

## **Inland Rail- Illabo to Stockinbingal SSI-9406**

### **Introduction**

**Eric & Dianne McKenzie**

**. We have lived at this location for 20years.**

**We run a mixed farming business which includes cereal cropping and a commercial Merino sheep enterprise. Our daughter, Yvette, also runs a Poll Merino Stud on the 3000-acre property. (**

**The property is 60% arable where we produce Canola, Wheat, Oats and grazing pastures. The 40% that is not arable is used for grazing and, due to the fact that it is hill country, it is prime lambing country as well as good area to get stock to higher ground in wet conditions. 200-acres acres of this area is put aside for drought containment as well as used to take pressure of growing pastures.**

**Approximately 1500 Merino ewes are managed as a self-replacing flock in which we sell approximately 800 surplus ewes for restocking purposes each year. With this also comes 100 bales of wool each year. Most of the crop sown is of a grazing variety which is utilised by the sheep enterprise as well as cereal for sale, hay and also used as sheep feed. There is approximately 700 acres sown down to cereals and canola each year plus 300 acres sown down to pasture.**

### **Route Selection**

**We believe that the route selection was rushed when initially proposed. The time that was taken to think about the topography, environment and effected production of the selected route was not looked at with enough consideration for the given factors that would be beneficial for a 'lifetime railway'.**

**Studies that have been prepared since the original selection of route shows that the selected route is NOT the favourable route. (See attached thesis).**

**By making the proposed route the actual route would be a detriment to high producing primary production farms as well as the community that surrounds it. With just the acquisition of our property would take potentially 3,000 acres and two families away from the area and potentially out of business of primary production that is supposed to be providing for the nation.**

**The route that we believe that the railway line should be on is Melbourne- Shepparton- Narrandera where it is already a gazetted line and the saving on acquisition would be enormous to the bottom line of the budget as well as minimal environmental impact, which is also shown in the thesis attached.**

### **Community Engagement by ARTC**

**Up to this point the engagement from the ARTC has been less than practical or helpful. As people that will be impacted if the selected route is taken, we have been appalled with the communication and response, or should I say lack of response. We have been treated disrespectfully and with no consideration of impact on any of us whether it be financially, emotionally or even mentally.**

**At attending an Acquisition meeting in Junee in the early months of 2021, we asked the ARTC questions regarding impacts, compensation and legalities and we have never had answers from them. The answers they gave us were- "we will get back to you", "noted" and "we will find out". We asked questions such as the following**

- 1. If there is more than one family the occupies (operates) a property that will need to be fully acquired, will they be paid \$80,000 each family (business) for relocation compensation?**
- 2. If this is a Government Acquisition is Capital gains tax to be paid?**
- 3. Who's responsible for fencing maintenance?**

#### 4. Biosecurity issues around moving livestock on public roads.

These are just some of the questions that were asked but never answered.

We feel like we have been dictated to instead of consulted with and then the ARTC tell the public that they have consulted with the affected farmers/businesses, and it is all going well and to plan so hence that what the public is believing.

#### EIS Farm Impacts

The EIS does not refer to each part of the route and what the effects are within each stakeholder. This makes it hard to see what the real impact is going to be.

- There is no reference to the sizes of some bridges that will pass main roads.
- There is no reference to what ease ways or bridges that are on each part of the route.
- On the maps that are supplied to each stakeholder there is no reference to what access ways/crossings or even fences are going to look like or where they will be located.

#### Loss of Land

In our situation, there are two ways to look at the loss of land. The fact that the route goes straight through the property from North/South, it can be summed up in two scenarios.

The corridor route that has been supplied will mean that 247315 m<sup>2</sup> will be taken for Permanent Acquisition and 113215 m<sup>2</sup> would be taken for Temporary Acquisition. As this is a long stretch of land (approx. 5km long) and not a large block, it makes it unviable to run our business if only the corridor is acquired.

#### Access and Crossing Points

As far as the maps show, there is only 1 crossing across the full length of the proposed route which is approximately 2.5km into the route which means that this is halfway into the route alignment. This is unviable and unrealistic for us to walk sheep from the West to the East of the proposed route. If we have to walk stock from the shearing shed to a paddock in which is the middle of the Eastern hill, we would either have to walk them around on the main road to the East gate and then through the first paddock to get to the paddock, in which we may already have sheep in that paddock so would have to then force stock away and hope that they don't get boxed in together or some alone stock don't mix in with the mob in question being moved. This would be approx. 3 km and with lambs at foot that needed to be marked it would be not particularly good for animal welfare as well as a huge biosecurity risk (see Stock Route 2). The other option would be to walk them down the lane way and around to the access road and up into the hills and hope that we do not have stock already in these paddocks. This would be approx. 6.5km to get them to the water point in that paddock (See Stock Route 1).

