

## **COMMUNITY IMPACTS**

Council recognises the potential for national benefits that may be achieved through inland rail. However, national benefits should not come at the cost of Lockyer Valley residents when the project will have no local benefits for the communities where the impacts will be greatest felt. Attachment D provides the detailed comments on the EIS. Following the review of the EIS, we highlight these generational impacts on our communities.

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***In 2040 the H2C alignment can expect a 1.8km long (and up to 3.6km long) double stacked freight train 6.5 metres in height to travel through the heart of Gatton, Forest Hill and Laidley at 80-115km/hr every 30mins at all hours of the day and night.***

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Against this reality, we invite the Coordinator-General to visit and consider our townships with a view to understanding the proximity of sensitive receptors to the proposed alignment. The most serious impacts of the project on some of our communities are summarised below as an indication of the cumulative impacts in a given location. Impacts of noise or visual amenity, or flood risk or rail safety are often considered individually. However, we need to consider the cumulative impacts of all of these problems in a locality to fully appreciate the real life-changing impacts on community members. Alarming, the draft EIS does not consider the cumulative impacts of the project on our communities.

### **GATTON**

Gatton is the largest community in the Lockyer Valley with a population of around 8000 people. It is the administrative centre for the Lockyer Valley Regional Council and is the economic focus for the thriving agricultural sector that surrounds the town and region.

Gatton is LVRC's only Principal Rural Activity Centre which is intended to be an important service and community hub in rural areas designed to hold a concentration of rural, commercial, retail, government and community services (South East Queensland Regional Plan 2017). The impacts of Inland Rail will call in to question the ability of Gatton to perform this role over the longer term. Council holds serious concerns that the combined impacts to Gatton will detrimentally impact business growth and resident sentiment. Significant impacts from Inland Rail will include:

<b>Traffic &amp; Transport</b>	The current alignment through the centre of Gatton impacts directly on adjoining landowners both business and residential. Details of acquisition are provided in the EIS and will remove residences and businesses and reduce the ability of other businesses to operate. The closure of the Gaul Street level crossing prevents direct access to the town centre for North Gatton and will physically isolate that community. Disruption to access at both ends of Old College road will further obstruct traffic access. The PCNP will no longer cross at Gaul Street and existing pedestrian and cycling access will be removed if the project deems that necessary. In times of flood north Gatton will be isolated leaving thousands of people unable to access services via road. Construction impacts on traffic and transport will have a duration of several years and will lead to extensive commercial and administrative disruption and loss of business.
<b>Noise &amp; Vibration</b>	By 2040 up to 50 train movements a day will occur through the heart of Gatton. Based on WHO guidelines sleep disturbance and correlated mental and physical health issues arise at noise levels above 44db. The EIS has ignored that criteria and adopted criteria of 55 dBALnight and LA Max of 80db. This very high criteria (inconsistent with the requirements of Building code) seeks to limit the number and extent of noise mitigation works on infrastructure and houses.

