

MEETING MINUTES (AMENDED)

Narrabri to North Star Inland Rail (Phase 2)

Community Reference Group

DATE / TIME

6 December 2023
4.38 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)
- ▶ Meryl Dillon (Community Member)
- ▶ Christopher Hartin (Moree Floodplain Committee)
- ▶ Sonia Rowe (Community Member)
- ▶ Fiona Kennedy (Moree Plains Shire Council)
- ▶ Isabella Hall (Inland Rail)
- ▶ Martin Singleton (ARTC)
- ▶ Butch Rossouw (IRDJV)

APOLOGIES

- ▶ Karen Craigie (Community Member)
- ▶ Steve McIntosh (Moree Local Aboriginal Land Council)
- ▶ Michael Murphy (Community Member)
- ▶ Angus Witherby (Community Member)
- ▶ Mark Connolly (Moree Plains Shire Council)
- ▶ Cr Mark Johnson (Mayor, Moree Plains Shire Council)
- ▶

OBSERVERS

- ▶ John Zannes (Transport for NSW) [video link]
- ▶ Belinda Scott (NSW Department of Planning and Environment) [video link]
- ▶ Melanie Elms (Inland Rail)
- ▶ Lauren Marer, Stakeholder Engagement
- ▶ Marta Wilkins, Senior Communications Adviser
- ▶ Michael Lahoud (NSW Department of Planning and Environment) [video link]
- ▶ Candy Pang (Inland Rail) [video link]
- ▶ Caroline Osborne (IRDJV)
- ▶ Clarissa Farrington (Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications) [video link]

Discussions

NO.	DISCUSSIONS
1. Welcome	The Chair welcomed all members to the meeting. Mr Silver also acknowledged the presence of representatives from Australian government and NSW government agencies and the Inland Rail staff.
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 11 October 2023 were approved on 7 November 2023.
5. Actions	<p>5.1 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: Further deferred to the next CRG meeting. DEFERRED</p> <p>5.2 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. Response: Due to the Mayor, Cr Johnson and Mr Mark Connolly being unable to attend the meeting the presentation has been deferred to the next GRG meeting. DEFERRED</p> <p>5.3 That at the next meeting of the CRG, Transport for NSW be invited to make a presentation on the proposed Newell Highway upgrade works. Response: John Zannes, Transport for NSW (TfNSW) reported that due to alterations to the Australian Government and NSW Government budgets it was not possible, at this point, to determine a timeline for Newell Highway upgrades north of Moree. The Australian Government has confirmed funding for works north of Moree but there has been no commitment from the NSW Government – as such there is no project currently.</p> <p>Mr Zannes noted that a Review of Environmental Factors for road works north of Moree had been exhibited in 2018. At this stage that is the scope of works being proposed but if there is a change in status or scope of the proposed works further engagement will occur with stakeholders.</p> <p>Rodney Schoupp asked whether the same level (height) of the highway would be maintained and how many culverts would be installed during the upgrade works. He advised that previous advice indicated there would be no new culverts, yet the railway upgrade shows two new culverts. Mr Zannes took the questions on notice. ACTION</p> <p>Mr Zannes reiterated that there are no timelines for these proposed works. TfNSW is presently working through project options. COMPLETED</p> <p>Sandy Munro questioned the status of the diversion and overpass for the Newell Highway. Ms Hall advised that Government funding for the project has been cut, although she understands that Moree Plains Shire Council is still advocating for the project to proceed. Meryl Dillon enquired as to a timeline for the overpass. Ms Hall advised that the overpass was part of ARTC’s 2C project. Ms Dillon enquired as to</p>

