REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS (REF) DECISION REPORT

Proposed *NARWONAH MATERIAL DISTRIBUTION CENTRE*

Introduction

I have reviewed the Review of Environmental Factors (REF) for the proposal known as *Narwonah Material Distribution Centre*. The REF has been prepared for the proposal by *Inland Rail* to satisfy ARTC's environmental assessment requirements under Part 5, Division 5.1 the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* ("EP&A Act"). The REF is titled *Narwonah Material Distribution Centre Review of Environmental Factors* and is dated as final.

This Decision Report provides a summary of the key environmental considerations and the determination for the proposal consistent with requirements of Section 4.4 of the ARTC *Code of Practice for Environmental Impact Assessment of Development Proposals in New South Wales.*

Project Description

The proposal is for the construction and temporary operation of a Material Distribution Centre (MDC) at Narwonah in regional NSW, south of the township of Narromine.

The Narwonah MDC forms a key component of the Inland Rail Program. The proposed MDC will be used for temporary track material storage and management prior to their distribution to multiple Inland Rail projects and sections across NSW, including Narromine to Narrabri (N2N), North Star to Border (NS2B), Illabo to Stockinbingal (I2S), Stockinbingal to Parkes (S2P) and potentially other projects along the Inland Rail route.

The following activities will likely be involved in the construction of the MDC:

- structural and engineering fill placement—material will be collected onsite to be used as general and structural fill, with these borrow locations being in areas of cut that will then be used as a hardstand area for site offices and laydown
- strengthening of some internal roads and rail track structure—pavement material and ballast will be sourced from local quarries
- track construction including placement of ballast, sleepers and rail—the track will be constructed using specialist excavator attachments, loaders, trucks and track-mounted resurfacing machines, and will connect to the existing rail corridor
- installation of steel structures (gantries, portal frames)—the portal frame installation involves concrete foundations being installed, with cranes placing the steel structures for fixing
- installation of insitu concrete elements for the flash-butt welding stations, rail handling rollers, and for the drop pits to be used for rollingstock maintenance
- vegetation clearing and grubbing
- stripping of topsoil
- bulk earthworks and subgrade treatment
- installation of diversion drains and erosion control
- installation of electrical connection and site distribution infrastructure
- installation of fuel storage infrastructure

- set up of offices and amenities.

The following activities will likely take place during operation of the MDC:

- rail logistics and welding, including short rail delivery and stockpiles, flash-butt welding and grinding stations, and LWR stockpiles
- sleeper logistics, including sleeper stockpiling and handling
- ballast logistics, including stockpile and handling
- TLM and work train provisioning
- storage of turnouts and catchpoints, and other pre-cast materials, as required (e.g., culverts, level crossing panels)
- installation of mainline turnouts and catchpoints from exiting ARTC corridors
- stabling roads for work trains, ballast trains, track plant and locomotives
- office and amenities for MDC operation and maintenance personnel
- heavy vehicle access to material stockpiles
- construction plant laydown
- civil and rail plant maintenance facilities

Note that the proposed MDC site is located on four properties, all of which are wholly owned by ARTC. A proposed subdivision as part of this proposal is planned to combine and reconfigure these lots with the inclusion of a fifth lot, to overall create two lots. The subdivision will allow the MDC to be located primarily on a single lot and may also facilitate the ongoing use of the proposal site post decommissioning of the MDC.

During MDC construction, working hours would be as per the recommended standard hours for construction work as detailed in the NSW Interim Construction Noise Guideline (ICNG). Out of hours works may also be required. During MDC operations, operational activities, including welding, loading and distribution, will be undertaken 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Construction of the MDC is expected to commence from June 2022 and be operational from September 2022 until approximately 2027, after which the MDC will be decommissioned.

Note that ARTC's EPL 3142 does not apply to this proposal.

