

SUBMISSION TO THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF INLAND RAIL

26/10/22

For the Attention of Dr Kerry Schott.

By Barbara Deans.

I am a mum, farmer, Coonamble Shire councillor, Chair of the local Coonamble NSW Farmers' Branch, and I am on the Gilgandra Inland Rail community CCC. We are directly affected by the N2N greenfield Corridor. Our farm/property will be dissected by the proposed N2N greenfield corridor. My family, including our daughter and son and their families, is fully involved in our farming business. We grow grain crops and have sheep and cattle. We are 4<sup>th</sup> generation, with the 5<sup>th</sup> in prams.

This review is needed, thank you.

My comments are for the N2N Greenfield section because I live here, and after 6 years of involvement I have a good understanding of the situation. I have sent submissions to the EIS NSW DPIE, PIR NSW DPIE, Senate Inquiry and NSW Legislative Inquiry, also the Ralston Quarry at Coonamble Shire. These submissions have the detail that is needed to understand what a disaster the N2N section is now, and could be, if this section is allowed to go ahead. This Greenfield line could not be built in a worse position, a levee bank to the Warrumbungle Mountains. Desktop studies don't deliver the truth of areas, landforms, and real-life situations. The cost of this greenfield section if built will keep on giving because of the watershed and soils. There are good alternative routes that are documented. I would be happy to forward extra information to this inquiry to support my opinions, because this is very short version, an overview to suit the requested succinct submission.

1 and 4 Themes. ARTC governance and stakeholder engagement and addressing community concerns.

There is none. There is no trust left in the community for ARTC. It is disgraceful how ARTC management has conducted the N2N section. ARTC management should be held accountable for its mistakes and take responsibility for misinformation and incompetence for the stress and worry forced on all of us for 7 years, while communities have endured 3 years drought, 2 years of Covid and 2 years of very wet conditions, struggling to farm and produce a crop. Our communities have enough to contend with.

There must be an independent assessment and planning of N2N section. It must start again, without the Department of infrastructure and ARTC. They have had their chance and have failed.

The following examples demonstrate the lack of trust in the community for ARTC.

I have encountered a lot of ARTC employees that have left and been replaced. It's been a revolving door of people. Public relation answers were given by ARTC employees all the time. ARTC employees that I have spoken to have no idea of communities, land formations, watershed from mountains, building a railway, how farms work, how people feel about their land, and have shown very limited ability to answer any question factually and truthfully. The argument for Greenfield, and to not use existing Brownfield N2N, was the time travelled by

the train. ARTC told communities 3 minutes (2015) to 16 minutes (2016). ARTC manipulate the information to suit their PR. The time difference turned out not be an accreditable argument against using Brownfield.

ARTC reports are full of mistakes, and this is why the EIS has not been able to get passed. Now the PIR has so many incorrect statements and unanswered questions.

For example, the Public Liability Insurance cost to landowners has not been addressed. The cost will be in perpetuity and unaffordable.

What insurance companies supply this?

What is the cost to landholders?

Will ARTC cover the cost for landowners and Shires?

Will \$250,000,000 cover be enough?

ARTC have never got back to CCC or me with information to answer this question, it has been taken on notice 20 times? Their PR answer was ARTC have good insurance to cover ARTC.

All the people, land holders and community, that are directly adversely affected, should be interviewed by this Independent Inquiry so the facts can be gathered. We are the ones that will bear the financial and emotional losses. Our facts and figures have been dismissed by ARTC and the Department of Infrastructure.

So far, the quarry owners, contractors, train companies, politicians and mining companies are getting the platforms to put their case forward. They will gain wealth at the expense of the families, landholders and community that must sacrifice and carry losses for other people's gains. It's not fair and not right.

I believe if ex-employees from ARTC could speak the truth about the N2N section and not lose their jobs, this Inquiry would get a clearer picture of the political interference that I believe has ruined this project.

Landowners were told by ARTC we will all get crossings! This could be 300 private crossings to match the owners and paddocks that were first identified. Now in the PIR report there are 30 crossings for 307 kms which is not manageable. A case of false information given to landholders.

