed the alignment without consulting with the newly impacted community. They actively misled landholders about their intention and did not use local knowledge regarding soils, land use and flooding risk. They even failed to undertake a desktop analysis of local flood management plans and topographic maps. Their own IRAS 2010 report had assessed the very same eastern alignment and rejected it due to flooding and landholder farming impacts.

An independent review needs to thoroughly analyse:

1. ARTC's failure to provide procedural fairness.
2. ARTC's propensity to create procedural bias by basing their flood analysis on anecdotal comments made by western alignment landholders.
3. ARTC's failure to cite readily available flood management plans and topographic mapping which flag significant flood issues south and south east of Narromine.

**Review Theme:** *How could ARTC improve its engagement with communities and stakeholders in responding to concerns?*

**Response to theme:** ARTC should stop refusing to answer legitimate questions and concerns regarding the alignment change and failures to analyse other beneficial alignment options.

## Review theme 2: The role of Inland Rail in meeting Australia's growing freight task and providing a Service Offering to meet freight sector needs.

- How could Inland Rail and access to intermodal terminals create new opportunities and benefits for your region/industry/community?

### Response to theme:

Alternatives and Options:

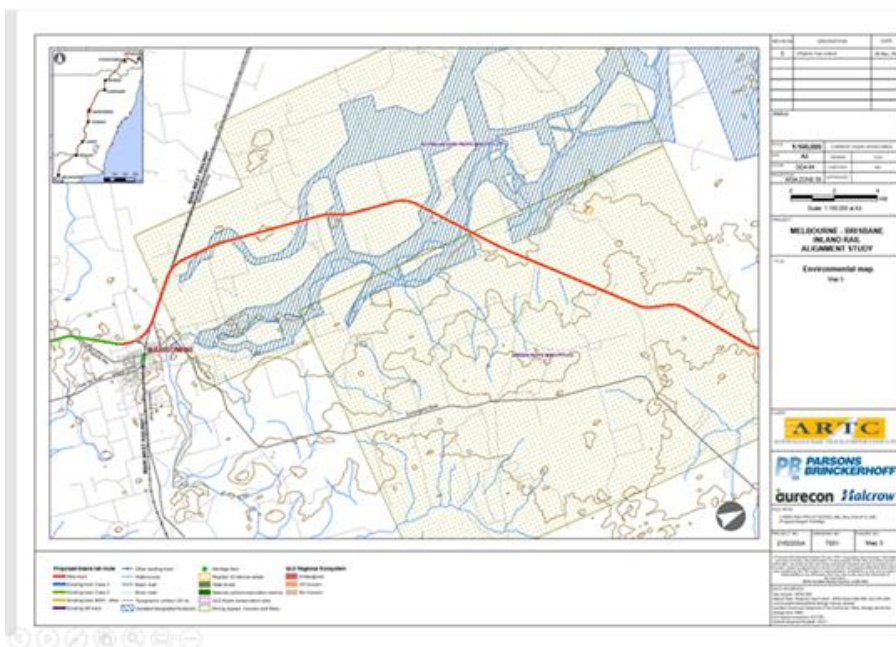
Narromine is being surrounded on the east, south and west by Inland Rail infrastructure. ARTC's N2N project EIS has indicated a significant portion of the western concept alignment will be built anyway. Called the Narromine West Connect (see below), the N2N EIS routes western rail traffic onto the new IR alignment. We have seen no evidence that ARTC has disclosed this additional project expense to the parliament, the shareholder ministers or the general community. The detail is hidden in thousands of pages of EIS documents. In essence ARTC will acquire land and build 2 km of the western concept alignment green field track anyway. This is one of many hidden costs associated with the poorly planned and consulted eastern alignment change. The alignment should be moved back to the original thoroughly assessed concept alignment and saving hundreds of millions of dollars, increased flood risk to Narromine township and outlying properties to the east and south.