	<p>The adoption of the WHO criteria would demonstrate the literally thousands of residences in Gatton that will be affected by rail noise. If noise barriers were to be considered there would then be adverse impacts on flood operation and visual amenity.</p>
<b>Visual Amenity</b>	<p>Clearly freight railways and trains are highly visible and not consistent with regional visual amenity values. One treatment discussed in the EIS to mitigate (some) noise are noise barriers. Such barriers would exacerbate the loss of access, reduce safety, present as a flood barrier and be fertile canvas for illegal graffiti as is found throughout Queensland rail corridors. This will further impact on the loss of amenity and the impact on town character and identity will be significant. The presence of high embankments (with or without noise barriers) bridges and other structures will affect local climate (shade, sunlight, breezes) and scenic amenity.</p>
<b>Flood and Safety</b>	<p>The flood panel has identified a range of concerns with the modelling and existing flooding risks on the existing rail corridor may be exacerbated – local and regional. The modelling needs to be reviewed before this can be clarified. It appears that the ultimately developed state has not been considered. The impact of the rail crossing closure without mitigation will isolate the whole of North Gatton in both local and regional flooding. The potential for embankment collapse and/or the redirection of flood flows in extreme events is real. From a rail safety aspect there is a genuine risk of derailment as spelt out in the detailed comments. If such a derailment were to occur in the town of Gatton it would be catastrophic.</p>
<b>Economy</b>	<p>The project makes significant claims about economic benefit despite being based on a 2015 business case and despite costs already increasing by \$5B. The benefits (if realised) are to be found as ‘national benefits’ or within the Toowoomba and greater Brisbane statistical region. Genuine <u>local</u> benefits are not specified. Employment, rather than sourced locally, is to be sourced from a radius of 125 km taking in workers from Brisbane, Ipswich and Toowoomba.</p> <p>The EIS also claims growers of the region will utilise the inland rail for productivity gain. This is simply not the case.</p> <p>It is claimed that the project will be a potential catalyst for the industrial uses in the Gatton West Industrial Zone (GWIZ). Separate Council investigations have identified significant investment is required at GWIZ to catalyse the precinct, which inland rail is <u>not</u> proposing.</p> <p>Separately, a wide range of business offerings are provided in Gatton and the impacts summarised above will cause a change to the environment of the town centre making it significantly less enjoyable. This will result in a reduction in customer willingness to patronise the businesses to the detriment of the local economy. Accordingly, viable businesses are likely to be negatively impacted.</p> <p>Living and doing business within Gatton will be less attractive with the introduction of Inland Rail. Loss of rural and township character will occur. Residents and businesses will look to move elsewhere where it is preferable to live and undertake business. The township will be negatively impacted. It is unlikely to continue to perform its role anticipated through the South East Queensland Regional Plan.</p>


## FOREST HILL

Forest Hill is a small regional village of around 1000 residents with strong heritage and rural traditional values. It has established itself as a regional tourist destination with the old-style main street drawing significant numbers of people every weekend to enjoy visiting, shopping and dining amidst the quiet peaceful lifestyle on offer.

<b>Traffic &amp; Transport</b>	The town is based around the existing railway line that historically serviced the town silos and the surrounding agricultural regions. The reference design has moved the existing level crossing to the East. While moved on safety grounds the crossing will now be further away from the desire line (especially for active transport) between north and south Forest Hill. Up to 50 trains a day of up to 1.8 km (or even 3.6km) in length indicates the crossing will be closed for significant periods each day. This will change travel behaviours and impact on emergency vehicle access.
<b>Noise</b>	By 2040 up to 50 train movements a day will occur through the heart of Forest Hill. Based on WHO guidelines sleep disturbance and correlated mental and physical health issues arise at noise levels above 44db. The EIS has ignored that criteria and adopted criteria of 55 dBALnight and LA Max of 80db. This very high criteria (inconsistent with the requirements of Building code) seeks to limit the number and extent of noise mitigation works on infrastructure and houses. The adoption of the WHO criteria would demonstrate that the entire population of Forest Hill will be affected by rail noise.
<b>Visual Amenity</b>	The EIS provides a before and after of what the change will be if noise barriers in Forest Hill are erected. This totally destroys the visual amenity and backdrop of this heritage based rural tourist destination. This will have flow on impacts to the viability of businesses in town. The presence of high embankments (with or without noise barriers) bridges and other structures will affect local climate (shade, sunlight, breezes) as well as scenic amenity.
<b>Flood and Safety</b>	Forest Hill is located on a flood plain and was impacted by significant floods in 2011 and 2013. The existing rail corridor played a role in the consequential flooding of the town. Residents are very concerned about the impacts of the new corridor which will significantly raise the height of the embankment. As indicated for Gatton, serious concerns are held about the flood modelling. Real concern exists that the heightened embankment in the current alignment will lead to higher flood levels in the town. The proposed rail configuration clearly impacts on flood evacuation routes. The potential for embankment collapse and redirection of flood flows in extreme events due to increased height needs is real. As for Gatton there is a genuine risk of derailment. If such a derailment were to occur in the town of Forest Hill, there would be catastrophic consequences.
<b>Economy</b>	Local businesses in Forest Hill thrive on weekend tourist trade. These visitors come for the rural township character and high-quality main street. The introduction of Inland Rail will decimate this character making it unappealing for tourists and travellers causing adverse impacts on this small rural economy. Living, visiting, and doing business within Forest Hill will be less attractive with the introduction of Inland Rail. Again, there may be national benefits but there will be a net economic cost to the businesses and land values of Forest Hill. There are no employment targets for residents. As for Gatton the trains will not be stopping here. It is all impact – no benefit.

