

Inland Rail Narromine to Narrabri Community Consultative Committee

Annual Report 2020

Community Consultative Committee Details

CCC / Project Name:	Inland Rail – Narromine to Narrabri	Reporting Period:	1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020
Independent Chairperson:	Michael Silver OAM	Proponent Contact:	Patricio Munoz

1. Executive Summary

The Community Consultative Committee (CCC) met face to face in the Sub-committee format on two occasions, at the start and end of 2020, due to the impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic and consequential restrictions on travel and community interaction. In August 2020 a combined meeting of the CCC was held via video conference.

The primary issues considered by the CCC related to the refinement of the Study Area to a Focus Area of Investigation in the development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as well as major concerns regarding flooding impacts, land and property acquisition processes and matters being assessed in the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement.

The Focus Area of Investigation reduced the generally five kilometres wide Study Area to a corridor that was between 150 metres and 400 metres wide. This refinement resulted in the number of properties directly impacted being reduced to 117 along the length of the project.

The CCC received comprehensive reporting on the progress of preparation of the EIS and other major matters throughout the year. There were several important presentations to the CCC:

- ❖ Environmental Impact Statement Presentation – Combined CCC meeting on 3 August 2020
- ❖ Property Discussion (Land Acquisition) Presentation – Sub-committee meetings on 7,8,9 December 2020
- ❖ Flooding and Hydrology Presentation – Sub-committee meetings on 7,8,9 December 2020

Notwithstanding these presentations and the detailed content of the EIS, there was still a degree of concern and scepticism within some members of the CCC Sub-committees regarding the likely impacts of flooding, how property acquisitions will be negotiated and finalised, how social issues such as accommodation will be managed and what economic benefits will flow to the rural communities.

The EIS was placed on public exhibition on 8 December 2020 for 62 days until 7 February 2021.

- **Meetings**

The sub-committees met individually on two occasions and once in a combined CCC video conference meeting:

Inland Rail Narromine to Narrabri Community Consultative Committee

Annual Report 2020

- **Narromine Sub-committee**
 - 24 February 2020 at Narromine
 - 7 December 2020 at Narromine
- **Gilgandra Sub-committee**
 - 25 February 2020 at Coonamble
 - 8 December 2020 at Gilgandra
- **Narrabri Sub-committee**
 - 26 February 2020 at Narrabri
 - 9 December 2020 at Narrabri
- **Combined CCC video conference meeting**
 - 3 August 2020 with hubs at Narromine, Gilgandra, Coonamble, Coonabarabran, and approved private locations, with the meeting hosted from the Crossing Theatre, Narrabri.
- **Attendance**

Community Members, Local Government Authorities and Proponent Representative (*Meetings attended/Possible meetings*)

 - **Narromine Sub-committee**

Paul Brydon (0/2), Shelley Baylis (0/2), Alan Channel (2/2), Murray Feddersen (2/2), Taje Fowler (0/2), Andrew Knop (2/2), Lewis Lydon (1/2), Narromine Shire Council (1/2), Inland Rail Representative (2/2)
 - **Gilgandra Sub-committee**

Peter Bonnington (1/2), Alexander Deans (2/2), Barbara Deans (2/2), Karen McBurnie (2/2), Stuart Mudford (2/2), John Single (2/2), Coonamble Shire Council (2/2), Gilgandra Shire Council (2/2), Inland Rail Representative (2/2)
 - **Narrabri Sub-committee**

Bruce Brierley (1/2), Christina Deans (2/2), Ted Hayman (2/2), Jane Judd (2/2), Cindy Neil (2/2), David Scilley (1/2), Russell Stewart (1/2), Narrabri Shire Council (2/2), Warrumbungle Shire Council (2/2). Inland Rail Representative (2/2)
 - **Combined CCC Video Conference Meeting**

