

Presentation to Senate Inquiry “Management of the Inland Rail project by the Australian Rail Track Corporation and the Commonwealth Government”.

Presented in Millmerran QLD, 29th January 2020.

**From: NSW affected landholders on the North Star to Border project of Inland Rail
(referred to as NS2B).**

**Mr Robert Mackay, “Budleigh” Boggabilla NSW, Mr Andrew Mackay “Merawah”
Boggabilla NSW, Mr Richard Doyle “Malgara” Boggabilla NSW, Mr Ian Uebergang
“Oakhurst” 294 Oakhurst Rd North Star NSW.**

**All parties co-submitting are directly impacted by the proposed green field alignment
across the Macintyre River floodplain, and areas of the alignment in the south from North
Star to the Qld border.**

**We note that this enquiry has been established as a result of significant dissatisfaction
with the alignment selection process conducted by ARTC along the alignment from
Victoria in the south to Queensland in the North. We are grateful for the opportunity to
present our concerns and we hope that the Inquiry can lead to a more balanced outcome
more empathetic with the communities through which the Inland Rail alignment will be
constructed. Some of our group have been in dialogue with ARTC for 6 years, involving
many meetings and inspections. We have condensed this presentation to focus on the
key issues we believe the Inquiry should know.**

- 1. Our submission and this presentation focus on the flawed process that ARTC
followed to determine their preferred alignment across the Macintyre Floodplain
on the NSW/QLD border, and the consequences of adopting that route rather than
the alternative favoured by the local community.**
- 2. Our concerns relate to the location of ARTC’s preferred alignment (D1)
approximately 2.5kms downstream of the junction of the Dumaresq and Macintyre
rivers, and only a few hundred metres from the off-take of Whalan Ck, a major
effluent stream fed from the River, and an important relief valve in the valley in
times of major flooding. Significant irrigation and civil structural development has
occurred in the valley in the last 50 years. Nearly three quarters of the floodplain
in close proximity to ARTC’s preferred alignment is protected by irrigation
structures which have a profound effect on flood flows in this area (See attached
Appendix 1). There is major community concern that the proposed development
will compress already restricted flood flows further north back into the Macintyre**

irrigated land. He then had the opportunity to propose an alternative route that did not impact him. This was adopted by ARTC who created a new preferred alignment (D1). No such opportunity was afforded to us.

7. After continuous lobbying by us and other community representative bodies including Goondiwindi Regional Council, and Moree Plains Shire Council, ARTC conceded to a review of the MCA process, an update of Flooding and Hydrology modelling as new information came to light, and a costing comparison of Option D1 vs Option A. This was proposed in June 2018. The MCA process review by an “independent” Consultant, Mr Glenn Hallahan, turned out to be a ‘tick and flick’ exercise whereby ARTC were asked what process they had adopted, and then asked to provide evidence of completion. This was presented to the CCC meeting On 3rd April 2019. When pressed to provide details of community consultation Mr Hallahan said he had no such detail because it lies outside the scope of his report. He also had no opinion as to the appropriateness of a 2.5% weighting on flooding and hydrology for the same reason. We consider Mr Hallahan’s review to be so restricted in its scope and so superficial as to be of no value in reviewing the selection process for possible flaws. One could even go so far as to say this review is a whitewash of ARTC’s early actions and a waste of public money. We understand that the latest flooding and Hydrological modelling and the costing comparison Option A vs Option D1 will be presented to us on 6th February 2020, almost 2 years after it was promised. It is noteworthy that this information will not be supplied to us until 1 week after this public hearing.
8. From the time ARTC’s preferred option was announced we have been requesting political support from federal members and Ministers for a review of the alignment decision. Their response was to reject our request and to urge us to continue dialogue with ARTC. We have continued to do so in the absence of an alternative but remain concerned that a poor decision will be made.
9. Even after ARTC promised to undertake reviews of their decision they continued to publicly promote their preferred alignment as “set in steel”. (this a headline that appeared in our local newspaper) and similar comments were published in their own e-newsletter. We felt very frustrated by this and, together with the poor consultation of the past, this behaviour prompted further questioning of the trustworthiness of ARTC’s undertakings to us.
10. ARTC’s approach has been largely a reactive one. They have responded to concerns and issues raised by concerned landholders and local government representatives as more information comes to light and deficiencies in information relied on by ARTC becomes apparent. We and others have pointed repeatedly to deficiencies in the data used in flood modelling. For example, irrigation banks and other structures in the valley were not considered in the model. We have tabled concerns regarding the estimated peak flow rates in large flooding events which