NO.	DISCUSSIONS
	<p>what criteria is used to assess these projects. Ms Hall suggested this is a matter for Council's response. ACTION</p> <p>5.4 That a presentation on Noise and Vibration Assessment be made to the next meeting of the CRG. Response: A presentation on noise and vibration will be made at this meeting. COMPLETED</p> <p>5.5 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. Response: Butch Rossouw advised that there is acoustic merit in the use of smaller wheels over large wheels. However small wheels are not designed for large loads. Commonly, passenger trains will be fitted with small wheels. Mr Munro explained his experience with trains with smaller wheels at Peterborough, South Australia where there was an appreciable difference in noise. Mr Rossouw noted that wheel dampers may be employed to reduce wheel noise but were most unreliable and are not favoured. COMPLETED</p> <p>5.6 That a report on stationary trains at Moree and potential safety mitigation measures be presented to the next GRG meeting. Response: Isabella Hall advised that a report, Pedestrian Safety in the Phase 1 N2NS project had addressed the issue of stationary trains at Moree. Ms Hall advised, given Mr Murphy was an apology for the meeting, she would defer her response to the next 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 Butch Rossouw, Technical Executive, WSP providing the technical presentation. A copy of the presentation is attached to the minutes.</i></p> <p>7.1 Project Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Butch Rossouw provided a brief overview of recent developments associated with the Inland Rail project. • Mr Rossouw highlighted that the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) had requested further information on Flooding and Hydrology, and Noise. Responses to the request for this information will be provided in a Preferred Infrastructure Report (PIR). Today's presentation will focus on Noise. • The PIR will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Noise Mitigation Options Report - to assess the effectiveness and feasibility of noise mitigation measures. ○ Targeted engagement - with identified sensitive receivers. ○ A justification report - based on community feedback and expertise justifying the noise mitigation options. <p>7.2 Noise Modelling and Mitigation Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Rossouw noted that noise must be assessed and managed in accordance with the Rail Infrastructure Noise Guideline (NSW EPA, 2013) (RING). He explained the significance of the 'noise trigger levels' in the noise assessment criteria – refer slide 11. • Mr Rossouw noted that apart from Oak and Morton Streets, it has subsequently been determined that Gosport Street is also impacted, including the EconoLodge.. • Mr Rossouw explained the methodology in establishing the baseline and how the increases in noise impact are determined. He explained the noise modelling parameters and advised that SoundPLAN Version 8.2 using the Nordic Rail Prediction Method is the industry standard to predict and understand noise – refer slide 13,

NO.	DISCUSSIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Rossouw advised that the noise model is being applied for the entire section of the alignment to ensure all potential impacts are revealed. This is particularly relevant now in the area around the Mehi River. • Chris Hartin asked, what occurs where receptors are affected outside the area covered by the noise modelling? Mr Rossouw responded that these will not be addressed in the PIR but if levels exceed those set out in the EIS they will be considered for mitigation. Isabella Hall added that this will only involve properties south of the Mehi River. She noted that potential noise levels in this area were being analysed due to some changes in the vertical rail alignment. • Mr Rossouw stepped the Committee through the various noise sources and predicted level of impact – refer slide 14. • Mr Rossouw explained the modelling scenarios, noting that the model calculates 27 trains per day but in fact it will be 20 trains per day. There is a requirement to round up any fractional train movements resulting in a more conservative model. • Mr Rossouw explained the map on slide 16 showing the properties that will be impacted. He went on to outline the hierarchical approach to mitigation in accordance with the RING. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Control source ○ Control transmission ○ Mitigation at noise-sensitive receivers • Mr Rossouw explained the results of Priority1 [Source Mitigation], Priority 2 [Transmission Control] and Priority 3 [Mitigation at Property]. He highlighted the mitigation benefits of the RING optimised barrier detailed in Priority 2. • Mr Rossouw detailed the critical factors to be considered in the Environmental Assessment of RING optimised noise barrier: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Heritage impact – European and Aboriginal ○ Visual impact ○ Social impact ○ Hydrology impact ○ Contaminated land ○ Groundwater ○ Reflected road traffic noise. • Mr Rossouw noted that only Visual Impact was assessed as having a significant impact and requiring more assessment. • Mr Hartin questioned what noise level are you working to? Mr Rossouw advised that the trigger is the maximum level. He advised that mitigation of the Average plus Maximum level must be achieved. • Mr Schoupp asked what happens with noise beyond the bridge across the Mehi River? Mr Rossouw advised that the noise modelling has been designed to consider the train picking up speed. Mr Schoupp suggested the crossing and lights at Gwydirfield Road will be significantly different from what is currently there and will result in a different impact. Mr Rossouw noted that the PIR noise work to date has only related to the urban area, as per DPE's request. He indicated the impacts on Mr Schoupp's property will be analysed individually. He noted that the impacts had been previously assessed in the EIS, however given the increase in the vertical height of the design (290 mm) it is probable that warning bell suppression at night may be required at the crossing. Martin Singleton commented that the crossing also will require a safety assessment prior to nighttime bell suppression being confirmed. • Meryl Dillon advised that the anticipated flood impact of the Newell Highway Bypass, as detailed in its Environmental Impact Study, was going to increase the flood height and sought an assurance that there would be no cumulative impact because of installation of noise walls associated with the Inland Rail project. Mr Rossouw explained that the hydrology is assessed to the level of the ballast – the formation level is the hydrology assessment driver. Ms Dillon noted that changes in the level of the Newell Highway have increased the flood level, and she, therefore, cannot see how the noise walls will not further impact