Paul Brydon (0/1), Shelley Baylis (0/1), Alan Channel (1/1), Murray Feddersen (1/1), Taje Fowler (0/1), Andrew Knop (1/1), Lewis Lydon (0/1), Narromine Shire Council (1/1), Peter Bonnington (0/1), Alexander Deans (0/1), Barbara Deans (1/1), Karen McBurnie (1/1), Stuart Mudford (0/1), John Single (1/1), Coonamble Shire Council (1/1), Gilgandra Shire Council (1/1), Bruce Brierley (0/1), Christina Deans (1/1), Ted Hayman (0/1), Jane Judd (1/1), Cindy Neil (1/1), David Scilley (1/1), Russell Stewart (1/1),

Inland Rail Narromine to Narrabri Community Consultative Committee

Annual Report 2020

Narrabri Shire Council (1/1), Warrumbungle Shire Council (1/1). Inland Rail Representative (1/1)

The Inland Rail representative at all meetings was Mr Patricio Munoz.

The Local Government Authorities were represented by two members.

The meetings were also attended by ARTC executives, technical specialists and project consultants providing presentations on various elements of the project to the CCC. Government agencies, both Commonwealth and State, were also present at the Sub-committee meetings as observers and made presentations or comment where appropriate.

The meetings of the sub-committees drew strong local interest, with community observers being permitted to attend the meetings. No community observers were permitted to log into the combined CCC video conference meeting.

- **Site Visits**

No site visits were undertaken by the CCC.

- **Combined Meeting**

- A combined meeting of the CCC was held via video conference on 3 August 2020.

- **Other Actions**

- The CCC introduced a Question and Answer Protocol at Sub-committee meetings to permit community observers to ask questions of the Proponent, at the conclusion of a meeting, in respect of matters that were discussed during the meeting. Limited use of the protocol was taken up by community observers.
- The CCC wrote to ARTC in May 2020 highlighting issues and concerns the impacts of flooding on Narrabri due to the particularly severe rain event of 8/9 February 2020 that resulted in extensive flooding in the vicinity of the Narrabri Railway Station and consequential impacts in other areas of Narrabri. The rain event highlighted existing community concern regarding the impact of floodwaters south of the Newell Highway road/rail overpass. The CCC suggested this flooding event required detailed investigation, in collaboration with Narrabri Shire Council, to reduce the potential flood pressure on Narrabri and any exacerbation as a consequence of the Inland Rail project.

2. Key issues

Issue	Actions Taken	Responses and Next Steps
Environment Impact Statement (EIS) Concern by some CCC members that the EIS lacked rigor and	Correspondence received from several CCC members expressing the view that the EIS should not be publicly exhibited.	The EIS was placed on public exhibition on 8 December 2020 for 62 days until 7 February 2021. Review of EIS during exhibition period.

Inland Rail Narromine to Narrabri Community Consultative Committee

Annual Report 2020

<p>adequate detail and should not be placed on public exhibition.</p>	<p>CCC was advised that progressing to exhibition was a matter for the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment following completion of its adequacy assessment of the document.</p>	
<p>Flooding and Hydrology</p> <p>Continued concern over accuracy and extent of flood modelling and hydrological information.</p>	<p>The CCC continue to examine and review information on the flood modelling and local flood impacts. Specific issues associated with flooding were raised in respect of Narromine and Narrabri. Serious concerns were expressed regarding the community consultation process at Narrabri and the design of waterway crossings,</p>	<p>Updates on flood modelling and responses to questions were provided during the year with a detailed hydrology and flood modelling presentation made to all Sub-committees at the December 2020 meetings. The presentation outlined the information contained in the Environmental Impact Statement.</p> <p>Concern over flooding issues remained a prime consideration and will be reviewed and examined by members during the Environmental Impact Statement exhibition period.</p>
<p>Access and Amenity</p> <p>Concern over severance of rural properties, rural amenity, implications for access and road transport movement.</p>	<p>The CCC requested clarification on process to address property severance and what standards will apply to rail crossings.</p> <p>Clarification sought on crossing arrangements for the Castlereagh Highway at Curban.</p> <p>Sought advice on how operational noise and vibration will be addressed and mitigated.</p> <p>.</p>	<p>Following confirmation of the Reference Design, landowners will be advised of the preferred corridor and meetings held to discuss access arrangements including rail crossings. This will also inform and support the land acquisition process.</p> <p>CCC advised that ALCAM model used for rail crossing design and location.</p> <p>Discussions for the crossing of the Castlereagh Highway at Curban are ongoing.</p> <p>Operational noise and vibration will be assessed following adoption of final design. Indicative noise and vibration modelling will be provided to landowners.</p>