Environmental Considerations *Note: this table summarises key environmental issues by exception. It does not capture routine environmental issues / management measures documented in the REF.*	
Biodiversity (Flora and Fauna)	
Key issues and management measures proposed	Minor The majority of the MDC site is largely agricultural and contains cleared lands from cropping and grazing. Small patches of semi-intact native vegetation is present along existing fence lines, as scattered trees, or along adjacent road reserves. Small dams occur throughout the proposal site. Construction of the proposal would remove about 328.19 ha of vegetation. Of this, about 181.89 ha of vegetation is comprised of cropland and introduced vegetation. The remaining 146.30 ha is comprised of native vegetation and includes four PCTs identified in the field survey. One PCT fulfils the requirements under the BC Act as a threatened ecological community (TEC) and includes a small woodland patch of Weeping Myall open woodland of the Darling Riverine Plains Bioregion and Brigalow Belt South bioregion, which is classified as endangered. An assessment of the likely significance of impacts of the proposal on Myall Woodland (a five-part test as per the

	BC Act) has been prepared and found that the proposal would be unlikely to have a significant impact on this community. An assessment of the likelihood of occurrence of threatened fauna predicted to occur in the locality found that there are 16 threatened fauna species that have been recorded, or are assumed present, within the proposal site and, subsequently, are likely to be impacted directly or indirectly by the proposal. Assessments of significance have been prepared for these species and found that the proposal is unlikely to directly or indirectly impact on these species. The proposal site does not contain any watercourses that provide suitable habitat for fish listed under the FM Act. Management measures are detailed in the REF and include a flora and fauna management sub-plan will be prepared prior to construction and implemented as part of the Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), and a suitably qualified ecologist is to be present during clearing activities for habitat identified during pre-clearing surveys, in order to identify areas to be avoided, and manage the rescue or relocation of fauna as necessary.
Indigenous Heritage	
Key issues and management measures proposed	Moderate The Indigenous heritage assessment identified several sites to the immediate south of the study area, on gilgai formations. The gilgais continue into parts of the study area that could not be inspected during survey due to dense vegetation coverage and poor access. Areas where gilgais are evident have been assessed as being of moderate archaeological potential, and a program of archaeological sub-surface testing must be completed for these parts of the study area. An Aboriginal site (Site MDC-AS01) was identified during the site visit located on the north-western segment of the study area (i.e. proposal site), and is a low-density artefact scatter. There are no previously recorded Aboriginal sites identified within the study area. Based on the current design stage of the MDC, impacts to Site MDC-AS01 are not confirmed. Avoidance of impact is the preferred option, however, if it is not able to be achieved through design development then an Aboriginal Heritage Impact Permit (AHIP) will be required. Areas outside of site MDC-AS01, where no gilgais are present, have been assessed as of low archaeological potential. Management measures are detailed in the REF and include the MDC design should be formulated to avoid impacts to Site MDC-AS01, if impacts to Site MDC-AS01 cannot be avoided an AHIP will be required to permit any impacts, including surface collection salvage. A program of archaeological sub-surface testing must be completed for areas where gilgais are evident in the proposal site.
Noise and Vibration	
Key issues and management measures proposed	Moderate The proposal site is situated within a rural setting and surrounded by a total of 20 residential receivers and two industrial receivers, which have been identified as sensitive receivers, within a 2-km radius. The closest sensitive receiver is approximately 170 m to the north the proposal site. The following potential noise impacts are anticipated during the construction of the MDC: • Two sensitive receivers were identified where noise levels are predicted to exceed the standard hours NMLs of 45 dBA, with predicted noise level ranges of 45–50 dBA and 50–60 dBA during standard construction hours. • When out of hours works are required, seven sensitive receivers are predicted to exceed the out-of-hours NMLs of 35 dBA.