Narromine West Connect N2N EIS infrastructure map:



The Narromine West Connect was part of the original western concept alignment (see IRAS 2010 map below). If the original concept alignment was constructed the N2N project would be:

- 9km shorter;
- 13km less green field impact;
- 100's of millions of \$ less expensive;
- minimal flood risk to community and rail



**Narromine Alignment  
IRAS 2010**

*"The alignment passes to the west of Narromine airfield and follows property boundaries across irrigated land for about 15 km until crossing the Macquarie River.*

*The alignment would then cross several flood-prone areas near the Macquarie River.*

*An option to the east was considered but found to be less favourable from a land-use and flooding perspective."*

Appendix E Sect 4.4.2

The N2N EIS data shows the 2016/17 MCA assumptions which moved the alignment east, were baseless. 1 in 100-year flooding length is actually longer to the east – NOT substantially shorter as claimed by ARTC in their flawed MCA.

The Geotech is very similar, but no cut and fill 'win' to be found on the east. All the massive earth embankments (18km long, with some up to 10 meters high and 90 meters wide) will have to be imported from ARTC's preferred burrow pits up to 26km away – no efficiency gains there either. These facts contradicted all the MCA geotechnical and structural win claims.

Flood depth and velocity are substantially greater in the east. This Eastern area floods so frequently the alignment could potentially be surrounded by flood water and inaccessible for months at a time. For example, the 'new' eastern alignment has extensively flooded 15 times in since March 2020.

In stark contrast, the western concept alignment was barely impacted over this same time – why? Because it does not have 400 sq km of elevated mountain range concentrating seven creeks' systems directly at it. A simple review of the local topographic mapping and Gazetted Flood Management Plan told ARTC staff this information back in 2010. The IRAS 2010 was right to dismiss the eastern study area. "An option to the east was considered but found to be less favourable from a land-use and flooding perspective." IRAS Appendix E Sect 4.4.2. ARTC's failure to disclose this important information in 2016/17 requires investigation.

Holding Redlich lawyers commissioned WRM Water to conduct an independent review of flood modelling. WRM Water report states: *"The flood mapping shows that the Macquarie River overflows into the Backwater Cowl at Webb's Siding for events greater than the 2% AEP event. The overflowing floodwater drains along the Backwater Cowl and away from the Narromine township. In effect, the overflows at Webb's Siding are a natural flood mitigation measure for Narromine as they reduce flows draining along the Macquarie River for rare to extreme events. The proposed rail configuration will convey the flows up to the 2% AEP event without significant changes in flow patterns. However, there is about 1,000 m of elevated embankment in between the viaducts and a further 1,000 m of elevated embankment to the south of the Backwater Cowl that would obstruct the overflows and divert flows back along the Macquarie river for the larger events. The EIS predicts that the change in flows due to the proposed rail would increase above floor flooding to 605*

*dwellings in Narromine for the 1% AEP plus climate change event and 2,520 dwellings for the 0.2% AEP event. This is a poor outcome for Narromine”*

### **3: The processes for the selection and refinement of the Inland Rail route and whether these processes are fit-for-purpose, including consideration of benefits and impacts.**

- *Do you consider ARTC’s approach to engaging communities on the route is fit-for-purpose*
- *How could ARTC improve its engagement with communities and stakeholders along the route in regard to the processes used to consider benefits and impacts?*

**Response to theme:** Too many instances of misdirection, dismissiveness and lies have occurred. ARTC will now always be distrusted. Perhaps stop lying and revisit the MCA using the correct data which will show the Eastern alignment is untenable. Move the alignment back to its original western location and minimise risk to community and rail.

Infrastructure negotiations have not been recorded or honoured. For example, a landholder was told he would be getting a viaduct bridge across their property. 9 months later they were shocked when ARTC sent an infrastructure map indicating the entire property would be severed by a 10-metre high by 90-metre-wide embankment forcing rural businesses to take farm vehicles onto a public highway to gain access to the other side of their property. There are many examples of this. Richard Wankmuller engaged with some landholders in 2019. Landholders have stated that Richard Wankmuller made infrastructure commitments to appease their concerns yet these records of conversation have been lost by ARTC. Landholders are finding the discussions have to be revisited with ARTC reticent about providing the promised infrastructure. We have since learned the Inland Rail construction requirements have substantially escalated and the outcome of these increases are that ARTC are pushing farming operations onto public roads, using earth mounds rather than viaduct bridging and not providing safer and more efficient grade separation structures for regional road users.