have not been picked up. Their response has been to mitigate the concerns raised, but always in the context of their service offering. The primary consideration for alignment selection and virtually every other decision made by ARTC is the service offering to Interstate transporters of under 24 hours travel time between Melbourne and Brisbane. No justification of this seemingly stringent time frame has been provided and yet the potential consequences of this requirement are catastrophic to regional communities. A detailed examination and explanation of the veracity of this requirement is owing to the landholders and communities in greenfield construction zones. In some cases, they stand to be profoundly affected.

11. We are concerned about other impacts such as removal/reduction of Travelling stock routes, disruption of stock movements between properties and the travelling stock reserves, and interruption to/blocking of regional telecommunication services, which are all supposedly to be addressed in the EIS process. It is clear that the ARTC do not understand the implications their disruption will cause affected farm businesses and residents. We are worried these issues will be dismissed or deferred to State or Federal departments without properly considering the consequences of their actions.

12. Comprehensive hydrological modelling, engineering design and financial management is critical for a project of this scale. It cannot, however, be the sole basis for determining the alignment over such a major floodplain. Models are only as good as the next unprecedented disaster and we have and are experiencing plenty of them now. We feel there is a lack of empathy for the very valid concerns and views of our community and others along the Inland Rail alignment. After the hurly burly of construction dies down, we will be the ones left to bear unforeseen consequences. In that light we would simply ask the question; Why not option A? It likely will only incur a relatively small additional financial cost, and only add an estimated 6 minutes to the overall travel time. The difference will be that it will be far less risky and will carry the support of the majority of the floodplain community which should be respected. If such considerations lie outside of ARTC's purview, then a Political intervention will be required.

13. We thank you for the opportunity to address you and we would like to extend an invitation to you to visit the Macintyre floodplain and see for yourselves the issues that concern us.