	• Up to two sensitive receivers are anticipated to be at the risk of sleep disturbance during night-time activities. • The construction road traffic noise analysis suggests that there may be a noticeable increase in road traffic noise on Tomingley Road, however the levels are expected to be compliant with the Road Noise Policy. • No adverse vibration impacts are predicted based on the offset distances between the proposal site and the closest sensitive receiver. The following potential noise impacts are anticipated during the operation (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) of the MDC: • Daytime NMLs expected to be exceeded by up to 7 dBA at two sensitive receivers during standard operational hours. • Night-time NMLs expected to be exceeded by up to 17 dBA at 11 sensitive receivers during out-of-work hours • Up to four sensitive receivers are anticipated to be at the risk of sleep disturbance during night-time activities. • No adverse vibration impacts are predicted to result from the operation of the proposed MDC. Management measures are detailed in the REF and include develop and implement a Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan (CNVMP), the construction noise impact assessment in the REF should be refined following any changes in design refinement, to reflect the final locations of construction activities and scheduling to inform the development of the CVNMP.
Non-Indigenous Heritage	
Key issues and management measures proposed	Minor No listed heritage items are located within the study area or within 3 km of it. One item of potential local heritage significance, the Craigie Lea homestead, is present approximately 200 m west of the study area. The archaeological potential of the study area has been rated as low to nil. No works are proposed within or near to any non-Indigenous heritage sites. As such, the proposed MDC is unlikely to impact on non-Indigenous heritage and no further heritage investigation is required. Management measures are detailed in the REF and include the Craigie Lea homestead should be inspected by a heritage specialist to determine whether the homestead retains heritage significance.
Community and Visual Impacts	
Key issues and management measures proposed	Minor Air quality impacts (such as dust and emissions) during construction and operation are anticipated to be minor. Any impacts related to traffic and access during construction and operation would be insignificant based on the traffic and access impact assessment that has been undertaken, note that most of the deliveries to the MDC will be via rail. The proposal site is located on lands within the dark sky region and works at night are proposed that will potentially increase the amount of artificial light in the night sky. A lighting assessment has been undertaken for the proposed MDC which concluded that the light fittings and design of the MDC used in the modelling exercise meet the recommendations of the Dark Sky Planning Guideline. Management measures are detailed in the REF and include where sensitive receivers are located within 200 m of proposed activities, or visible dust is generated from work areas or unsealed access roads, watering would be implemented where practicable. A Traffic Management Plan (TMP) will be prepared for the proposal as part of the CEMP, in consultation with council.

Soil and Water	
Key issues and management measures proposed	Minor The proposal site is characterised by relatively flat land sloping in a north-westerly direction, several localised depressions and small farm dams are present within the proposal site. The proposal site is subject to flood-liable land; however, the proposed activities are anticipated to include appropriate drainage provisions and not result in alteration to the flood patterns to more than a minor extent. Management measures are detailed in the REF and include site elements will be strategically placed to minimise impacts to overland flow conveyance and storage, and appropriate cross and open-drain features will be provided to maintain designated flow regime and avoid flow redirection and/or flood impacts on external properties.
Contamination and Waste	
Key issues and management measures proposed	Minor The proposal site is not identified on the NSW EPA contaminated land records or ARTC's contaminated site register. Site investigation undertaken as part of the geotechnical assessment found no evidence of soil contamination and assessed that there is a low potential risk from soil contamination to human health or environment on this site. All waste generated during construction and operation would be managed using the waste hierarchy approach of avoidance and reuse before consideration is given to disposal. Management measures are detailed in the REF and include a Contaminated Land and Hazardous Materials Management Plan would be prepared and implemented as part of the CEMP, including an unexpected finds protocol.
Other	
Key issues and management measures proposed	Cumulative impacts are unlikely during the construction phase of the MDC, however cumulative impacts may occur because of operational activities occurring simultaneously with the construction phase of the N2N Project.

Review of Environmental Factors (EP&A Regulation 2021 - section 171) and Matters of National Environmental Significance (EPBC Act 1999)	
Have the section 171 Environmental Factors and Matters of National Environmental Significance been considered?	Yes

REF Exhibition and Public Submissions	
Was the REF publicly exhibted, and were community or stakeholder submissions received?	Yes The REF was publicly exhibited from 5 to 18 May 2022 with three submissions received. A response to submissions report has been prepared and accompanies the REF.

Environmental Approvals and Licences Required	
Approval requirements	The proposal can be assessed under Part 5 of the EP&A Act and determined by ARTC. EPL 3142 does not apply to this proposal.

Operational Requirements	
Are there any operational requirements that apply to the proposal post-construction?	Note that the MDC will be decommissioned at completion of operations, and will not form part of ARTC's operational rail network. A contamination assessment report (with sampling and analysis conducted) should be undertaken post the MDC and demobilisation to demonstrate the proposal site was not contaminated as a result of the MDC and the land is suitable for use or development.