The fundamental logistics this has with only one crossing is massive as well as including the huge animal welfare impacts on livestock especially at some stages of reproduction. The losses of productivity from ewes and abortion of lamb are at higher risk when travelling distances.

With only the 1 crossing it will be difficult to also move machinery between paddocks. And with the loss of paddock space, the loss of production when it comes to cropping and pastures would mean less income for us. This would also mean that there would be less grain and hay produced to feed the stock. This would mean that we would have to decrease the number of stock retained and hence again a loss of income from a decrease in production.

#### Production Reduction

With the loss of land this would affect the commercial and stud production of sheep with the numbers that would be able to be run on the property. Numbers would have to decrease by as up to 50% due to fact that lambing would not be able to take place near the railway corridor and the decrease in paddock sizes would reduce how many we can run in each paddock.

The stud that Yvette runs would have to be decreased as well as a number of rams are taken from commercial breeding ewes and with the number that would have to be reduced, the gain in quality would be reduced. This would be an enormous impact on what return the stud could produce.

With the reduction in numbers would mean a great loss of income which could have potential of at least being \$250,000 a year. This is just in sheep sales and wool production. In that would also be time lost for contractors within shearing, commission in stock sales for the stock & station agent as well as reduction in commission to local wool brokers. It would also mean that the local businesses that we purchase our animal health products from would not get these sales either.

Within the crop production, it would mean a terribly similar problem as there would not be as much grown so therefore not as much fertiliser, chemicals or contract tractor driving done that would affect local businesses.

With the corridor at the base of the hills, this is where a lot of the water that feeds into the dams comes from. With the corridor where it is, there would be a reduction of at least 75% of the dam filling destroyed and therefore we would not be able to have livestock on the Western side of the corridor. The trough system runs under the corridor route so therefore the water system would be destroyed as well. The corridor runs right over the top of the main line to the South of the property so therefore the reduction of livestock being reduced again would impact the productivity of the property businesses.

#### Property Security/ Biosecurity

With only the one ease way, the chance of being able to contain a fire outbreak from either getting into the hills or vice versa, it would be extremely dangerous for surrounding properties. Within that would also reduce the access to get stock out of country if a fire did break out on the property. This is a huge animal welfare issue as well as income, and the stress to us and community.

If stock must be either let out onto the main road or driven up the main road, this will cause a huge risk on the safety of the animals being moved as well as the risk of contaminating diseases from stray animals. This could potentially end the stud operation and put the commercial operation into an elevated risk for sale of commodities.

#### Noise/Vibration Impact

With the railway corridor being so close to the houses and infrastructures, it is unviable for us to stay here. The impact of vibration would destroy the two houses that we live in (Eric & Dianne in one and Yvette in the other). Both of these are less than 500mtres from the start of the corridor on this property and with the level of vibration due to the speed and repetitiveness of the trains, it would make it impossible to live in.

The shearing shed, machinery sheds, silos and hay shed would also be destroyed as it is in line, or closer, with the houses. None of these buildings or structures could be saved or moved due to the narrowness of the property. This would also make the operations of this property unviable.

The noise and vibration would have an enormous impact on the animals that are kept on the property with the stress levels being increased in livestock therefore reducing production and lambing rates would decrease at a minimum of 15%. This equates to approx. 250 lambs as the numbers stand as they are now.

#### Environmental Impacts

With the corridor route as it stands, it goes through three major water courses throughout the property.

There is a lot of wildlife that uses these water ways as shelter and drinking water. With the corridor it would destroy the natural water course and if it were looked at right now, it would have major impacts on the follow on of water systems.

There have been sightings of the Pink Tailed Legless Lizard on the property, which is an endangered animal as well as it is home to the Superb Parrot which is also endangered. These factors have not been taken into consideration within the EIS. It is only an issue for endangered species when it suits. If it needs to be ignored, it seemed to just not be a problem to the Government or contractors for them.

### **Compensation**

When it comes to compensation there are two ways that this property could be seen in. The corridor only or the entire property. As from the points stated previously, the property with the corridor taken out makes this property unviable and it cannot even be lived on. The income losses become too much to be a viable property with the two businesses operating. The compensation that has been issued seems very undervalued considering the impacts.

