

MEETING MINUTES

Narrabri to North Star Inland Rail (Phase 2)

Community Reference Group

DATE / TIME

11 October 2023
4.35 pm

LOCATION

Social Co-house, 167 Balo Street, Moree

FACILITATOR

Michael Silver OAM

MINUTE TAKER

Michael Silver OAM

DISTRIBUTION

N2NS (Phase 2) CRG

ATTENDEES

- ▶ Michael Silver (Independent Chair)
- ▶ Rodney Schoupp (Community Member)
- ▶ Alexander Munro (Community Member)
- ▶ Terry Haynes (Moree Gun Club)
- ▶ Michael Murphy (Community Member)
- ▶ Meryl Dillon (Community Member)
- ▶ Christopher Hartin (Moree Floodplain Committee)
- ▶ Sonia Rowe (Community Member)
- ▶ Angus Witherby (Community Member)
- ▶ Mark Connolly (Moree Plains Shire Council)
- ▶ Cr Mark Johnson (Mayor, Moree Plains Shire Council)
- ▶ Isabella Hall (Inland Rail)
- ▶ Marcela Suarez (Inland Rail)
- ▶ David Garrod (Inland Rail)
- ▶ Rob Leslie (IRDJV)
- ▶ Martin Singleton (ARTC) [video link]

APOLOGIES

- ▶ Karen Craigie (Community Member)
- ▶ Steve McIntosh (Moree Local Aboriginal Land Council)

OBSERVERS

- ▶ John Zannes (Transport for NSW) [video link]
- ▶ Belinda Scott (NSW Department of Planning and Environment) [video link]
- ▶ Melanie Elms (Inland Rail)
- ▶ Michael Lahoud (NSW Department of Planning and Environment) [video link]
- ▶ Jacqui Neil (Inland Rail) [video link]
- ▶ Rebecca English (Moree Plains Shire Council)
- ▶ Candy Pang (Inland Rail)

Discussions

NO.	DISCUSSIONS
1. Welcome	The Chair welcomed all members to the meeting. Mr Silver also acknowledged the presence of the Mayor of Moree Plains Shire Council, Councillor Mark Johnson, representatives from the NSW government agencies and the Inland Rail staff.

NO.	DISCUSSIONS
2. Acknowledgement of Country	The Chair acknowledged the Traditional Owners of the land on which the meeting is being held and recognised their continuing connection to land, waters, and culture, paying respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.
3. Declarations of Interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Michael Silver – Pecuniary interest – expenses of Independent Chair borne by ARTC.
4. Minutes of Previous Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The meeting noted that the minutes of previous meeting of the Community Reference Group held on 21 June 2023 were approved on 7 July 2023.
5. Actions	<p>5.1 That at a future meeting, the Proponent provide a detailed presentation on the hydrology and proposed flood management requirements associated with retention of the Camurra hairpin embankment. Response: A presentation on hydrology and flood management will be made at this meeting. COMPLETED</p> <p>5.2 That at a future meeting, the Proponent provide an overview of the requirements of the EPBC Act and the areas of natural environment within the N2NS (Phase 2) project that are likely to be subject to 'controlled action' requirements under the Act. Response: A presentation on environmental and biodiversity legislation and requirements will be made to the next CRG meeting. DEFERRED</p>
6. Correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nil
7. Proponent's Report	<p><i>Isabella Hall, Stakeholder Engagement Lead – Central introduced the Proponent's Presentation with Rob Leslie (IRDJV) and Marcela Suarez (Inland Rail) providing the technical presentations. A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes.</i></p> <p>7.1 Project Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Isabella Hall provided an overview of recent developments associated with the Inland Rail project. Ms Hall highlighted the Independent Review of Inland Rail undertaken by Dr Kerry Schott AO and the 19 recommendations to be implemented. Ms Hall advised that Inland Rail Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of ARTC is now responsible for delivering Inland Rail. She advised that sections of Inland Rail between Beveridge, Victoria and Parkes, New South Wales have been prioritised by the Australian Government for completion by 2027. The Australian Government will determine the future delivery schedule once approvals for all remaining sections are obtained and there is greater certainty on costs. In terms of sections north of Narromine, work continues securing approvals and land acquisitions. Ms Hall advised that a six-member board has been appointed to Inland Rail Pty Ltd. <p>7.2 Approvals Process – Community Consultation and Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms Hall provided an overview of the status of projects in New South Wales and the NSW approvals process – refer slide 11. Chris Hartin enquired as to the timelines for construction in the north. Ms Hall responded that there is a change in focus and timing. Whilst still moving forward, the Australian Government will determine the future delivery schedule for Inland Rail. Ms Hall outlined the current status of the Narrabri to North Star – Phase 2 Project – a complex project to upgrade 13.7 kilometres of track across the floodplain and build 1.6 kilometres of new track. She advised that the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) had sought additional information in respect of hydrology and noise. This information will be contained in a Preferred Infrastructure Report (PIR). Ms Hall also indicated a Response

