

Uncertainty plagues corridor

Proposed rail line to supersede farmland

BY QUINTON MCCALLUM

LANDOWNERS along the proposed Iron Road rail corridor on the Eyre Peninsula want more detailed information about the plan and are concerned about the impact on their farming operations.

It comes as the state government ponders a decision on the future of the Central Eyre Iron Project, a verdict expected imminently.

The proposed rail and infrastructure corridor would be 145 kilometres in length and span from a deep sea port at Cape Hardy to a large-scale magnetite mine at Warramboo.

Kenny and Liz Nield, Rudall, own 2500 arable hectares across five blocks, with the rail corridor proposed to go through three of those, plus 590ha of leased land.

They say the corridor, which affects 44 landholders, will split their farming enterprise in half, and say they've received little information about corridor specifics.

The Nields said farmers were stuck in a waiting game, reluctant to make improvements to their properties for fear of losing land.

They are concerned about

the impact on stock and machinery movements, among other things.

"We've said no to them purchasing any of our land for this corridor," Mrs Nield said.

"We're hoping Iron Road don't think they can use the state or federal government to help them gain this land.

"There's only so much land available for agriculture in SA and mining companies should stay away from it.

"Farming lasts for generations. Mining is temporary."

Jason and Julie Burton run a cropping operation at Kielpa and estimate they could lose 100-200ha of land depending on the exact location of the corridor, which they say has not been forthcoming from Iron Road.

Mr Burton said building their farming enterprise was a long process and he didn't want to lose, or split, any land.

"I'm fourth generation and it's taken that many years to get where we are," he said.

"There's no way I'm handing over 100ha and splitting blocks in half without putting up a fight.

"As far as I'm concerned, they're just not doing it."



APPREHENSIVE: Jason and Julie Burton, Kielpa, and Kenny and Liz Nield, Rudall, have land along the proposed Iron Road rail corridor from Warramboo to Cape Hardy, and are concerned their properties will be split in half.

Iron Road issued a statement saying it had spoken to "as many of the impacted landowners as possible to discuss potential impacts to farming activities" and was

"committed to ongoing engagement".

"We have also held several community meetings and drop-in sessions for impacted landowners and any other

interested parties to meet with staff, view our maps to see the location of the railway in relation to their land, and chat about any concerns such as rail safety and dust

on crops," the statement said. Iron Road is also in a holding pattern, waiting on the state government's assessment of its development application.

Decision looms on Eyre mining application

ASSESSMENT of Central Eyre Iron Project applications is "well progressed", according to the Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure.

Planning Minister John Rau is considering the development application, while the Department of State Development is assessing the

mining application under the *Mining Act 1971*.

"Following the Planning Minister's consideration of the assessment report, a decision by the Governor, on advice from the Executive Council, under Section 48 of the *Development Act 1993* will then be made," a DPTI spokesperson said.

While Iron Road does not have acquisition rights on land in the proposed rail corridor, the possibility remains for the state government to step in if landholders refuse to sell the area needed.

While the DPTI spokesperson said further comment on the assessment process and acquisition que-

ries was inappropriate while the development was under assessment, Mellor Olsson partner Anthony Kelly said there was "a raft of different legislation" which gave power "for acquisition of land".

Potential legislation included the *Railways (Operations and Access) Act 1997* and the *Roads (Opening and*

Closing) Act 1991, but Mr Kelly said decisions about land acquisition would most likely be made after the approvals process.

He said landholders would be entitled to compensation if land was acquired.

Iron Road has committed to further consultation and reiterated the "positive social

and economic impacts on the region" the CEIP would bring. It says it will work with Sumitomo and grain partners Emerald Grain to give croppers choice and claims the rail corridor will avoid conservation areas, towns and heritage areas, following roads and property boundaries where possible.

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