There are too many of these examples to fit into 8 pages.

ARTC is not fit for the delivery of IR in the N2N greenfield Section.

2 Theme. Meeting Freight task.

IR cannot be built like the Canadian rail system, which was being pushed as ideal for our region by ARTC executives. Grains will be the backbone when coal is gone. Regional bulk freight like our grains need cheaper freight costs. One would start with where the grain is grown and work to where the ports are.

ARTC has ignored the grain of the Coonamble, Walgett, Gulargambone and Gilgandra Shires which is the major grain growing area of NSW. One million tonnes in this whole area, so our silos need to be directly on Inland Rail to help the business case for IR and build regional NSW. The Inland Rail needs to stay on existing rail.

No cost/ benefit analysis or social- economic assessment has been done for the N2N section. Growers at Narrabri are paying \$25 a tonne freight, and growers at Coonamble are paying

\$45.75(13/9/2022), a difference of \$20.70/tonne.

Which is \$45million in freight costs to farmers on a on a monopoly owned line. Adding the cost of on farm freight to GrainCorp silos, at an average of \$20 /tonne, gives a total of \$65.75/ tonne which growers pay. A region can't grow with this cost. N2N route needs to be altered for the benefit of our region.

Moree, in a Rail Express article (approx 2 weeks ago), said they want to be paying \$16 a tonne. Coonamble, Gilgandra, Walgett and Gulargambone need to have this advantage as well.

Obviously, the cost benefit is to the Line operators (Dept Transport and National Pacific etc) and to the detriment of Coonamble and all grain growers and towns and community. It was obvious this needed a cost/ benefit analysis and social- economic assessment. We need our grain on this train at a competitive freight rate. Coonamble needs the same freight rate as Narrabri and Moree. Our Shires are entitled to this, and the only way this can be delivered is have direct access to Inland Rail line at the Coonamble, Gulargambone, Curban, Armatree and Gilgandra GrainCorp and Qube silos.

An intermodal at Coonamble which is ½ way between Melbourne and Brisbane could be a place for resting/storing containers. 12,000 apparently at any one time are idle and need a storage place. A Coonamble small intermodal could cater to frozen meat, bulk grain, and container specialised grains. Chickpeas to India etc, recycling collecting depot, value add to grains, mills, precious metals. Value adding because we have the space etc. We need honest independent analyses of the economic and the social benefits for this area. There are 2 submissions from Coonamble shire that show the potential of our Shire and how the Shire could benefit. Keeping \$20/30 million a year in our Shires on freight saving would be a start.

For example, a farm producing 4000 tonnes of grain with a freight saving of \$20/ton = \$80000. A wage to pay a farm worker which could bring a family to our area. A plus.

The Shires of Narrabri, Moree and Narromine (they are on Inland Rail) have put forward their ideas how to grow their Shire with IR. Coonamble has the same potential for all the same value adding ideas, except we have the added advantage of saving \$20 to \$30 million per year for the whole area in freight because our freight is so much higher than other areas. If Coonamble remains on a monopoly owned spur line to IR, we will always have expensive freight. Our alternative will be to use trucks and invest in on farm storage and use more trucks.

Until the non-bias reports/ studies are done there can be no case for IR in N2N.

MCA reports are faulty, the 2015 business case based on 2010 report is out of date and based on 10-year-old prices and figures and ideas without factual reports. Desktops studies badly done. One only need look at the references for ARTC figures to see how out of date and wrong the reports are.

There are barely any figures in the N2N section that have been presented to the public that can be trusted or verified. The many submissions done to answer EIS and PIR, Senate and NSW inquiries have proved this and deserved to be read to inform this Inquiry.

All the big players, ARTC, Department of infrastructure and contractors and all the other voices that have a stake in this for profit, will indicate to the Inquiry that we don't need to be listened to as individuals.

3 Theme. ARTC is not fit for purpose to deliver route selection for N2N Route.

I am referring to the SS1 18\_9487 Department of Planning. The Sears conditions have not been met. On page 2, which states there must be "...analysis of any feasible alternate routes to the project...".

