



## Albury to Illabo

# PIR Response to Submissions report summary

### About the Albury to Illabo Proposal

The Albury to Illabo 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 Albury to Illabo section comprises 185km of existing operational standard gauge railway. Enhancement works are required at 24 locations to enable the use of double-stacked freight trains.

Proposed works include track realignment, lowering and/ or modification within the existing rail corridor; modification, removal or replacement of bridge structures (rail, road and/or pedestrian bridges); raising or replacing signal gantries; level crossing modifications; and other associated works.

The Proposal crosses five Local Government Areas (LGA): Albury, Greater Hume, Lockhart, Wagga Wagga and Junee.

### What has happened so far

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposal was placed on public exhibition in 2022 and submissions were invited from the community and key stakeholders. We responded to the issues raised in these submissions in the EIS Response to Submissions Report in November 2023. Alongside this, we also prepared a Preferred Infrastructure Report (PIR) which provided further assessment of traffic and transport, noise and vibration, and air quality impacts from the proposal. Additionally, the PIR also considered changes to the proposal since the EIS that had arisen as a consequence of the further assessments and related submissions.

The PIR was placed on public exhibition from 15 November 2023 to 6 December 2023 and during this time, the community and key stakeholders were invited to make a submission. We have now prepared a PIR Response to Submissions report that responds to the issues raised in these submissions.

We are here



Environment Impact Statement (EIS)

August 2022



EIS Response to Submissions Report & Preferred Infrastructure Report (PIR)

November 2023



PIR Response to Submissions Report

February 2024



### PIR Response to Submissions Report

The PIR Response to Submissions report includes an analysis of the number and type of submissions and the issues raised during the exhibition period, a response to those issues including any further environmental assessment or mitigation measures, and an updated justification and evaluation of the proposal. It also documents additional community engagement undertaken since preparation of the PIR.

## Albury to Illabo key elements



**14** track realignments (also known as track slews)



works at **24** enhancement sites along 185km of existing rail corridor



track lowering under **3** road bridges



replacing **3** pedestrian bridges



removing **2** redundant pedestrian bridges



replacing **2** road bridges



**9** level crossing modifications and other clearance works



modifying **4** rail bridges

## Overview of submissions

**44** submissions received in total

which included:



**41** submissions from the community



**2** submissions from public authorities



**1** submission from organisations

Advice was also received from 10 New South Wales government departments and agencies.

## Project timeline

Project development stages		Status
Concept assessment	Prepare State Significant Infrastructure Application Report	✓
	Lodge State Significant Infrastructure Application Report	✓
	Receive Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements (SEARS)	✓
Reference Design and EIS	Corridor refinements (Study Area, Focus Area and Rail Corridor)	✓
	Prepare EIS	✓
	Exhibit EIS	✓
	Lodge EIS Response to Submissions Report	✓
Project Assessment	Lodge PIR Response to Submissions Report	✓
	Lodge PIR	✓
	DPHI assessments and determination	Ongoing
	Receive planning approval	Mid-2024
Detailed Design	Commence detailed design	Mid-2024
Construction	Start early work, followed by major civil construction and rail signalling work	Late 2022 - 2026
Operation	Inland Rail Beveridge to Parkes freight network to become operational	From 2027

## Key issues raised

See Section 2.3 of the PIR RtS

Most of the submissions received were located within the Wagga Wagga precinct. Across all of the submissions and the advice received from NSW government departments and agencies, the most frequently raised issues were:

**Options and alternatives** – Route of the Inland Rail program and use of the corridor through urban centres. Issues including level crossings and a bypass of the City of Wagga Wagga (matters beyond the scope of the PIR).

**Transport and traffic impacts** – Impacts including traffic impacts during bridge closures, construction mitigation and management measures, operational impacts and social impacts associated with level crossing closures.

**Noise and vibration impacts** – Construction noise impacts, construction vibration impacts, traffic noise impacts during construction, traffic noise impacts during operation, operational noise impact, operational vibration impact, mitigation and management of impacts for noise and vibration (including visual impacts).

**Social impacts** – Social impacts associated with traffic impacts, level crossing closures and demands for workers or accommodation.

**Operation of proposal** – Including train numbers, inclusion of noise barriers and the design of road and pedestrian bridges.

## Response to issues raised

Appendix A of the PIR Response to Submissions report contains a register with the identification number of each submitter and indicates which section of the report has responded to each issue.

In response to issues raised, we revised some of the assessments that were part of the PIR, including the:

- transport and traffic assessment to include updated inputs into the traffic modelling for Wagga Wagga and Junee
- operational rail noise assessment to include the identification and assessment of some receivers that had not been included in the PIR
- air quality assessment to provide further assessment of locomotive idling.

We also updated and added some new mitigation measures to minimise impacts from the proposal in Appendix B of the PIR Response to Submissions report.



## Next steps

The proposal would continue to incorporate environmental management and design features to ensure that potential impacts are managed and mitigated as far as practicable. With the implementation of the revised mitigation measures provided in Appendix B of the PIR Response to Submissions report, it is concluded that the potential environmental impacts of the proposal would be adequately managed.

Subject to approval of the proposal, the detailed design would be developed with the objective of minimising potential impacts on the environment and the community. The design and construction methodology would continue to be developed with this objective in mind, considering the input of stakeholders and the local community, and the conditions of approval.

DPHI will now complete its assessment of the merits of the proposal in accordance with Government legislation, policies and guidelines and will provide an assessment report for the Minister to consider when deciding on the project approval. DPHI will publish the decision online and will give public notice of the reasons for the decision and how community views were taken into account in making the decision. Inland Rail will continue to consult with community members, government agencies and other stakeholders during design development, construction and operation of this proposal to minimise potential impacts on the local and regional environment and the community.

To view the full PIR Response to Submissions report, visit the Major Projects NSW Planning Portal website at <https://pp.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/projects/inland-rail-albury-illabo>