Inland Rail Narromine to Narrabri Community Consultative Committee

Annual Report 2020

<p>Consultation and Communication</p> <p>Concern over the adequacy and effectiveness of community consultation.</p>	<p>Ongoing monitoring of the consultation, communication and engagement processes</p>	<p>Numerous community information sessions conducted, and a specific consultation program established to support the exhibition of the EIS.</p>
<p>Social and Economic Impacts</p> <p>Concern over housing and accommodation and how local business will obtain benefit from the Inland Rail project.</p>	<p>Requested a further update on Social and Economic Impact issues.</p>	<p>Update on Socio-economic implications provided to the August 2020 Combined CCC meeting</p>
<p>Land Acquisition</p> <p>Concern over the land acquisition process.</p>	<p>Requested that a further presentation be provided regarding the land acquisition process.</p>	<p>A detailed presentation on the land acquisition process was provided to all Sub-committees at the December 2020 Sub-committee meetings</p>
<p>Pilliga Forest Impacts</p> <p>Concern over impacts on the Pilliga Forest.</p>	<p>Requested a report on how biodiversity and endangered species will be assessed and managed.</p> <p>Sought clarification on the impact of bush fire in the Pilliga Forest on the Inland Rail.</p> <p>Sought advice whether the Inland Rail corridor will be fenced in the Pilliga Forest.</p>	<p>Reported that detailed biodiversity studies and endangered species analysis has been undertaken in the Pilliga Forest and will be included in the EIS.</p> <p>Reported that should bush fire occur in the Pilliga Forest that the trains will not operate.</p> <p>The rail corridor through the Pilliga Forest will not be fenced.</p>
<p>Environmental Impacts</p>	<p>CCC requested confirmation of water resources and the projects water demand.</p> <p>Requested advice on how noxious weeds and particularly Hudson Pear will be managed.</p> <p>Advice sought on how biodiversity offsets will be established.</p>	<p>The regular presentation of Environmental Assessment reports to the CCC.</p> <p>Advised a range of water sources will be accessed to support the project's construction. The water demand is</p> <p>Hudson Pear and other noxious weeds will be managed in accordance with the standards of noxious weed authorities.</p>

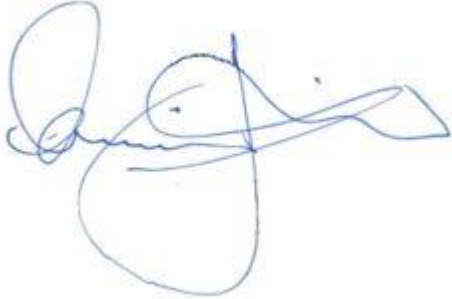
Inland Rail Narromine to Narrabri Community Consultative Committee

Annual Report 2020

		<p>Analysis of environmental matters in the EIS during the exhibition period.</p> <p>Advised expressions of interest invited from landowners regarding areas that could be taken up as biodiversity offsets.</p>
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3. Focus for next 12 months

- Analysis of the outcomes of the exhibition of the EIS.
- Notation of submissions to EIS exhibition.
- Progression of the assessment process by the NSW Department of Planning and Environment.

Signature of Chair:	
Date:	8 April 2022