

APPENDIX

G

Rapid Assessment Framework checklist

NARRABRI TO NORTH STAR—PHASE 2 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT



The Rapid Assessment Framework is a comprehensive set of reforms implemented by the NSW Government to ensure State Significant Infrastructure is supported by better quality assessment, better coordination and better engagement with the community. These changes came into effect under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Major Projects) Regulation 2021. The Rapid Assessment Framework includes a series of guidelines, in particular the *State Significant Infrastructure Guidelines* (DPIE, 2021b), to which proponents must consider under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021* (EP&A Regulation 2021).

The Narrabri to North Star (N2NS) Phase 2 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared prior to these reforms and the mandatory application of this guidance. However, under the superseded Environmental Planning & Assessment Regulation 2000 (EP&A Regulation), Schedule 2, Clause 2(c), the EIS for a State Significant Infrastructure project must be prepared *with regard* to the State Significant Infrastructure Guidelines.

This appendix demonstrates where the EIS fulfills the requirements of the Rapid Assessment Framework and in particular the requirements of State Significant Infrastructure Guidelines.

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G1 Undertaking engagement guidance

The following section provides a comparison of the key requirements of the Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) guideline *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects* (DPIE, 2021a) (*Undertaking Engagement Guidelines*), which came into effect on 1 October 2021 and applies to State Significant Infrastructure projects. The *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines* encourage engagement throughout the life cycle of a project, from early planning through to delivery and is an appendix to an overarching document, the *State Significant Infrastructure Guidelines* (DPIE, 2021b).

Specifically, consideration is given to the extent to which the N2NS Phase 2 EIS has met the requirements for proponents as described in Chapter 3 and Appendix A of the *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines*. These sections outline what project proponents should consider when preparing an engagement strategy and the expectations for engagement with the community and stakeholders during the preparation of the EIS.

Reference is made to Chapter 4 and Appendix D of this EIS, which provide more specific detail on the engagement undertaken as part of this EIS.

G1.1 Key documents

- ▶ Inland Rail Communications and Engagement Strategy (0-0000-900-PCS-00-ST-0002) (ARTC, 2015).
- ▶ N2NS Phase 2 Engagement Plan (3-0001-262-PCS-00-RP-0001) (IRDJV, 2020).
- ▶ N2NS Phase 2 Engagement Implementation Plan (3-0000-262-PCS-00-PL-0001) (ARTC, 2020)—updated quarterly.

G1.2 Consistency with Chapter 3 requirements for developing an engagement strategy

The ARTC Inland Rail Communications and Engagement Strategy (Inland Rail Engagement Strategy) (ARTC, 2015) was published in 2015 and provides the overarching communications and engagement framework for the Inland Rail program. This document guided the development of the N2NS Phase 2 Engagement Plan (Engagement Plan) (IRDJV, 2020), which outlines the consultation and engagement activities to be completed for the proposal. The Engagement Plan draws heavily from ARTC's N2NS Phase 2 Engagement Implementation Plan (Engagement Implementation Plan) (ARTC, 2020), which outlines the proposal more broadly, and takes into account the requirements of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). Table G1-1 summarises how the Engagement Plan aligns with the requirements of Chapter 3 of *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines*. References to report sections and appendices in the table refer to the consultation technical paper in Appendix D of this EIS.

TABLE G1-1 CONSISTENCY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF CHAPTER 3 OF UNDERTAKING ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES

3. Key factors when developing an engagement strategy

Consistency with N2NS Phase 2 Engagement Plan

3.1 Plan early	<p>Inland Rail's Engagement Strategy is centred on community engagement practices that are open, transparent, ongoing and equitable. The strategy was built on activities that have occurred since endorsement of the Inland Rail Implementation Group's recommendations in 2015. Alongside Inland Rail's social performance initiatives and ARTC's corporate values, the Engagement Strategy seeks to build trust and credibility to contribute to creating and maintaining the program's social licence to operate.</p> <p>The issues raised and the understanding gained through early consultation from 2014 to 2020 were used to inform the Engagement Strategy for the EIS. Early consultation predominantly involved conveying introductory information relating to the Inland Rail program as a whole, discussion of early works, and preliminary engagement with affected stakeholders. Regular Enews updates and correspondence was maintained throughout this period of consultation. Specific early engagement activities are listed in the consultation technical report in Appendix D of the EIS.</p>
3.2 Engage as early as possible	<p>N2NS Phase 1 and N2NS Phase 2 specific consultation has occurred since the projects were split in 2019 and focused N2NS Phase 2 EIS consultation has occurred since August 2020. While ARTC manage the ongoing proposal communications and engagement, consultation for the development of the EIS, as outlined in the Engagement Plan, was focused around two intensive periods of consultation in 2020.</p> <p>The objectives of the first round of consultation between August and September 2020 included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ detailing that Phase 2 has been formally separated from Phase 1

3. Key factors when developing an engagement strategy

Consistency with N2NS Phase 2 Engagement Plan

- ▶ explaining the EIS and design development, including the process and requirements for hydrology and outlining consultation that will take place throughout development of the EIS
- ▶ confirming that the hydrology model is consistent with personal experiences obtained during flood events and understanding land use and priorities regarding hydrology on each landowner's property
- ▶ listening to the priorities, concerns and opportunities of landowners and the wider community regarding design, social impacts and hydrology.