The only viable way that this property could have the Inland Rail through is to acquire the entire property and within this must be looked at not just as land value but as a whole business acquisition and the value that has been given is well under the current rate. We must be able to look at buying two homes so therefore two properties.

When we have been given an offer the rude phone calls that we have received have been distressing. Being told that we should be ready to sign off on the offer and on a regular basis is not respectful. The way that we have been treated throughout the whole procedure has put a strain on our family and has been incredibly stressful for us all. It has put strain on the relationships within family and what the future may look like for any of us. We feel that we cannot go ahead with improving infrastructure or production since we have been made to feel hung by the ARTC and hamstrung in the way that we cannot improve our productions with focusing on the businesses that we run.

Dear Dr Kerry Schott AO,

We have been dealing with the burden of the Inland Rail for a number of years now and it is not just taking its toll on us but our family and community involvement and engagement. We are up to lose the entire 3000acre property that we currently live on if the current route for the Inland Rail project is used. The ARTC have not made any part of the delivery easy on any of us and I am actually quite taken back and angry at the treatment that we have been given by the ARTC in all aspects of their communication.

In a normal transaction and in widespread practice, common curtesy and structure is what we would deserve but what some of the people have been like would nearly be seen as illegal and just downright rude. We have been threatened by ARTC staff to sell and be done with it and harassing us with the same phone call week after week on where we stand when we have told them not to call but deal with solicitors and go through the right channels of communication. This would bring me to the fact that I'm not sure that there is a structure and process of communication when it comes to the ARTC. Our expectations were far from what we have and are receiving from the ARTC.

In going forward, we would encourage and invite you to personally come out and see where the proposed line would be going and the impacts that it will have, environmentally, financially and emotionally. It is something that we all believe has to be seen in person and as to date not one politician has been out to assess the property and see what and where the so-called route will be going through.

We are not against the Inland Rail, but we just want to see it put in the right place for Australia for the next 100 years and the growth of Australian product-to-plate to remain the top priority for all of Australia.

Following is our submission for your review in regard to the delivery and issues around the project stated by the submission review. It is a very brief submission as the impacts are huge on us and all areas of our business is impacted. I have also attached a copy of the submission that was sent through for the EIS for this section. Please feel free to contact us at any time to either discuss or make a time to visit.

Regards

Eric, Dianne and Yvette McKenzie



**Inland Rail Program- Independent Review**

# Submission

Eric & Dianne McKenzie

[REDACTED]

Yvette McKenzie

[REDACTED]

This Submission has our permission to be made public

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?*

**Response:**

When it comes to the management of the ARTC, we are not really sure anyone knows what they are doing or more to the point, where the buck stops and starts for some of the roles. We attended an Acquisition meeting in Feb 2021 where we were informed of the processes that the ARTC had in mind and when questions were asked with regards to acquisition, we were told “we will get back to you” and “noted, we’ll look into that for you”. Some of these questions including Capital Gains Tax due to the fact that it is compulsory acquisition? If more than one business was operating on the property that had to be relocated, was the payout of \$80K going to be given to all affected businesses or not? What Bio security plans did they have in place? These are questions that we still haven’t received answers on. Structures around the Inland Rail project have not been advised in an equal manner when it comes to all of the line. There seems to be different information given to each segment of the route.

None of our questions or concerns have been answered in regard to any of our issues and any response we got was that “that’s not our department, we can’t answer that for you.” We have been

trying to get answers out of ARTC but cannot seem to find the person responsible for any area, but the ARTC seem to put a green tick on engaging with the public and potentially affected businesses. Since the issue of the Inland Rail was raised with us, the management of the ARTC seems to also change regularly. I think that we have seen 4 project managers, all of whom are no longer working for ARTC and the fact that some of them have spoken out against the ARTC and the way they have handled the program is quite concerning and has left us wondering why if past employees don't agree with the program then how is it all viable?

Having an actual list of people to contact and for what areas would be helpful and actually getting answers would also be a good start in actual community and personal engagement. Have the same meetings with all affected- environmentally and primary and secondary impacted people and businesses throughout the entire route of the rail line as the North is being told one thing and the south is being told another. It is a small world and farmers know other farming communities better than the ARTC are aware of.