NO.	DISCUSSIONS
	<p>to Submissions is being prepared to address issues raised in the Environmental Impact Statement exhibition process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms Hall noted that should the project be approved by the DPE then Commonwealth approval under the Environmental Protection Biodiversity and Conservation Act 199 will be sought. • Michael Murphy enquired whether the rail project around Moree will change due to the site of the Special Activation Precinct (SAP). He noted that it is all related, but the rail line is through town, whilst the SAP is out of town. It needs to be integrated. • Ms Hall advised the rail line already exists. Mr Hartin added that the SAP is not an Inland Rail project it has no control over the SAP. • Mark Connolly advised that ARTC has been working with Moree Plains Shire Council in relation to the SAP Master Plan. The SAP Master Plan has been approved and takes account of the rail line upgrade – it needs to be integrated. The rail line location will not change – this has been considered in the SAP Master Plan process. • Mr Murphy stressed that noise, emergency access and other community and social issues need to be considered. • Ms Hall responded that a thorough Multi Criteria Analysis process had been undertaken prior to the rail line upgrade being progressed. • Mr Connolly suggested that a presentation by Moree Plains Shire Council on the SAP Master Plan be made to the next meeting of the CRG. <p>ACTION: <i>That at the next meeting, Moree Plains Shire Council be invited to make a presentation on the Special Active Precinct Master Plan and the Precinct's integration with the Inland Rail Narrabri to North Star (Phase 2) Project.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marcela Suarez provided an overview of key aspects of the Project. She outlined the principal structures and elements of the Project: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 13.5 kilometres of existing line (upgraded) ▪ 1.6 kilometres of new line ▪ 7 level crossings – 5 public + 2 private. ▪ 1 crossing closed – consolidation of 2 crossings. ▪ 8 bridges ▪ 1200 culverts ▪ Bridges in first 3 kilometres, after that, culverts. ▪ Alice Street level crossing ▪ Camurra hairpin alteration • In response to a question from Mr Murphy regarding linkage to the SAP, Ms Hall advised that construction of Stage 2C has been deferred. • Ms Suarez explained the development of the Tender Design, noting it would provide more detail than the Reference Design. • Mr Connolly sought confirmation that there had been consultation and engagement with Emergency Services, Police, and other emergency agencies regarding treatments at level crossings. Ms Suarez confirmed that this consultation had occurred. • Ms Suarez outlined the stages for progression of the Project, indicating a Contractor will be engaged to prepare a Tender Design. This will then move to a Detailed Design. • The Chair enquired as to the level of detail available to the community at this point, particularly regarding structures which may impact on flood movements. Ms Suarez indicated information on the design of structures would be available. • Mr Connolly questioned whether there will be further opportunity to respond to the PIR. Martin Singleton advised that the RTS will be available to the public and it was a matter for DPE whether the PIR is publicly exhibited.