ARTC has not met this condition. ARTC have not done a Financial Cost Benefit analysis and A Social Benefits report or MCA reports (PRI figure 2.12) on the alternate route on the existing Coonamble- Gilgandra line therefore proper investigation has not been done on this feasible route.

ARTC have said the route choice was based on MCA reports.

What MCA reports that have been done are inadequate and have inaccurate information and a great lack of information. No MCA reports for the options 201 to 205 (PRI figure 2.15) and the options have been placed on the fast and high-water side of Coonamble not the western side where the water is low and slow. ARTC have not listened to the community. The existing rail is on the western side where the engineers 100 years ago placed it, to avoid the watershed of the Warrumbungle mountains, and let the Castlereagh River catch the water and stop it hitting the railway line.

ARTC told CCC they had done MCA reports on options 201 to 205 (PIR figure 2.15) and it would cost too much to refurbish the Coonamble Gilgandra line to Inland Rail standard. This was not true, false information given to the community. Which cast a bad light on the local people that were telling the truth about route choice and has damaged our community and the people speaking up about issues.

A quote from my original submission in comparing critical factors relating to alignment, the MCA<sup>1</sup> documents contain 76 points marked 'To Be Announced'; 24 points that 'Assume similar impacts'; 64 marked 'Not Applicable'; 144 'similar'; 8 'unknown'; and 17 noted as 'not complete.' ARTC used Route comparisons in the N2N based on a remarkable lack of information, and these incomplete documents were used for this route selection. At what point will these assumptions be tested, and the gaps filled so that we can have faith in the investigation corridor's decision?

The MCA reports have unsubstantiated information in them, which means up to 307km of unverified information.

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The Inland Rail IIP Gate Report states it will cost \$20 million (not billions) to refurbish the

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Coonamble Gilgandra existing line to Inland Rail Standard. This figure is documented and found on Coonamble Shire Papers February 2021 website. We need the saving of 2 billion put in to our horrendously deteriorating and dangerous road systems which are unusable when wet and are full of “break the vehicle potholes” and collapsing roadsides, in Coonamble and all country Shires. This was another occurrence of incorrect information ARTC told communities. Telling us that it was more expensive to refurbish existing railway lines then it was to build a greenfield line. Community was asking this about the Coonamble to Gilgandra line, which is in very good condition, and the Dubbo to Gilgandra line which has some sections that need repair, which the NSW government is going to have to refurbish in the near future.

#### Topics of note.

That ARTC will not answer or don't have the answers to and have given the public relations answer of “she'll be right mate it's all in detailed planning trust us.”

#### Water

The amount of water needed for the build is extraordinary and the figures don't add up and information is lacking integrity. No irrigation licences, ARTC told the public the bores will be depth off 1000 metres (I think they meant to say 1000 feet but I did reaffirm 1000m at CCC meeting), and this will be under the artesian basin but test bores at Gilgandra are only 100 to 300 meters from what the locals say. This information is not transparent to the public, so we don't know. 100/300m is what local bore depths are. If ARTC drop the water level of our domestic and stock bores and run them dry this whole area will be a disaster. ARTC's PR answers to our questions have been insulting uneducated and without credible information. It should be noted that ARTC have not listed all the bores in the EIS. I could not find mine (2) and they are definitely in 4kms range. 5100 bores are a big number in small area, if they have missed mine how many others are missed. I am very worried about the water scenario.

Crossing loops and lay over areas moved at the last-minute. Landholders only informed of these changes when PIR published. This is very unprofessional and stressful and will be expensive to landowners.

Erosion not given any consideration until the PIR report and not appropriately addressed. This could be an irreparable problem because we are on the watershed of the Warrumbungle Mountains which feeds the second fastest flowing river NSW, and this proposed corridor runs perpendicular to the watershed. A very expensive disaster waiting to happen.

Biodiversity has been woefully inadequately addressed and biodiversity stewardship unattainable for a Greenfield build.