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:**

Australia needs more freight sectors such as rail but if the hubs and ports are put in the right place. Hubs in places such as Melbourne and Brisbane seem to be the main focus but having a hub in Narrandera, which would be in the middle of one of the biggest growing primary producing areas would be beneficial into the directing in which produce needs to take. If a major hub were put at Narrandera, Melbourne, Brisbane, and Sydney redirection would be easy and worth investing in. There is already a gazetted line from Melbourne to Narrandera and then having a decent airport there would seem to be a benefit cost saving for international exports and imports to a regional area. Some much produce could be delivered to Narrandera and the destination cities would be endless. You would actually be creating jobs for the local area of the Riverina and big production businesses such as the Wine, Meat, Rice, Almonds, Walnuts and Grains, just to name a few, would use this major freight depot as one of the States and National inland redirection pivot locations. This way you would not be taking away the 2000 truck drivers off the road that the supposed Inland Rail project would be and you would still be using the engineering jobs to build the rail up and the airport up to an international level.

Putting hubs and terminals in the wrong place would create a rift with communities as the impact on some places would be to the point of closure which in turn puts pressure for work on other areas. Some towns are already losing major clients as the workers with mines and other infrastructure businesses are taking away accommodation and money from towns as other people cannot get accommodation, so they also don't get fuel, food etc.

New lines may not be the answer but redirecting funds to do up other lines that already exist to make them multifunctional lines which would be a cost saver on the economy but also eventually be better for the country by not taking away any more primary producing country that is already struggling to feed the population.

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:**

The ARTC have got communities to believe that the Inland Rail in its entirety is a great idea that will have only positive impacts on the community. The ARTC have been giving scholarships to students and sponsorship to community events to promote themselves in only the best way. This is very much a slap in the face for affected farmers like ourselves as this money that they are 'splashing' around is in fact rate payers' money that are looking to reduce produce and jobs from their community. This money is definitely not fit-for-purpose as it divides the people of the community. We will now not support any function or event that the ARTC is sponsoring or supporting in any way due to the way that this whole project has and is being dealt with. The community has been divided by the misleading information that has been given to them and the way that the ARTC have 'left' people off community groups due to the relationship of the impact that they may have.

The ARTC have in no way shown the community the negative impacts that it will have on communities. The loss of jobs on farms acquired, the loss of income taken by contractors that work on the farms, income taken from the loss of sales made from the farm products as well as the income and sales that it will take away from local businesses such as merchandise, fertiliser, rates, and even groceries. These might seem like minor adjustments but if businesses are lost, that can have grave impacts on communities.

There are people that have lived on farms for generations and the wealth of knowledge that these people have is incredible. The sad fact that none of these people's ideas and thoughts are being listened to by the ARTC or anyone that has any association with the project. Educated and so-called professors in fields such as environment, weather patterns, the topography seem to want to just tell farmers how and what will happen. These are uninformed people that also have no communication skills when it comes to dealing with the stakeholders. The ARTC and others involved don't want to be seen to say that they have got something wrong and that the whole Inland Rail Route should be looked at. There is a thesis (Attached) stating facts about the proposed line and the impacts that this would have on each of the chosen routes.



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?*
- *In what ways could ARTC improve its communication and engagement processes with communities and stakeholders?*
- *How could ARTC improve its engagement with communities and stakeholders in responding to concerns?*

**Response:**

The ARTC have not done anything well when it comes to engaging with communities, and their concerns.

Start again would be my idea of getting this right. Have a look at the proposed route and engage with locals and farmers that know each area better than most public service staff.

This question seems to be remarkably similar to statement 3., just worded differently. All impacts and concerns that stakeholders and communities have had, have all been avoided by the ARTC and green ticks have been applied to Facebook pages and news articles when they have put us into a room and, I would say, dictated to us, not discussed. I have discussed this further in statement 3.

## Conflict Case Study – The Impact of Inland Rail (Connecting Melbourne to Brisbane) on Rural Australia



### For whom is it a problem?

#### Primary Parties:

- Australian Federal Government;
- Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) (Proposed Route);
- National Trunk Rail (NTR) (Alternative route);

#### Secondary Parties:

- Privately-owned companies in rural New South Wales and Victoria which export manufactured agricultural products;
- Melbourne – Brisbane Inland Rail Alliance in Parkes;
- Parkes, Narrandera, Tocumwal, and Shepparton Shire Councils;
- Wagga Wagga, Albury Shire Councils;

#### Third Parties:

- Landowners in the proposed new track;
- Road transport companies and drivers.

#### The issues:

This is a case study on the impact of change, and the flow on effect of social conflict in rural Australia. The conflict occurs not in the concept of inland rail, but of the route taken by the inland rail.

