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Dear Mr. Obiakor,

**Notice of Exhibition of application for Inland Rail – Albury to Illabo (SSI-10055)**

Thank you for your referral dated 15 August 2022 inviting comments from the Heritage Council of NSW on the above State Significant Infrastructure (SSI) proposal.

**Proposed Works**

The proposed development involves:

- Enhancement works to structures and sections of track along 185 km of the existing operational standard-gauge railway between Albury and Illabo to accommodate double-stacked freight trains up to 1,800m long and 6.5m high;
- Works are proposed at 24 locations along the Main South Line corridor, described as 'enhancement sites'
- Key features include:
  - Adjustments to approximately 44 km of track across 14 enhancement sites to accommodate the vertical and horizontal clearances according to Inland Rail specifications, comprising:
    - realignment of track within the rail corridor at 14 enhancement sites
    - lowering of track up to 1.6 m at three enhancement sites
  - Ancillary works, including adjustments to nine level crossings, modifications to drainage and road infrastructure, signaling infrastructure, fencing, signage, and services and utilities.
  - Construction compounds (including laydown areas) and other areas needed to facilitate construction works
  - Temporary changes to the road network, including roads closures to undertake works on road bridges and level crossings
  - Other ancillary works.

The proposal does not extend to those existing sections of the alignment where no works are required. The possible future use of the railway between Albury and Illabo by freight trains up to 3,600 m long would be subject to separate assessment

**Heritage Listing**

The proposed SSI affects 42 listed heritage items including the following 9 State Heritage Register (SHR) items along the Main Southern Railway:

1. *Albury Rail Bridge over Murray River* (SHR no. 01020)
2. *Albury Railway Station and yard group* (SHR no. 01073)
3. *Culcairn Railway Station and yard group* (SHR no. 01126)
4. *Henty Railway Station and yard group* (SHR no. 01169)
5. *The Rock Station and yard group* (SHR no. 01268)

6. *Wagga Wagga Railway Station and yard group* (SHR no. 01279)
7. *Bomen Railway Station* (SHR no. 01093)
8. *Junee Railway Station, yard, locomotive depot* (SHR no. 01173)
9. *Junee Railway Station – moveable relics* (SHR no. 01172)

The Yerong Creek Urban Conservation Area is noted as having a known archaeological site within its boundaries and shall be subject to HNSW comment. The proposal also impacts locally listed and s.170 conservation register items.

86 registered heritage items are located within 200m of the SSI proposal. The following three are State listed:

- *'Commercial' or 'Waterstreet' Hotel and Cottage* (SHR no. 00538) located on 430 Smollet Street, Albury
- *Post office* (SHR no. 01425) located on Lorne Street, Junee
- *Former 'Jadda' Centre* (SHR no. 01687) located on Broadway, Junee

### **Information for Consideration**

The following reports were considered in our assessment:

- *Environmental Impact Assessment, prepared by ARTC and Inland Rail*
- *Technical Paper 3 – Non-Aboriginal Heritage, prepared by GML Heritage*
- *Technical Paper 10 – Landscape and Visual Impact*

### **Heritage NSW Comments**

As delegate of the Heritage Council of NSW, I provide the following comments:

- The proposal results in *direct and indirect impacts to multiple heritage structures and archaeological areas during construction and operation. This includes potential impacts from vibration, demolition, archaeological disturbance, altered historical arrangements and access, aesthetic changes, changes to visual amenity, viewsheds and vistas, and at-property noise treatments. Potential impacts of subsidence were considered and found to have no impact on the identified registered heritage items. Significant views or references to significant view lines were not identified during the register searches.*
- It is noted that the *Technical Paper – Non-Aboriginal Heritage* by GML Heritage concludes that the proposal would have:
  - an overall minor impact on heritage items located within the enhancement sites
  - a major impact on the subset group of bridges and footbridges
  - a minor impact on the representativeness of the ARTC Section 170 register
- The following comments relate specifically to the listed SHR places:

#### **1. *Albury Rail Bridge over Murray River* (SHR no. 01020)**

The proposal intends to remove the historic overhead bracing framework and install new replacement bracing, raised 2m above on stanchions. A new permanent walkway is proposed to the eastern side of the bridge. The bridge structure would require structural reinforcement along the downside lattice truss to allow the additional load of the trains and proposed elements. The existing paint is proposed to be removed and the bridge is to be repainted. Additionally, temporary works for construction are also proposed.

The historic overhead bracing is intrinsic to the material manifestation of the subject item's significance. It is noted that alternatives to raising the bridge height by removal and replacement of the overhead bracing were not possible. It is also noted that the submitted reports indicate that the bracing is currently in good condition. It is recommended that, as much as possible, elements of the overhead bracing structure are reused in the replacement structure. Should reuse not be viable, documentation should indicate the reasons why reuse was not possible and

provide probable relocation or alternate reuse spots. Alternatively, the bracing elements should form part of an interpretation strategy for the project. Any new materials proposed to be introduced to the historic structure shall be compatible with the historic fabric. Intrusions and intervention into the bridge shall be minimised as much as possible. Further, it is recommended that the proposed removal of graffiti and repainting be undertaken with consultation with the project's nominated heritage consultant. A site protection plan should also be in place to ensure that impacts resulting from the demolition are mitigated and the remaining historic structure is not damaged during construction works.

2. Albury Railway Station and yard group (SHR no. 01073)

The proposal at Albury Railway Station includes the demolition of an existing pedestrian bridge and the construction of a new pedestrian bridge and demolition of Signal Box 1a. Track works include the removal of redundant track in proximity of the built heritage components and construction of new track over an area of archaeological potential (Broad-gauge railway tracks). New tracks and realignment of existing tracks would also impact Signal Box 1a. Temporary construction activities would also impact areas of archaeological potential.