For example, the biodiversity credits for N2N are wrong. The ecosystem credits (if I am correct about the extra 9000 ha cleared) is not included in EIS and PIR and should be triple @140,442 ecosystem credits needed.

ARTC has stated in section 6.7.3 PIR the operation and construction footprint of 3489.3ha. But adding in access roads and fencing clearing (9000ha) not accounted for, making a grand total of 12489ha at my calculation.

**News reports are alerting us to the fact that big infrastructure projects can't meet Offsets requirement now so even more reason to keep IR it on brownfield.**

**A legacy of not having to obey the rules because big companies and government departments don't obey the rules why should the community.**

**Noise. Inadequately addressed, left to detailed design not good enough.**

**Fencing and grids. A complete debacle by ARTC. The answer to landholders should have been you can have whatever fence you need and ARTC will maintain it and be responsible for it.**

**Vibration. Collapsing of water bores not addressed, inadequate reporting.**

**Accidental death of family and neighbours not addressed.**

**Landowners not in the corridor will be affected by new access roads. Have not been notified.**

**This will be a significant cost, has this been accounted for?**

**Loss of amenity to the people of NSW. Warrumbungle National Park and Dark Sky Park are 12kms away from the proposed corridor. Farmers losing what have worked for due to bad planning and incompetence.**

**Depreciation of farms and farm debt not addressed.**

**Archaeology and fossils not addressed. The Warrumbungles is a very old area with a lot of fossils.**

**Thumping in Pilliga a quicksand effect not addressed. Where sand covers over a layer of clay and add water and vibration.**

**Haulage roads not addressed and false information given to public. Haulage roads will be as hard to construct as the railway line itself because of the soil and hydrology conditions. The cost will be significant and may be prohibitive. ARTC are communicating to Shires and Quarry owners that all haulage will be in rail corridors. This was stated by Quarry owners and Shire engineers at a meeting last week at Coonamble, and they seemed to believe they had correct information from ARTC. I question ARTC's ability to deliver this, as there are no reports.**

**From my submission on Ralston Quarry:**

**To the south of Ralston Quarry on the rail corridor, in the first 7 km there are 57 culverts and one bridge. To the north of Ralston Quarry in first 13kms, there are 306 culverts and 3 bridges. (See inland rail EIS) This means that there is no haulage road, and a truck would not be able to navigate the corridor without a very high quality road for access, and a road would have to be built with 363 culverts and 4 bridges for trucks to be able to follow the corridor for a haulage road. And this just for the first 20 km from the Ralston Quarry, of the 307km of total green field.**

**Another anomaly is that 307 km of very expensive greenfield line to service one business, which is Santo Gas in the Pilliga, is wrong and Australia can't afford paying for bad planning.**

**Refence EPBC 2018/8259 .23/9/2018. Department of Environmental and Energy Submission #3461 Inland Rail N2N referral attachment 1.4 attachment 4 lots within proposed site. It was**

online I don't have the link sorry I am sure it will be able to be found.

It contains 8 pagers of lot numbers, 768 lots. This document has Santos as the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> lots on page one of eight, I [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] This clearly shows bias to one company. It is the only business on the 307 kms section green field.

We were told at the CCC (8/12/2020 see minutes) by ARTC that ARTC were starting at 32 km section to Narrabri do detail studies, one might guess where that lands inland rail at lot [REDACTED] [REDACTED] at Santos Dams.

The millions of dollars of farmland and businesses in the Coonamble, Gilgandra, Walgett, Coonabarabran Shires have been disregarded and disrespected by this apparent bias to one company over the growth and wellbeing of our regional communities and businesses that have been here for 100 years.

In the same application ARTC have stated they would need 260 culverts. I counted in the EIS, 4727 culverts not counting the bridges. This number will be out of date now, and the project will need a lot more. This shows that information from ARTC can't be trusted. The budget for N2N section can't be authenticated if the figures aren't correct. The Government will need an open cheque book for N2N greenfield. There are better routes, cheaper, user-friendly and region- building that could be built.

Thank you,  
Yours Sincerely,  
Barbara Deans.