The following information has been taken directly from the following websites, public proposals and from personal interviews from train operators, and local landholders who support the alternative route.

<https://inlandrail.artc.com.au>

<https://infrastructure.gov.au/rail/inland/submissions/index.aspx>

Public Submissions:

**Supporting Proposed Route:**

Australian Rail Track Cooperation (ARTC) Business Case  
 Australian Food and Grocery Council  
 Wagga Wagga City Council

**Supporting Alternate Route:**

Melbourne – Brisbane Inland Rail Alliance  
 Narrandera Shire Council  
 National Trunk Rail (NTR) Letter 30 Jun 2014

The Federal Government has identified the need to transport agricultural products quickly and efficiently from processing plants to port in the 2017 budget. Currently road freight links the two major ports of Brisbane and Melbourne and 30-40% of the cost of grain is consumed by freight. Trains run at a significant environment saving compared with trucks, each grain wagon can carry the equivalent of 3 times B-Double sized grain truck. The proposed train would tow 100 wagons, effectively taking 300 trucks off the road per train. Rail is half the cost of road freight; however consumer studies have shown that unless rail can match road's reliability and speed, road freight will still be preferred. A dedicated rail corridor from Melbourne to Brisbane has been identified to improve the reliability and speed issue. Moving heavy freight off the roads has flow through benefits of improving safety and maintenance of our roads.

Infrastructure Australia on Inland Rail has evaluated the proposals. Two companies are proposing two routes, the ARTC (wholly government owned and currently in charge of operational Queensland, New South Wales and Victorian Railway), and NTR (private consortium).

	<b>Proposed Route (ARTC)</b>	<b>Alternate Route (NTR)</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>Distance (km)</b>	1731km	1595km	-136km
<b>Time to build</b>	10 years	6 years	-4 years
<b>Steepest Grades (speed and efficiency restrictions)</b>	2.50%	1.50%	-1%
<b>Circles of Curvature (speed restrictions)</b>	51 circles	20 circles	-31 Circles
<b>Price</b>	10 billion	13 billion	3 billion
<b>Time</b>	24 Hours	19 Hours	-5 hours
<b>Track Capacity</b>	25Tonnes	32Tonnes	
<b>Average number of wagons</b>	82	92	-10
<b>Maximum permitted speed</b>	115km/h	120km/h	-5km/h
<b>Practical Train Turnaround Time</b>	60 Hours	48 hours	-12 Hours

ARTC Business Case 2015 (ARTC Proposed Route)

**The drivers of the concept behind the proposed route:**

- Increasing the network to meet the needs of freight in the future;
- Bypasses Sydney and the Coastal Route and travels through the four richest farming areas in NSW, VIC & QLD;
- It will save one third of the fuel required compared with road transport and save 15 crashes a year;
- Minimise the impact of the community and provide value for money.

**Melbourne to Brisbane Inland Rail Alliance Proposal (MBIRA) (NTR alternate route):****The drivers of the concept behind the alternate route:**

- Future standards of rail;
- Quicker time to export for time sensitive products;
- Attract freight from road through efficiencies;
- Address the distance factor in inland Australia;
- Act as an incentive for decentralisation and regionalisation.

**To attract freight to rail (NTR):**

- Needs to be fundamentally different to current offerings;
- Need to compete on price, reliability, and availability.

**Notes comparing the two proposals (from NTR alternate route proposal):**

- Notes that the ARTC study does not try to capture current road freight, but instead capture a proportion of future growth freight; It predicts road freight will actually increase after the inland rail is built;
- Needs a modern efficient railway for logistics and regional development;
- A 'business as usual' railway proposal is low cost but misses out on opportunities;
- Constrictions faced by not upgrading rail to a future standard show freight will be forced back onto the road;
- Private investors want a sound business case and efficient assets, or they will be discouraged; Positive NPV returned on investment for NTR alternative, higher initial cost but lower operational cost;
- Railway design for operational cost minimisation.

**National Trunk Rail Submission regarding "Unfair Treatment", lodged with Infrastructure Australia after the Proposal was lodged:**

- Alleges that ARTC work has been given the go ahead by the Inland Rail Implementation Group, before submissions for alternatives were closed;
- Request the details from Inland Rail Implementation Group regarding the rationale behind the ARTC route being confirmed;
- NTR has detailed that they are open to cooperate, and want to be included on this critical issue;
- Principal criteria in the ARTC proposal is minimising capital cost, which uses assets that are up to 150 years old;
- The ARTC proposal was listed as "Poor value for money" (Productivity Commission, 2014);
- Criteria of "lowest life cycle cost per tonne per km" has been overlooked;
- Investment in rail networks return \$2.65 on each \$1 spent, as opposed to the ARTC report of \$5b invested returning -\$533m.