No

Reviewer notes
Environmental assessments undertaken for the N2N project have been used to inform the MDC REF. The proposed MDC is currently at conceptual design and will be further refined at detailed design. Existing environmental assessments undertaken to inform the REF may be further refined, or additional assessments undertaken. Any further assessments undertaken during detailed design to support the construction and operation of the MDC should ensure the REF conclusion of 'no significant impact' remains, otherwise further environmental assessment and approval may be required.

Conclusion

I have considered the requirements of Part 5, Division 5.1 of the EP&A Act and the ARTC *Code of Practice for Environmental Impact Assessment of Development Proposals in NSW*.

On behalf of ARTC I have determined that:

- The Proposal is subject to Part 5, Division 5.1 of the EP&A Act;
- The environmental impact assessment for the Proposal complies with the requirements of Part 5 of the EP&A Act and the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021;
- An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required for the Proposal;
- A Species Impact Statement (SIS) is not required for the Proposal; and
- The Proposal should proceed subject to the environmental conditions as set out in Schedule 1.

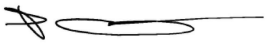
I make these determinations in reliance on the documents I have reviewed and the advice I have received in relation to the Proposal as summarised above.

I note that I did not prepare the REF and that I am authorised by ARTC to make the determination set out in this Decision Report.

Approval Recommended by:

Name and position: Stuart Ross, Corporate Environment Manager	
Signature 	Date 16 June 2022

Endorsed by: Applicable / ~~Not applicable~~

Name and position: Peter Clements, Group Executive Safety and Environment	
Signature 	Date 20.6.22

Approved by:

Name and position: Stephen Jones, Director Health Safety and Environment, Inland Rail	
Signature Belinda Jones	Date Jun 20, 2022

Note: Refer Schedule 1 for environmental conditions.

SCHEDULE 1 - ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

REFERENCE	ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS
1.	**GENERAL**
1.1	The proposal must be carried out in accordance with the terms of this approval and generally in accordance with the proposal as described in the REF documents.
1.2	~~All works within the rail corridor must be undertaken in compliance with ARTCs Environment Protection Licence (EPL 3142).~~
1.3	All mitigation measures recommended in the REF and this Schedule (Schedule 1 Environmental Conditions) shall be applied to the proposal. These Schedule 1 Environmental Conditions will prevail where there is any inconsistency.
1.4	All necessary licences, permits and approvals required by legislation shall be obtained prior to the works commencing. Copies of these licences permits, and approvals shall be kept on site and complied with during works.
1.5	Where proposal construction has not commenced within twenty-four months of REF determination, a Consistency Review will be undertaken.
2.	**CONSTRUCTION ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN**
2.1	A construction environmental management plan (CEMP) shall be prepared addressing all REF mitigation measures, these Schedule 1 Environmental Conditions, and other environmental requirements as applicable.
3.	**TRAINING**
3.1	A site-specific environmental induction must be prepared and delivered to site personnel and is to include: - environmentally sensitive areas and 'no go' zones; - emergency procedures, - complaints handling, - environmental incident recording and reporting, and - site specific environmental controls.
4.	**INCIDENT NOTIFICATION**
4.1	Environmental incidents shall be reported to ARTC Project Manager (and as applicable to the ARTC Network Controller) as soon as practicable.
5.	**COMMUNITY COMPLAINTS**

REFERENCE	ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS
5.1	Details of all complaints are to be forwarded to ARTC Enviroline (1300 550 402 or enviroline@artc.com.au) for logging into the ARTC complaints database, unless a project specific contact number has been provided to the community.
6.	**OTHER**
6.1	ARTC documents ENV-GL-010 and ENV-GL-011 provide guidance on the compliant management of waste spoil and timber.
6.2	Indigenous heritage - Archaeological sub-surface testing must be completed for parts of the MDC site assessed as being of moderate archaeological potential (as per section 6.3 of the REF) to determine the potential for impact and whether additional management measures or an AHIP is required.
6.3	Indigenous heritage – Where impacts to Site MDC-AS01 cannot be avoided an AHIP must be obtained and conditions complied with.
6.4	Should environmental assessments and/or specialist studies in the REF be further refined, or additional environmental assessments and/or specialist studies be undertaken as detailed design for the MDC progresses, the findings must be reviewed against the conclusions in the REF with regard to 'no significant impact' to ensure REF adequacy is not compromised. This review must be undertaken and documented by Inland Rail at the conclusion of each specialist study.