

## Community Consultative Committee (CCC) – Annual Report

<b>CCC project name:</b>	<b>Illabo to Stockinbingal Inland Rail Project (I2S)</b>	<b>Reporting period:</b>	<b>2022 &amp; 2023</b>
<b>Independent chairperson:</b>	<b>Garry West</b>	<b>Proponent contact:</b>	<b>Andrew Garratt (Stakeholder Engagement Manager A2P)</b>

### 1. Executive summary / introduction

Inland Rail is the largest freight rail infrastructure project in Australia and is a 1,700km fast freight backbone providing transit times of less than 24 hours for freight trains from Melbourne to Brisbane. The Illabo to Stockinbingal (I2S) project is one of 13 individual projects. This 39km section of Inland Rail creates a new direct route from east of Illabo tracking north to Stockinbingal in NSW. The route will bypass the townships of Cootamundra and Bethungra and the winding, steep section of track known as the Bethungra Spiral on the Main South line, opening up a more efficient way to transport freight through the area.

The Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARs) were first issued on 19 September 2018 and updated on 30 April 2021.

In August 2018 the project was determined to be a 'controlled action' and requires assessment and approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act 1999)* before it can proceed.

As the project is declared State Significant Infrastructure (SSI) and was declared 'Critical State Significant Infrastructure (CSSI) in March 2021. This declaration didn't change the approval pathway, but it allows for some preconstruction activities to progress with approval, such as utilities work, surveys and investigations, or storage of materials in existing rail facilities along the alignment.

A Community Consultative Committee (CCC) was established in 2019 and has continued to operate within the framework of the NSW Department of Planning & Environment (DPE) CCC Guideline.

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was released for public exhibition and comment by the Department of Planning & Environment (DPE) on 14 September 2022 and closed on 26 October 2022.

Mid-2022 the formal property acquisition process commenced, with all directly impacted landowners being engaged and property valuation inspections completed for all properties.

Dr Kerry Schott AO was appointed by the Australian Government in October 2022 to undertake an Independent Review of Inland Rail. The Review findings were released in April 2023 with the Government agreeing to the 19 recommendations in full or in principle. In line with the Government's response to Dr Schott's review, Inland Rail Pty Ltd was established as a subsidiary of ARTC with its own board to govern the delivery of the inland rail project effective 1 July 2023. The Government has prioritised construction of the projects south of Parkes, confirming the route and providing funding.

Following the exhibition of the EIS, a Response to Submissions Report (RTS) was prepared that includes an analysis of the issues raised in the submissions and how they have been addressed and submitted to DPE in November 2023. A total of 29 submissions were received from members of the public, community groups, business organisations, public authorities, NSW government departments and agencies. The EIS approval is anticipated in February 2024 and the EPBC approval in May 2024. A Design and Construct contract is expected to be awarded in May 2024 with detailed design being undertaken up to March 2025. Early works construction is planned to commence in August 2024.

## **2. CCC activities over last 12 months:**

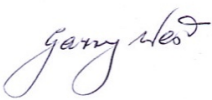
- The CCC met twice in 2022 and once in 2023 for face-to-face meetings. Attendance at these meetings were consistently strong with members providing feedback on issues of concern.
- The Inland Rail presentations at each meeting provided comprehensive projects updates on community engagement, environmental studies, land acquisition processes and project design activities. These presentations are uploaded to the Inland Rail website at the same time CCC minutes are uploaded.
- Observers from Transport for NSW and the Commonwealth Infrastructure Projects Division were present at most CCC meetings and were able to provide relevant clarifications on specific issues.

## **3. Key issues**

- Property acquisition process, together with delays in settlement.
- Noise and vibration
- Level crossing closures and operations for landowners
- Property severance and connectivity measures, including stock underpasses and private level crossings
- Hydrology and flooding impacts
- Biodiversity

## **4. Focus for next 12 months:**

- Monitor & review detailed design and property acquisition process

Signature of chairperson:	
Date:	9 January 2024