NO.	DISCUSSIONS
	<p data-bbox="502 293 903 322">7.3 Flood Design and Performance</p> <ul data-bbox="552 344 1437 2029" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="552 344 1437 432">• Rob Leslie outlined the Conditions of Approval Quantitative Design Limits. He noted that more hydrology work would be undertaken for inclusion in the PIR and preparation of the Tender Design. <li data-bbox="552 439 1437 495">• Mr Leslie highlighted the limits on changes to flood impact, for example 10 mm change to land surrounding residences. <li data-bbox="552 501 1437 645">• He advised that consultation would occur with effected landholders and the broader community regarding flood impacts and the current design. He noted there are still some impacts to be worked on in the Detailed Design. Consultation will occur with landowners to reach agreement on the level of impact. <li data-bbox="552 651 1437 707">• The flood modelling in the EIS has extended from the 1 in 5-year event up to the 1 in 100-year event. <li data-bbox="552 714 1437 770">• Mr Leslie reiterated the key condition – no change in flood level by more than 10mm shall occur at buildings or structures. <li data-bbox="552 777 1437 887">• Mr Leslie highlighted the N2NS (Phase 2) Railway Features – refer Slide 18. He noted that in an extreme flood event over six kilometres of the line is over topped. It is intended to raise the line by about 0.5 metres and install more box culverts (1200) and 8 new bridges. <li data-bbox="552 893 1437 981">• Mr Leslie outlined the development of the flood modelling for the 5% AEP (1 in 20 year) event noting that Council flood modelling from 2017 and ARTC survey data has now been fed into the flood model. See slide 19. <li data-bbox="552 987 1437 1097">• Mr Leslie noted that in the model for the 1% AEP (1 in 100 year) event the entire floodplain is engaged. He advised that in previous work irrigation storages had not been considered and appeared as ‘dry patches’ – they are now considered in the model. See slide 20. <li data-bbox="552 1104 1437 1191">• Mr Leslie then stepped the Committee through the afflux for the 5% AEP and 1% AEP modelling, noting that the design scenario endeavours to maintain flow and distribution. <li data-bbox="552 1198 1437 1285">• Angus Witherby highlighted the Phase 1 downstream impacts of culverts, noting it is a sensitive landscape where 10mm to 50mm increase in afflux can be incredibly significant. <li data-bbox="552 1292 1437 1348">• Mr Leslie advised that the flood model had been evaluated against the October 2022 flood event. <li data-bbox="552 1355 1437 1411">• Mr Murphy suggested that discussions need to be held with landholders as they have the local impact information. <li data-bbox="552 1417 1437 1473">• Mr Leslie advised that significant consultation has occurred with floodplain residents. <li data-bbox="552 1480 1437 1590">• Alexander Munro highlighted that “it is flat’ – the problem is where the line is located. “If the rain events of 1954 and 1956 had occurred in October 2022 we’d have had a real flood.” He then explained the circumstances of these events in the 1950s. <li data-bbox="552 1597 1437 1653">• Mr Murphy expressed concern that the proposed culverts would be sufficient to permit the flood water to ‘go west.’ <li data-bbox="552 1659 1437 1747">• Meryl Dillon sought some assurance that the proposed upgrade works would not negatively impact parts of Moree township, noting that “200mm means having dry feet or not having dry feet”. <li data-bbox="552 1753 1437 1809">• Terry Haynes commented that much of the flood impact issue is human-made – the culverts in many respects created the issue. <li data-bbox="552 1816 1437 1872">• Mr Murphy commented that whilst the proposed works may improve flows out of town it could change the impacts in town. <li data-bbox="552 1879 1437 2029">• Mr Hartin stated that any works need to improve the overall flood management system, not just ensuring that the current situation is not made worse – there needs to be improvement. He questioned how White Swamp and other unmetred water is considered in the flood modelling. Mr Leslie advised that the Gravesend gauge data and the real data from the October 2022 flood event along with the Council’s flood modelling has been incorporated into the model.