NO.	DISCUSSIONS
	<p>flood levels. Mr Rossouw reiterated that there will be no additional impact on flooding from the installation of noise wall barriers. The formation height is the critical level, with the rail line above the flood level. (Amended 31.03.2024)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr Singleton noted that the existing Newell Highway noise bunds are also a key driver of hydrology in this area. • Terry Haynes sought information on the design of the noise wall. Mr Rossouw explained that “I” beams are installed in very deep footings to support the precast concrete noise barrier panels. • Mr Rossouw explained the parameters of the Visual Impact Assessment. He noted the following considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Selection of up to 4 public viewpoints likely to provide representation of the noise barriers. ○ Identification of key impacted sensitive receivers. ○ Determination of the overall significance of visual impacts by assessing the magnitude of impact in combination with the sensitivity of the receiver. • Ms Dillon advised that during the assessment of noise impacts from the highway upgrade, noise walls were considered but rejected due to the visual impact and the feeling of separation that they create within the community. Mr Rossouw acknowledged the concerns and noted that these issues were raised in the social impact assessment – the issue being ‘what effect does it have in a social sense.’ • Mr Rossouw outlined the key visual sensitive receivers – refer slide 26 and then presented photomontages demonstrating potential treatments to mitigate visual impact – slides 27-31. • Mr Hartin questioned whether noise walls would need to be increased in height to accommodate impact of double stacked trains. Mr Rossouw advised this would not be necessary for noise mitigation, but these issues will be considered in the detailed design phase. • Mr Singleton noted that the noise wall treats the entire property (land included) and surrounding neighbourhood whilst individual treatments to residences only benefit the interior of the building and not the land. • Ms Dillon enquired whether there will be any provision for vegetation treatments to the noise walls, giving a better overall outcome. Mr Rossouw agreed that vegetation as visual mitigation measure need to be considered. <p>7.3 Noise Mitigation Options Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isabella Hall outlined the proposed noise consultation program. She advised residents would be formally advised of the upcoming consultation during December 2023. • Ms Hall suggested that CRG members may wish to support impacted residents as advocates. She would be pleased to discuss this role with any interested CRG members. • Mr Munro questioned whether comments that 1.8km trains cannot run north beyond the Penneys Road rail crossing are correct. He also questioned the status of Inland Rail Stage 2C within the Moree Special Activation Precinct (SAP).. • Fiona Kennedy responded on behalf of Moree Plains Shire Council noting that Council currently has an Engagement Plan in place for the future development of the SAP. Ms Kennedy added that Moree Plains Shire Council is working with ARTC to achieve approvals for Stage 2C, and its hope is to have stage 2C and Phase 2 completed as one package of works. Currently 1.8km trains can theoretically run north between Penney’s Road to Moree, where the Narrabri to North Star Phase 1 work has been completed, however the rest of the rail network is unable to take 1.8km trains. It should also be noted that there is no receipt terminal on the network that can accommodate the 1.8-kilometre trains, at this stage