## LAIDLEY

Laidley is a rural town with a population of around 4000 people that along with Gatton has strong regional administrative and economic function. It has high rural and heritage values and is a tourism destination within SEQ.

<p><b>Traffic &amp; Transport</b></p>	<p>The reference design indicates the railway going through the outer northern part of the town. While thankfully not splitting the town in half (as it has in Gatton and Forest Hill) it has enormous impacts on the immediate vicinity especially in the Valley Vista Estate. The traffic impacts during construction will be significant given the location of the tunnel through the Little Liverpool Range with all construction traffic accessing the site via a residential street. Ultimate development as set by the planning scheme and the SEQ Regional Plan is compromised as is the future cost associated with the reduction of network planning options.</p>
<p><b>Noise</b></p>	<p>By 2040 up to 50 train movements a day will occur in this location. Based on WHO guidelines, sleep disturbance and correlated mental and physical health issues arise at noise levels above 44db. The EIS has ignored that criteria and adopted criteria of 55 dBALnight and LA Max of 80db. This very high criteria (inconsistent with the requirements of Building code) seeks to limit the number and extent of noise mitigation works on infrastructure and houses. The adoption of the WHO criteria would demonstrate the many hundreds of homes in Laidley that will be affected by rail noise. This is particularly the case given the train will be on a very high embankment or on structure as it proceeds through the Laidley area.</p>
<p><b>Visual Amenity</b></p>	<p>The EIS provides a picture from Valley Vista that is replicated below. It speaks volumes of the impact of this railway on the visual amenity of the region. This is a photo of a residential subdivision near Valley Vista with the superimposed new railway. Note the proximity of the existing house. Such impacts cannot be mitigated. The presence of extremely high embankments (with or without noise barriers) bridges and other structures (e.g. tunnel venting) also impacts on local climate (permanent shade, sunlight, breezes), as well as scenic amenity.</p> 
<p><b>Flooding and Safety</b></p>	<p>Laidley was severely impacted by the 2013 floods and is vulnerable to flood events due to its location. Residents are very concerned about the impacts of the new rail corridor across the flood plain given the complexity of the regional and local flooding. As indicated above serious concerns are held about the flood modelling local and regional. Real concern exists that the embankment heading up to the proposed tunnel will cause flooding and redirect floodwaters. The alignment will impact on regional flood evacuation routes and will affect the requirement for flood water to cross the alignment through Vista View. The ultimately developed state of North Laidley must be addressed. The impact of significant filling of the flood plain, potential embankment collapse and redirection</p>

	of flood flows in extreme events (due to increased height and the deep cuttings) must be addressed using flood modelling that is correctly calibrated and validated to assess impacts. The proposed laydown areas require risk management relating to the creation of debris, heavy objects and washing away of stored materials.
<b>Economy</b>	The H2C alignment traverses through some of the last remaining developable residential land to the north of the Laidley township. Laidley is an area intended by the Regional Plan and the Council for future urban growth given its status as a Major Rural Activity Centre and location within the Urban Footprint. The alignment and impacts from the operation of inland rail raise serious questions about the ability for Laidley to continue to grow and expand within the bounds of the existing Urban Footprint.

As indicated above the cumulative impacts within these centres are extreme. These long-term impacts cannot be appropriately mitigated to a suitable standard and demonstrate that the project should not be approved in its current form or on its current alignment.

Lockyer Valley Regional Council recommend that the current proposed alignment is re-evaluated and revised so the alignment avoids our townships. Alternate alignments are available to the proponents especially around Gatton and Forest Hill where impacts could be better managed and where potential benefits to the proponents could also be found.

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