Narrabri to North Star Phase 2

Preferred Infrastructure 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.

Preferred Infrastructure Report

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposal was on public exhibition, commencing in September 2022 for 49 days, resulting in 19 submissions and 11 pieces of agency and council advice.

In assessing the proposal, the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) requested further information relating to hydrology and flooding, and operational noise impacts.

The Preferred Infrastructure Report (PIR) includes information on additional assessments, consultation, and design refinements in response to DPHI's request. It also documents several additional mitigation measures developed since the EIS.

Project timeline

We are here

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Exhibition	**Preferred Infrastructure Report**	Anticipated planning approvals	Detailed design	Construction
September 2022	**November 2024**	2025	2027*	TBC*

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

The PIR was lodged with DPHI in October 2024 and is available to view on the NSW Government's Major Projects website. To access a link to the PIR, visit our website at inlandrail.info/P2WP or scan the QR code. We have also responded to EIS exhibition submissions and advice in a Response to Submissions Report. A summary and a link to the full report is also available on our website.

PIR outcomes

Hydrology and flooding

DPHI request – Extend flood model coverage to include the village of Ashley, northwest of Moree, and assess compliance against the same design limits considered in the EIS.

Outcome – Extended model shows impacts are within acceptable limits.

DPHI request – Model scenarios to reduce the redistribution in floodwater including retention of the existing Camurra hairpin embankment.

Outcome – Hydrology models were re-run with the Camurra hairpin embankment retained and additional cross drainage structures. Modelling data showed improvement in surface water flow distribution, and a decrease in flooding impacts on surroundings.

DPHI request – Assess the impacts of the proposed increase in rail level north of Moree Station (and south of Alice Street) and other measures to mitigate impacts to residential properties in Moree from the cumulative flood impacts of Phases 1 and 2 of the Narrabri to North Star section.

Outcome – A low bund or earth embankment (<500mm) is proposed to be located within the western side of the existing rail corridor, adjacent to Moree train station. It extends approximately 250 metres south of the Alice Street level crossing. The bund mitigates the cumulative flooding impacts of the Phase 1 and 2 Inland Rail sections.

Operational noise

DPHI request – Assess the effectiveness and feasibility of noise mitigation measures for residents of Moree township. Undertake targeted resident engagement to discuss, seek input on and recommend a preferred treatment option. Document results in a justification report.

Outcome – The Inland Rail Stakeholder Engagement team completed a comprehensive consultation campaign to explain operational noise impacts, discuss mitigation options and understand resident preferences.

Two community information sessions and 20 one-on-one meetings were held, and surveys with affected residents were conducted to gather property treatment preferences and feedback.

Preference survey results

East side of railway resident preference

Noise wall **56.25%**†

West side of railway resident preference

At-property treatment **70%**†

A justification report recommending the above options was submitted within the PIR. Other mitigations considered include suppression of level crossing bells at night and train driver reminder signs.

† Results are weighted (70%) to favour residents who are predicted to be impacted by noise levels that exceed trigger levels outlined in the NSW EPA's guideline on rail noise. For more information about the assessment process and the trigger levels please email us or find the information on our website at inlandrail.com.au/n2ns-noise-mitigation-consultation-process.

Next steps

DPHI will consider the PIR and determine if any further information is required. DPHI will then assess the proposal including the PIR and RtS, and provide an assessment report to the NSW Minister for Planning to consider when determining the project approval. This decision will be published online and include 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 approval, the proposal will be further refined during the detailed design phase to further minimise environmental impacts.