NO.	DISCUSSIONS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Committee noted the flow chart of dates for the noise mitigation consultation and in particular two events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 10 February 2024 - Information presented to community on noise mitigation options development for consideration. ○ 7 March 2024 – Community information and briefing session with technical information and explanation of noise modelling data and impact. • Ms Hall added that the pre-assessment of mitigation options as detailed in the Option Matrix will be presented to residents. The desired outcome being to weigh up stakeholder views, feasibility and reasonability, advantages and disadvantages, and hierarchy of controls to form a recommended mitigation option. • Mr Munro asked whether the noise wall will assist in reducing the impact of highway noise. Mr Rossouw indicated it will have minor benefits. • Mr Hartin enquired whether there would be improvements for those on the western side. Mr Rossouw said this is a concept option. It will be subject to detailed design – looking at a 1.5 metre wall on an existing mound. It will be subject of engineering analysis to determine it viability. • The Chair questioned when will residents receive the detailed information. Ms Hall advised that a detailed brochure will be forwarded to all residents well before the meeting on 7 March 2024. • Ms Hall sought the opinion of the Committee on the noise wall proposal. Sonia Rowe expressed broad support but highlighted the need for visual mitigation and the use of vegetation to soften the impact. She also expressed concern that the walls may be the target for graffiti. Discussion proceeded on potential options such as murals/artwork by local artists which may reduce potential graffiti attacks.
8. Other Agenda Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil
10. General Business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nil <p>Meeting closed at 6.31 pm. The Chair thanked all for their attendance</p>

Actions

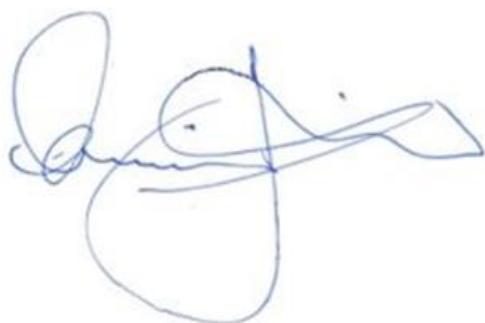
NO.	ACTIONS	ACTION BY	DUE DATE
1	That at a future meeting, the Proponent provide a detailed presentation on the hydrology and proposed flood management requirements associated with retention of the Camurra hairpin embankment.	COMPLETED Rob Leslie 11/10/23	31/12/2023
2	That at a future meeting, the Proponent 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	07/03/2024
3	That at the next meeting, Moree Plains Shire Council be invited to make a presentation on the Special Activation Precinct Master Plan and the Precinct's integration with the Inland Rail Narrabri to North Star (Phase 2) Project.	DEFERRED	07/03/2024
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.	COMPLETED John Zannes	06/12/2023
5	That a presentation on Noise and Vibration Assessment be made to the next meeting of the CRG.	COMPLETED Butch Rossouw	06/12/2023

NO.	ACTIONS	ACTION BY	DUE DATE
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.	COMPLETED Butch Rossouw	06/12/2023
7	That a report on stationary trains at Moree and potential safety mitigation measures be presented to the next GRG meeting.	DEFERRED Isabella Hall	07/03/2024
8	That at the next CRG meeting, Transport for NSW provide advice as to the whether the same level (height) of the Newell Highway (north of Moree) will be maintained during proposed upgrade works and how many additional culverts will be installed.		07/03/2024
9	That as part of its presentation on the Special Activation Precinct (Action 2 above), that Moree Plains Shire Council also advise what criteria is used by Government to assess funding for these projects.		07/03/2024

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the N2NS (Phase 2) CRG is scheduled Wednesday 7 March 2024.

Meeting minutes approved.



Michael J. Silver OAM
Independent Chair
18 January 2024