



## Narrabri to North Star Phase 2

# Response to Submissions Report summary

### About Narrabri to North Star Phase 2

The Narrabri to North Star Phase 2 section of the Inland Rail program (the proposal) is a Critical State Significant Infrastructure project being assessed under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)*.

The proposal comprises 14km of existing rail track and formation across the Mehi-Gwydir floodplain and the construction of around 1.6km of greenfield rail track to bypass the existing Camurra Hairpin. The proposal also includes a 1.3km spur to reconnect the Weemelah line.

The proposal starts immediately north of the Alice Street level crossing in Moree and ends at Camurra North, just past the Moree Gun Club.

Initially, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared for the entire Narrabri to North Star section, however due to complexities, including hydrology and flooding, a separate assessment was necessary for the Phase 2 section.

### Key features of the proposal

- Replacing rail bridges over the Gwydir and Mehi Rivers and several smaller waterways
- Refinements, upgrades and removal of some level crossings
- Raising the rail height by approximately 0.5m to improve flood immunity; and
- Upgrading cross drainage and flooding infrastructure

### Response to Submissions Report

A Response to Submissions Report is a requirement of the NSW Government's Major Project planning process under Division 5.2 of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)*.

The report documents and responds to 19 submissions and 11 pieces of advice received by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) during EIS exhibition in late 2022.

Inland Rail has carefully considered the content of the submissions and advice and has prepared responses to questions and any issues raised. The report also describes actions taken since the EIS was placed on public exhibition. For example, it outlines a final

### Project timeline

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Exhibition

September 2022

We are here

Preferred Infrastructure Report

November 2024

Anticipated planning approvals

2025

Detailed design

2027\*

Construction

TBC\*



\* Timing to be determined by the Australian Government once the full scope and cost is known

set of mitigation measures, which incorporate amendments made in response to submissions and advice, or new information.

To access this information online and a link to the NSW Government's planning portal please visit [inlandrail.info/P2WP](http://inlandrail.info/P2WP) or scan the QR code.



## Overview of submissions and advice



## Key issues raised

Most of the community submissions received were from within the Moree area. Across all the submissions and advice received, the most frequently raised issues were:

- **Environmental, social and economic impacts** – Impacts relating to hydrology and flooding, soil and contamination, heritage, animals, working hours, air quality, traffic and transport, land use and property, visual amenity, social and economic and hazards and safety.
- **Noise and vibration** – During construction and operation.
- **The proposal** – The Inland Rail route and use of the corridor through urban Moree. Concerns around stock management, fencing, vertical and horizontal alignment clearances and future flood immunity of the proposal.
- **Procedural matters** – Concerns around business and program-level decision making as it relates to property issues within the proposal area.
- **Issues beyond the scope of the proposal** – Impacts relating to the removal and replacement of infrastructure, hydrology impacts associated with other construction projects within Moree and impacts relating to other Inland Rail sections.

## Refinements to proposal

Further investigations have been completed, following the public exhibition of the EIS and minor design refinements have been included in the proposal as a result of the submissions and advice received including:

- Consolidation of two and upgrade of five level crossings, including upgrading three from passive to active
- Updated temporary occupation and permanent acquisition impacts due to refinement of design, including contractor lay-down and construction areas and site access intersections/roads
- Vertical alignment adjustments, including to the Mehi and Gwydir bridges to provide additional clearance and access
- Determination of preferred operational noise mitigation methods in urban Moree
- Cross drainage design refinements and the inclusion of additional culvert structures
- Potential for raising select existing flood protection levees on private property
- Feasibility study for an emergency services access road beneath the Mehi River road and rail bridges.

## Next steps

DPHI will consider the RtS and determine if any further information is required.

DPHI will then assess the proposal, including the RtS and the PIR and provide an assessment report to the NSW Minister for Planning to consider when determining the project approval.

The decision will be published online and will give public notice of the reasons for the decision and how community views were considered.

As the proposal was declared a 'controlled action' under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Act 1999* (EPBC Act) in 2020, Australian Government assessment and approval is also required.

Subject to Australian Government approval the proposal will be further refined leading up to and during the detailed design phase, to further minimise environmental impacts.