It is noted that the proposed works at the Albury Railway Station would result in visual and physical impacts to the listed place. It is recommended that the proposed new pedestrian bridge be designed in consultation with the project's nominated heritage consultant to ensure that it is aesthetically balanced with its surroundings and the historic character of the yard and landscape.

The proposed elements for demolition shall be salvaged and reused, as much as possible on site and/or form part of the interpretation strategy. Further, a site protection plan should be in place to ensure that any impacts arising from demolition are managed appropriately.

HNSW notes that the documentation includes a program of test excavation to manage impacts to the archaeological resource – the broad-gauge railway tracks. It is recommended that the test excavations be undertaken prior to any approval granted for this application. The test excavation report should be submitted for review by Heritage NSW and its findings should inform the proposal, the Archaeological Research Design and any further detailed design.

3. Culcairn Railway Station and yard group (SHR no. 01126)

The pedestrian bridge proposed for removal at Culcairn Railway station is specifically mentioned in its SHR listed statement of significance. While the proposed demolition of the pedestrian bridge would result in irreversible impact upon the significance of the subject place, it is noted that the alternate options for the proposal have been considered and discounted due to various technical constraints. It is recommended that the significant fabric from the pedestrian bridge is salvaged and forms part of an interpretation strategy for the project proposal. Further, a site protection plan should be in place to ensure that any impacts arising from demolition are managed appropriately.

4. Henty Railway Station and yard group (SHR no. 01169)

It is noted that no works are proposed to the structures associated with the Henty Railway Station and Yard Group and therefore no impacts to heritage values or fabric are foreseen.

5. The Rock Station and yard group (SHR no. 01268)

It is noted that no works are proposed to the structures associated to the heritage listing of the Railway Station and yard Group, therefore the proposal would have a negligible impact upon heritage values and fabric.

6. Wagga Wagga Railway Station and yard group (SHR no. 01279)

The proposal includes the demolition of the Wagga Wagga Railway Station footbridge and the Edmondson Street road-bridge and construction of new pedestrian and road bridges. Additionally, tracks are proposed for realignment and modifications to other rail infrastructure is proposed including removal of a gantry. Temporary construction works and compounds are also proposed.

The Edmondson Street bridge is not within the curtilage of the SHR listed Wagga Wagga Station, however the significance assessment undertaken by GML Heritage indicates that the bridge may have potential for being of heritage value. Its demolition would have a visual impact upon the setting of the subject place.

Similarly, while the station pedestrian bridge is not specifically noted as having individual heritage significance, its removal would have an impact upon the setting of the Wagga Wagga Station.

The replacement structures are noted in the documentation as being larger than the existing bridges. It is recommended that the design and details of the proposed replacement bridges be undertaken with consultation with the project's nominated heritage consultant to ensure that visual impacts are minimised and that they sit within the aesthetic character of the historic yard group.

It is also recommended that a site protection plan be prepared to ensure that the demolition of the bridges does not result in any direct impacts or damage to existing heritage structures in the surrounding areas.

7. Bomen Railway Station (SHR 01093, 18, 4280278)

It is noted that the proposal does not intervene into any structures within the Bowmen Railway Station SHR curtilage.

8. Junee Railway Station, yard, locomotive depot (SHR no. 01173)

The proposal includes the demolition of an existing pedestrian bridge including the removal of footings from a station platform, adjustment to existing utilities and overhead signaling as well as trackwork.

While the pedestrian bridge is not described in the state heritage listing, the significance assessment undertaken by GML Heritage concludes that the bridge is valuable for being a rare example of a rapidly disappearing Warren Truss bridges along the NSW railway network. It is recommended that the fabric of the bridge structure be salvaged and reused within the proposed development and form part of the interpretation strategy for the project.

It is also recommended that a site protection plan be prepared to ensure that the demolition of the bridges does not result in any direct impacts or damage to existing heritage structures in the surrounding areas.

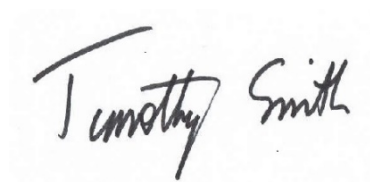
9. Junee Railway Station – moveable relics (SHR no. 01172)

It is noted that the works would not impact the June Railway Station moveable relics.

- *Yerong Creek Urban Conservation Area* - The documentation describes that the potential archaeological remains of the Yerong Railway Station Building (demolished 1980s) would be impacted by the proposed works. The recommendations by GML heritage include the implementation of a test excavation. It is recommended that the test excavation program be completed prior to any approval granted for the proposal. The final test excavation report should be submitted for review by Heritage NSW and any findings inform the Archaeological Research Design and any future detailed design of the proposal.
- The mitigation measures noted in the submitted documentation are considered acceptable. However, comments provided above should be incorporated into the documentation and the proposed strategy for archaeological disturbance, salvage, reuse of fabric and interpretation should be updated accordingly.
- Three SHR listed items are noted in proximity to the proposed works area. It is recommended that any impacts arising from vibrations or changes to visual settings should be mitigated appropriately and as recommended in the report by GML Heritage.
- The proposed study area includes several s.170 register items as well as many local heritage items, and other local items are in the vicinity, advice should be sought from the relevant state agencies and local councils.

If you have any questions regarding the above advice, please contact Mariyam Nizam, Senior Heritage Assessments Officer, at Heritage NSW on 02 8837 6375 or [Mariyam.Nizam@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:Mariyam.Nizam@environment.nsw.gov.au).

Yours sincerely



**Tim Smith, OAM**  
 Director, Assessments  
 Heritage NSW  
 Department of Planning & Environment  
**As Delegate of the Heritage Council of NSW**  
 8 September 2022