NO.	DISCUSSIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Murphy commented that during the last flood (October 2022) no land was visible. • Mr Leslie commented that the intent of the design is to ensure minimum change to existing flow. • Mr Hartin advised that excessive volumes of flood water can adversely affect the Newell Highway. He sought information on what hydrology assessments had been undertaken in relation to road upgrade works on the highway. • John Zannes (TfNSW) took the question on notice. <p>ACTION: That at the next meeting of the CRG, Transport for NSW be invited to make a presentation on the proposed Newell Highway upgrade works.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Murphy said that it needs to be acknowledged that the fall of the land goes west. • Mr Hartin commented that if more culverts are punched through the northern end of the line this would reduce the impact when flood waters back up in the south on more populated areas, although you do have Yarraman. • Mr Munro commented on changes in structures on the rail line, with bridges replaced by culverts. (Crews Crossing to south of the TAFE) • Mr Murphy suggested a 'suspended line,' such as a viaduct is required. In response Mr Leslie advised that the thickness required for a via duct structure (200 metres long) would require an additional thickness of about one metre, further reducing the flow capacity. • Both Mr Murphy and Mr Hartin expressed concern over the increase in height of the rail line and the potential serious flood impacts should culverts be blocked creating a wall. Ms Dillon then questioned whether water management structures are considered particularly their impact on flows and flood levels. Mr Munro added that the impact of all creek and river systems being at full capacity must be considered. • Mr Leslie responded that to validate the model, real water level and rain fall events are factored into the model and the worst-case scenario is considered. <p>7.4 Hydrology – Current Status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Leslie outlined the additional information requested by DPE that will be incorporated into the PIR: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extending flooding model coverage to Ashley. ▪ Modelling floodwater redistribution mitigation scenarios including Camurra Hairpin retention. ▪ Assessing rail raising/low bund north of Moree station to mitigate potential residential flooding in town. • Mr Leslie detailed the post EIS hydrology actions and the Tender Design compliance results – see Slides 27, 28 & 29. • Mr Leslie noted that there are still some impacts to be worked on as part of finalisation of the PIR. He then reported on the progress being made on the hydrology for incorporation into the PIR – see Slides 30, 31 & 32. This included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Updating flood model consistent with Council's flood modelling developments ▪ Addressing key EIS Peer Review recommendations ▪ Addressing EIS submissions from DPE and other agencies • Mr Murphy commented that irrigation does not change flood levels – levee banks over-top because of the volume of flood water. • Mr Leslie explained the testing of the hydrology model relative to the 2021 and 2022 flood events. The model had been run to assess the assumed flood levels against the actual levels – the model flood levels for the 2022 event were slightly higher, whilst there was agreement on the peak and there was a sharp similarity between the model and the flood event over the eight days. See Slide 31 (Model dotted line on graph~Mehi River solid line on graph).

NO.	DISCUSSIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Leslie commented that the modelling demonstrates there is no additional impact on Ashley. • Mr Singleton commented that, significantly, the Tender Design is better balanced around the hairpin and central floodplain in a 1 in 20-year flood (5% AEP) and the need to ensure balanced flows across the floodplain. • Mr Singleton noted that providing significantly increased flow capacity through the rail line (i.e. not mimicking the current flooding/overtopping behaviour) would alter flooding patterns across the flood plain and likely results in a range of negative flooding outcomes. Rather, ARTC must balance upstream and downstream impacts via the cross-drainage design to achieve an overall improvement. Mr Leslie added that there is sensitive infrastructure on both sides of the line, including valuable agricultural, land, so it is important to maintain the status quo. <p>7.5 Noise Mitigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isabella Hall provided an update on Noise Mitigation, advising that DPE requested further information on the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oak and Morton St area noise mitigation options report (residential receivers) ▪ Noise Mitigation Engagement report – detail engagement outcomes with residents ▪ Noise mitigation justification report – report justifying selection of proposed noise mitigation measure/s. • Ms Hall noted the Oak and Morton Street areas are subject of a noise mitigation report. She indicated that only receptors that exceed the noise level criteria will be eligible for mitigation treatments. Ms Hall added that the technical report will examine all treatment options including a noise wall and individual treatments on premises. It is anticipated that the completed technical report will be available in December 2023 with consultation with residents to occur in February/March 2024. A presentation to Moree Plains Shire Council is scheduled for 14 December 2023. • Ms Dillon questioned how the noise impact on residences is assessed and how many properties are impacted. Ms Hall responded that impacts are assessed both internally and externally – 12 residential properties (all houses) are impacted in the Environmental Impact statement. Ms Hall indicated a community survey of the residences in the area will be undertaken. • Mr Hartin noted that residences north of the subject area also hear noise when it exceeds the criteria. Mr Murphy questioned what is assessed. Ms Hall advised – noise and vibration. <p>ACTION: That a presentation on Noise and Vibration Assessment be made to the next meeting of the CRG.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Munro commented that the use of smaller wheels on rolling stock in Western Australia appeared to have a dampening effect on noise. Mr Singleton noted the comments – he advised that the PIR will breakdown the noise components and provide clarity as to the elements that create the dominant noise. <p>ACTION: That advice be provided at the next meeting of the CRG on the use and benefits of smaller wheels on rail rolling stock and implications for double stack 1.8-kilometre-long trains.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Singleton advised that the Alice Street rail crossing bells would be turned off at night, however the pedestrian crossing warning would remain on. The Gwydirfield Road crossing is still under review.