**Why is it difficult to resolve?**

Whenever a change is proposed that will alter the dynamics of an area, groups who are disadvantaged will oppose it and groups who stand to be advantaged will support it.

#### **Where does it require third party help?**

"If there is an excess of claimants over opportunities for adequate reward, there arises strain and conflict" (Coser, 1957, p.201).

Solutions need to be imaginative and not tied into interests as all these parties may be narrowly viewing the solution.

A third party with no interest in the project would be a fair way to decide the best outcome for the project. The third party would be:

- Free from funding or prior relationship pressure;
- Open to all submissions;
- Communicate information and develop trust;
- Weigh up the positives and negatives from both sides with the best intentions for the overall project;
- Analysing all elements, taking into account emotions;
- Investigate any red flags or prior relationships between the groups.

**c. Discuss some constructive strategy options of relevance, or strategies that might be successful using concepts, principles, theories or practices which you have studied in this subject.**

#### **How can we use conflict to be constructive?**

Positives of conflict include: stimulation of interest, motivation and problem solving, it can promote group cohesion, provide basis for change, and encourage communication, creativity and innovation. Negatives of conflict to avoid are increased stress, breakdown in relationships, low communication (Tillett, 2006, p.16).

#### **Be personally prepared; develop your thinking, reaction and behaviour skills:**

It is important that you begin any problem solving process fit for purpose. Develop listening skills free of preconceived ideas, ask people what they want, step into their shoes and adopt their perspective of the issues are all a good start to the resolution process (Fisher and Ury in Cox, 1986).

Gandhian teachings are invaluable for conflict resolution: examination of the facts, clear attitude, separate people from the problem, consider the interests that motivated the positions adopted, explore options for a mutual agreement that involves mutual gain, and make a sustained effort to find objective criteria that could be used to settle the dispute. (Cox, 1986).

Work out the values held by the conflicting groups. Common values band community's together (HRM540, Topic 8). Be sensitive to the issue, be realistic and well-informed. Do not apply generalisations or stereotypes to the situation, do not assume you understand, instead ask and clarify. Cooperation and motivation are more important in conflict resolution than fluent vocabulary. Apply active listening, and if difficulties arise, clarify what is happening and why. (HRM540, Topic 9). Flush out false assumptions, ideological orientations, and personal prejudices. Assuming cooperation can sometimes promote cooperation, start with a collaborative flexible approach, and keep the relationship going even after an apparent resolution (Tillett, 2006, p.3).

Look for some comparable projects and their outcomes if you are not familiar with the conflict groups. What did they do right/wrong, what can we learn? Was there relationships within the

resolution that can be used again: nature of the resolution, compared with management, compromise, settlement, deterrence, containment (Laue, 1991, p.323)

### **Communication**

"Lack of communication intensifies dislike" (Frank in Burrowes, 1996, p.70). Employ a cooperative process approach which can include:

"information sharing, mutual confidence and trust, perception of similarities in values and beliefs, acceptance of each others legitimacy and problem centered processes" (Deutsch in Burrowes, 1996, p.71).

Media coverage – is there a positive or negative following of the issues?

Mass media has the ability to present the news to influence our perception of issues; they have the power to propagate assumptions or simplifications that can cause conflict.

"Mass communications have always been a two-edged sword. On the one hand, they inform and educate, and this can empower and unite; on the other hand, they can also divide people and turn them against each other"(Ramsbotham et al, 2016, p.421).

Good communication is very important for conflict resolution to reduce misunderstandings, as are other factors like "willingness to work on a creative solution for a mutual satisfaction of the needs of all parties, willingness to learn, discover or ascertain the facts, willingness to trust the word of others, and to set down in an agreed document the joint declaration of the parties to implement the terms for the agreement reached and to honestly express emotion/feelings non violently" (HRM540, Topic 11).

Communication is a never ending process:

"Legitimacy of future costs and benefits among men is a subjective value, and like all values they are subject to change" (deReuck, 1984, p.100).

### **Research the past:**

It is important to acknowledge historical decisions and grievances of the past, but not allow the past to capture the future. The past is of considerable importance to the current conflict, and conflict resolution needs to "help people overcome their problems" (Groom in Burrowes, 1996, p.77).