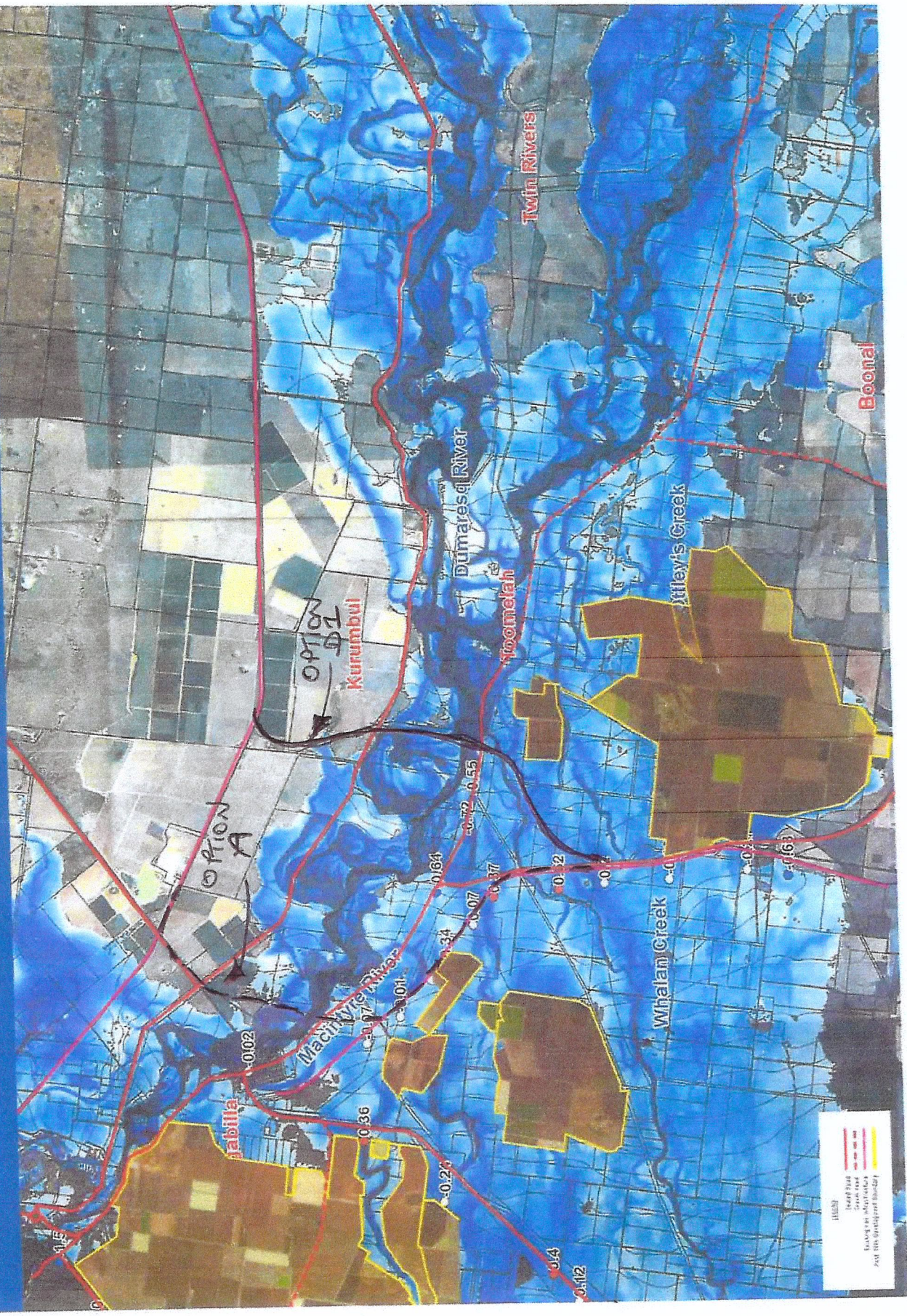
Robert Mackay
Landholder

Andrew Mackay
Landholder

Richard Doyle
Landholder

Ian Uebergang
Landholder

1976 FLOOD - OBSTRUCTIONS ON THE FLOOD PLAIN



A.1 MCA WEIGHTING

Criteria	Criteria Weighting	Sub-criteria	Sub Criteria Weighting
Technical viability	17.0%	Alignment	20%
		Impact on PUP and other assets	15%
		Geotechnical conditions	20%
		Impacts on existing road and rail networks	15%
		Flood immunity/ hydrology	20%
		Future proofing	10%
Safety assessment of the proposed alignment	16.5%	Operational safety	25%
		Public safety	10%
		Road safety interfaces	25%
		Emergency response	20%
		Construction safety	20%
Operational	16.5%	Effect/ Impact on travel time	33%
		Effect on reliability and availability	33%
		Network interoperability and connectivity	33%
Constructability and schedule	12.5%	Construction duration	20%
		Construction access	15%
		Construction complexity	15%
		Resources/ material sources	15%
		Interface with operational railway	20%
		Staging opportunities	15%
Environmental Impacts	12.5%	Impacts to ecological values of conservation significance (threatened species, communities and habitats)	25%
		Visual impacts	10%
		Noise and vibration impacts	20%
		Flooding and waterway impacts	20%
		Effect on air quality and greenhouse gas emissions	10%
		Effect on soils and erosion	15%
Community and property impacts	12.5%	Property impacts	20%
		Heritage	20%
		Impact on community e.g. roads / community infrastructure	20%
		Social and community impacts (community stakeholder risk)	20%
		Current and future land use impacts	20%
Approvals and stakeholder risk	12.5%	Planning and approval timescale	20%
		State/ Federal agency buy in	20%
		Local government buy in	20%
		Other statutory and regulatory approvals	20%
		Service authorities (utilities/ other)	20%