NO.	DISCUSSIONS
8. Other Agenda Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nil
10. General Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stationary Trains – Mr Murphy expressed concern that pedestrians were crossing the line at random locations due to trains being stationary on the line for extended periods. ACTION: That a report on stationary trains at Moree and potential safety mitigation measures be presented to the next GRG meeting. Land Acquisition – The Chair enquired as to progress of land acquisition. Ms Hall responded that the acquisition process will likely start towards the end of 2023 or early in 2024. Ms Dillon questioned whether this related only to the realignment or to noise as well. Ms Hall advised it only related to alignment matters – acquisition will not occur due to noise. Mr Murphy commented that vibration was also an issue. Ms Hall indicated that this is was assessed as part of the Environmental Impact Statement. Mr Hartin questioned the potential ongoing liability from operational noise and the hydrology modelling under pinning the design. Ms Hall advised there is a requirement to undertake ongoing monitoring. <p>Meeting closed at 6.20 pm. The Chair thanked all for their attendance</p>

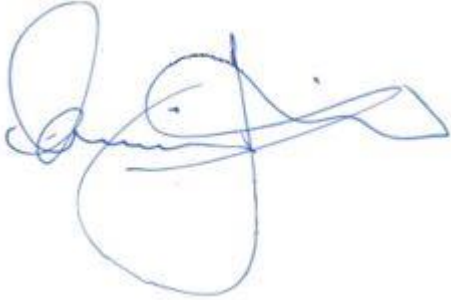
Actions

NO.	ACTIONS	ACTION BY	DUE DATE
1	That at a future meeting, the Proponent provide a detailed presentation on the hydrology and proposed flood management requirements associated with retention of the Camurra hairpin embankment.	COMPLETED Rob Leslie 11/10/23	31/12/2023
2	That at a future meeting, the Proponent provide an overview of the requirements of the EPBC Act and the areas of natural environment within the N2NS (Phase 2) project that are likely to be subject to 'controlled action' requirements under the Act.	DEFERRED	06/12/2023
3	That at the next meeting, Moree Plains Shire Council be invited to make a presentation on the Special Active Precinct Master Plan and the Precinct's integration with the Inland Rail Narrabri to North Star (Phase 2) Project.		06/12/2023
4	That at the next meeting of the CRG, Transport for NSW be invited to make a presentation on the proposed Newell Highway upgrade works.		06/12/2023
5	That a presentation on Noise and Vibration Assessment be made to the next meeting of the CRG.		06/12/2023
6	That advice be provided at the next meeting of the CRG on the use and benefits of smaller wheels on rail rolling stock and implications for double stack 1.8-kilometre-long trains.		06/12/2023
7	That a report on stationary trains at Moree and potential safety mitigation measures be presented to the next GRG meeting.		06/12/2023

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the N2NS (Phase 2) CRG is scheduled for Wednesday 6 December 2023. It is also proposed that the subsequent meeting will be held on Wednesday 13 March 2024.

Meeting minutes approved.



Michael J. Silver OAM
Independent Chair

7 November 2023