Peoples perceived past shape who they are today, usually it is a mythical past, not a historical past. The past can also hyper sensitise groups, where the group culture is a product on an individual, and comments regarding certain issues are met with increased sensitivity (Groom in Burrowes, 1996, p.77).

### **Understand the interests behind the conflict:**

*Determine needs of the parties with a view to align them.*

Need to align "policy, process, structure and systems to the satisfaction of human needs" (Burrowes, 1996, p.79).

"Often the role of conflict resolution is to demonstrate that a belief is in the incompatibility of values or needs is not based on fact, and the parties do have mutual interests and can cooperate (Tillett, 2006, p.17).

*Know who you are dealing with and their processes.*

Bureaucracies are an institution with no emotion and "emphasis on calculable, methodical and disciplined behaviors" (Coser, 1957, p.199). It is therefore the job of outsiders to challenge the process, exerting pressure towards innovation which is perceived as interference with routine (Coser, 1957, p.199).

Private sector groups make decisions to increase funding and benefits for themselves. As a result, their intentions and needs should be reviewed carefully.

"Conflict ensues in the effort of various frustrated groups and individuals to increase their share of gratification. Those who hold the power will see the attack as an attack on the current system. Some will feel it detrimental to their interests, and others will feel their position strengthened" (Coser, 1957, p.203).

*Be mindful of the culture of the parties.*

Some cultures can be more inclined to fighting, and "non-realistic" conflict (Coser, 1957). This information must also be taken into account when preparing to deal with conflict groups. Some groups fight whatever change is before them, whether it is a good idea or not (Ramsbotham et al, 2016, p.117). Azar identifies many different types of needs as an "underlying source of protracted social conflict" (Ardagh, 2004). Security needs, political access needs, history and culture all play a part in rural Australia's stance. Reality is experienced through perception, not directly received. Our experience is mediated by our perception, and our perceptions are defined by preconceived ideas; either culturally, socially, and cognitive elements like values, meanings, attitudes, and judgment (Ardugh & Black, 1991).

**Problem-solving, apply your collected knowledge of the conflict to the solution:**

To begin to negotiate a solution there must be a balance of power, as one side will not negotiate if it thinks it can secure an all out victory of its demands (Laue, 1991, p.326). A problem solving approach does not work if both parties are not ready for the resolution process (Burrows, 1996, p.71).

Your solution may result in a settlement, instead of a resolution. A resolution by definition satisfies the inherent needs of all parties (Burton, 1991, p.63). Burton looks at the ontological needs of people and uses analytical problem solving to design an adequate solution that does not involve coercion.

"The human needs of identity, recognition and autonomy, all of which imply equity"  
(Burton, 1991, p.66).

Burton suggests careful analysis of the conflictual parties and the issues at stake. Then facilitate an interactive meeting where the issues can be analysed. No proposals or bargaining can take place until an agreement is reached between all the parties of the problem definition. Once the issues are defined, analyse existing policies available or in use, then start to explore options available. Fixing one conflict, he warns, does not fix the next one, as all conflicts are individual and it must be aimed at the needs of that individual.

**A Final Thought:**

Putting time into the decision process can be "less costly and more rational, more persuasive and less power-laden" (deReuck, 1984, p.99).

A good resolution will have the following characteristics: does not sacrifice any of the parties important values, the parties do not wish to refute the solution, even if they are in a position to do so later, the solution is sufficiently advantageous to all that it becomes self-supporting or self-enforcing. The importance of the relationship between the parties in a lasting outcome is high "agreements terminate conflicts, relationships implement agreements" (Burton in Laue, 1991, p.302).

**d. Sketch a possible solution that you consider to be fair to all parties, and justify your prescription using any of the materials and research you have read which you deem relevant.**

**Common values of the two routes:**

- We need a national freight corridor and to update current railway tracks;
- Move towards national gauge of railway;
- Bypass existing constrictions of time taken from Port to Port;
- Provide value for money;
- Promote safety on the roads and make environmental savings on fossil fuels;
- Minimise the impact on the community;

### **Communication**

Media coverage – there is a lot of information available on the internet; however most of it is from official government sites regarding the ARTC solution. It took some investigating to find the public submissions for an alternate route and the NTR.

The NTR alternate route has listed communication with the government departments as being difficult and “disrespectful” (The Weekly Times, 6/4/2017), that the people they deal with today are changed to a different role tomorrow, and they feel they are not being treated fairly.

