Department of Planning and Environment

Our ref: OUT22/12909

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NSW Department of Planning and Environment

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8 September 2022

Subject: **Inland Rail Albury to Illabo (SSI-10055) – Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)**

Dear Mr Obiakor

I refer to your request for advice sent on 11 August 2022 to the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) Water about the above matter.

The above proposal involves enhancement works to structures and sections of track along 185 kilometres of the existing operational standard gauge railway between Albury and Illabo. Enhancement works are required to provide the increased vertical and horizontal clearances required for double-stacked freight trains.

DPE Water has reviewed the EIS, with key recommendations including:

- Clarification of the ability to obtain a secure water supply for the project.
- Detailed design should ensure that scour protection is consistent with existing structures prior to construction.

Please see Attachment A for more detail and additional recommendations.

Please note that the licensing and approval function has now moved from NRAR to DPE Water. Should you have any further queries in relation to this submission please do not hesitate to contact DPE Water Assessments water.assessments@dpie.nsw.gov.au. or to the following coordinating officer within DPE Water:

Simon Francis – Senior Project Officer
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Yours sincerely

Liz Rogers
Manager, Assessments, Knowledge Division
Department of Planning and Environment: Water

Attachment A

Detailed advice to DPE Planning & Assessment regarding the Inland Rail Albury to Illabo (SSI-10055) – Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

1.0 Water Supply and Licencing

1.1 Recommendation – Prior to Determination

The proponent should provide clarification of the ability to obtain a secure water supply for the project. This is to include relevant agreements where required and to demonstrate sufficient water entitlements can be acquired where necessary.

1.2 Recommendation – Post Approval

The proponent must obtain relevant approvals for water supply works (not considered in this proposal), and Water Access Licences (WALs) under the *Water Management Act 2000* (WMA) before commencing any works which intercept or extract groundwater or surface water.

Explanation

During construction, groundwater will be encountered at two excavation sites and dewatering will be required. Excavation for the Riverina Bridge will require dewatering of 0.7ML (over up to 21 days) from the Upper Murray Alluvial Groundwater Source; and, excavation at the Kemps Street Bridge will require dewatering of 11.4ML (over 25 days) from the Lachlan Fold Belt Murray Darling Basin Groundwater Source. Excavation for the Pearson Street Bridge is not expected to encounter groundwater.

The EIS identifies that the proponent would obtain a relevant WAL to account for this take. Water demand for construction has been estimated at a total of 56.9ML (9.7ML in the Albury precinct, 3.4ML in the Great Hume-Lockhart precinct, 13.5ML in the Wagga Wagga precinct and 30.3ML in the Junee precinct) over the estimated 15-month within the construction period.

The EIS notes a preference for sourcing water from local governments mains supply or from other water supply authorities. However, no agreements for this supply have been confirmed yet. Should preferred water sources prove to be unviable, then the proponent may need to seek water from groundwater bores or possibly farm dams. This information is required to better understand the project's water supply security.

If water supply is to be sourced from bores, as the individual works have not been identified in the EIS and hence not subject to the relevant exclusion for a *Water Management Act 2000* approval under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, the proponent will be required to obtain a Water Supply Work Approval where necessary. This process would require further advertising and assessment which may add delays to the work schedule. The impact assessment and access to additional water entitlement will be required to meet the rules of the relevant Water Sharing Plan, the Access Licence Dealings Principles Order (2004) and DPE Water's Factsheet – Assessing Groundwater Applications. As the proponent has noted, trade rules may impact the ability of the project to source water through the market.

The proponent has not provided details of any WALs held in the water sources where water take will need to be accounted for. Required WALs will need to be sought prior to project commencement.

2.0 Surface Water

2.1 Recommendation – Post Approval

DPE Water recommends that:

- Detailed design should ensure that scour protection is consistent with existing structures prior to construction.
- Watercourses should be monitored for unexpected impacts, and if required, rehabilitated with reference to *A Rehabilitation Manual for Australian Streams* (LWRRDC 2000).

- Works within waterfront land need to be consistent with DPE - Water's Guidelines for Controlled Activities on Waterfront Land.
- A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) must be prepared in consultation with DPE - Water prior to commencing works.

Explanation

The project involves track upgrades to existing rail corridor infrastructure at 'enhancement sites'. Detailed scour protection at these sites has been proposed for post-approval, but will be aimed so as to mimic existing hydrology conditions. As all impacts appear to be in pre-developed areas (within the existing rail corridor), which are typically already armoured, the changes arising from the proposal are unlikely to impact any watercourse. Watercourses should be monitored for unexpected impacts and if required rehabilitated with reference to Ruthford *et al A Rehabilitation Manual for Australian Streams* (Land and Water Resources Research and Development Corporation, 2000).

The proposal site crosses a number of watercourses within the Murray and Murrumbidgee catchments, the majority of which are ephemeral or intermittent. During construction there is potential for activities associated with the construction of new culverts or temporary creek crossing to temporarily disturb watercourses and waterfront land.

Technical Paper 11 – Hydrology, flooding and water quality indicates the Guidelines for Controlled Activities on Waterfront Land have been considered in the development of mitigation measures for activities which may impact waterfront land.

The EIS proposes sediment and erosion control to be developed in accordance with the guidelines, Managing Urban Stormwater: Soils and Construction (Landcom 2004), which is supported by DPE Water.

Managing runoff and the associated sediment and erosion control around construction compounds and other excavation works will need to be addressed during development of the CEMP. These works will need to be in accordance with the Landcom (2004) guideline. This is proposed in the EIS, and supported by DPE - Water.

End Attachment A