Good communication helps to promote a creative solution for a mutual satisfaction and flush out false assumptions, ideological orientations and personal prejudices. To achieve this, I would lead discussions, community consultation, and participation from consultation groups in implementation and open forums regarding suggested solutions. To promote mutual confidence and trust I would share information and accept responses to these open forums.

### **Research the past:**

Investigate corruption and ensuring all decisions are made with the best of intentions. If the government has ‘given the all clear’ to ARTC to go ahead without adequate consultation with both sides it appears as though their relationship with the ARTC should be reviewed. On face value they may favour the ARTC due to the dealings they have together on a regular basis.

The proposals under consideration are under contention for not being accurate by industry spokespeople. This needs to be investigated and noted, so the decision can be hinged on good information.

The Inland Rail concept has been proposed in Government since 1902. Rail has not been without political conflict, for example the Sydney to Melbourne Line was never supposed to run through Cootamundra, however the political powers at the time changed the route. It is still a major constriction today, and 100 years later the mistake is still being designed out at great cost (Southern Control Optimisation Project, 2001). By using the current configuration, they are still using the old infrastructure which had design faults, even after optimisation in the upgrade. Productivity Commission as listed many examples in the field of rail as poor value or money. It is a significant spend, and an asset which could serve us for 100 years if chosen wisely.

### **Understand the interests behind the conflict:**

The ARTC are using tracks that are in use and are maintained, which could be mistakenly regarded as “routine solution”. It is therefore the job of outsiders to challenge the process, exerting pressure towards innovation which is perceived as interference with routine

Private sector groups make decisions to increase funding and benefits for themselves. As a result, their intentions should be reviewed carefully.

Those who are on the current railway will see the change as an attack on the current system, so they need to be kept informed and offered chances to respond to any changes.



**Problem-solving, apply your collected knowledge of the conflict to the solution:**

To begin to negotiate a solution there must be a balance of power, treating both route proposals with dignity and openness. Currently ARTC are the favoured route, but due to the history and current relationship with the government, the NTR solution should be welcomed for challenging the proposal to provide the best for Australia's future.

**Proposal Differences:**

**ARTC Proposed Route:**

The ARTC had originally advised the government that the proposed route does not return a positive net present value, and to revisit the investment in "10-30 years".

According to the ARTC business case, it has 'low private investment support', when the NTR proposal has investors already.

Using the existing line would still need some upgrades to be brought into "future standards", as it is listed as being restricted in weight limit to 25t compared to 32t rated work that would be completed on the alternative route.

The selling point to the alternative route is there would be no need for land purchase, it is flatter with fewer curves ("Circles of curvature" are 20 circles on alternate route, versus 51 circles on proposed route. It is interesting to note that the current route through the coast has 267 circles, so it is a significant saving either way) which impose speed restrictions and reduce reliability levels of freight.

**NTR Alternate Route:**

The upgrade to dual gauge would make the railway useable again to Melbourne and add extra functionality of North bound tracks to Brisbane, however Narrandera also has a track to Sydney's port – only 583km, dual gauge to Melbourne is 432km, will there be more freight driven by North South rail?

The track has been closed since 1988, and has not been maintained, would be disadvantaged by the fact that it was closed once due to cost versus return, and history of the area shows it can be ravaged by drought.

The significant upgrade to freight service would boost the local economy of Narrandera and surrounds, however there are significant large industries already using the current line.

Wagga Wagga and Albury are major inland cities, versus the very small villages of Tocumwal, Jerilderie, and Narrandera.

**My solution to the conflict is:**

Pending investigation and further consultation with industry, an option for resolution that satisfies the common needs of both parties would be to operate a dedicated freight corridor through Narrandera, with a view to upgrade the facilities of both routes at the joining point in NSW. That would continue the current in use line, without the interruption of the freight trains coming through to Brisbane. By working in conjunction with one another, these upgrades could benefit both routes. Add efficient sidings, an advanced logistical solution for wagons, and a pickup and drop-off service each day for the current line so the smaller 25t trains could be used to distribute freight effectively and efficiently in a timely manor to industry without major disruption to passenger services or to current logistics.

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This solution would be proposed in conjunction with all upgrades on the current line to be increased to 32t capacity, and to create a rail network of the future. A new line using an existing route would be able to attract new freight, be ready faster and therefore alleviate some freight off the current line when it is time to upgrade its facilities.

This is an important addition to Australian infrastructure, and with further investigation and solid backing from the private sector and groups involved, the project should be an exciting addition to Australia's future.

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