The second round of planned consultation took place from November 2020 to December 2020. The objectives of the second round of consultation were:

- ▶ presenting and seeking feedback on the proposed design, including rail alignment, level crossing design and culvert size and placement
- ▶ informing the community about construction impacts relevant to them
- ▶ seeking feedback from the community on preferred noise mitigation measures
- ▶ demonstrating where feedback from the first round of consultation has been incorporated into the proposed design
- ▶ explaining the next steps for consultation, proposal design and approvals.

Further consultation has occurred since 2020 regarding specific issues undergoing refinement in the EIS, including noise, construction hours, hydrology, social and property impacts, up until and including March 2022. Consultation will continue to occur with key stakeholders throughout detailed design and construction.

3.3 Ensure engagement is effective	<p>Stakeholders were engaged using methods appropriate to the target audience with the tools outlined in section D3.1 of Appendix D of the EIS. Activities included workshops, information sessions, meetings and briefings to provide numerous opportunities to engage with the proposal. Consistent with the level of public participation selected for the proposal per the IAP2 spectrum, stakeholders were informed, consulted, and involved in the planning and decision-making processes. A Community Consultative Committee was not established for the proposal due to the length of the alignment. Alternative engagement methods outlined in Appendix D of the EIS were deemed more suitable.</p> <p>The outcomes of the engagement and how it has been considered has influenced the final reference design and EIS is provided in section D4.2 of Appendix D.</p>
3.4 Ensure engagement is proportionate to the scale and impact of the project	<p>Section D3.1 of Appendix D of the EIS outlines the consultation tools and their intended purpose and was used to guide appropriate, proportionate and relevant engagement activities. These activities were carried out in the areas affected by the proposed work, where communities could be directly affected by the work.</p>
3.5 Be innovative	<p>Section D3.1 of Appendix D of the EIS details a variety of consultation tools used to reach audiences. The tools included the Inland Rail website, phone calls, emails, an interactive project map, social media on multiple platforms, mailing of printed information, and advertisements in local media. Engagement activities have also adapted to the lockdown and social distancing requirements of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a move to online meetings where appropriate.</p>
3.6 Be open and transparent about what can be influenced	<p>Where possible, Inland Rail has sought to incorporate stakeholder feedback directly into the design process as described in section D4 of Appendix D of the EIS. Aspects of the proposal development and design that were negotiable or non-negotiable were detailed within the Engagement Plan to inform conversations with stakeholders. Where a particular aspect of the proposal could be influenced, engagement was carried out with the relevant stakeholders, for example section D4 outlines the various consultation topics, and Table D4-4 outlines the issues raised for consideration and how each issue was addressed in the EIS and proposal design.</p>
3.7 Implement the community participation objectives	<p>DPE expects proponents to adopt their community participation objectives when engaging on State Significant Projects. The community participation objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Open and inclusive ▶ Easy to access ▶ Relevant ▶ Timely ▶ Meaningful.

3. Key factors when developing an engagement strategy

Consistency with N2NS Phase 2 Engagement Plan

In preparation and implementation of the Engagement Strategy and the Engagement Implementation Plan, ARTC has followed the IAP2 and the *Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Guidance Series, Community and Stakeholder Engagement* (DPIE, 2017). This work includes the Inland Rail program engagement principles as described in section D2.2 of Appendix D of the EIS, which align with the community participation objectives from the *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines*.

G1.3 Consistency with Appendix A of the *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines* requirements

Appendix A of the *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines* details the expectations for engagement at each phase of an assessment process. Currently, the phases relevant to the proposal and proponent-led engagement are the 'scoping phase' and the 'preparing the EIS' phase. Consistency of the EIS with these requirements, and in particular the Consultation Technical Report in Appendix D, is detailed in Table 2.

TABLE G1-2 CONSISTENCY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF APPENDIX A OF THE UNDERTAKING ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES

Phase	Expectation of the proponent	Comment	Where addressed in the EIS
Scoping	Identify any early engagement that has been carried out that is relevant to the project (e.g. engagement undertaken as part of a prior planning process)	Communication on the proposal commenced at the proposal announcement in 2014. From 2015, community workshops and information sessions were held that informed the scope and the issues for consideration in the EIS.	Appendix D: section D4 Appendix D: Appendix M—N2NS community engagement and stakeholder consultation activities
	Identify the key stakeholders for further engagement (i.e. individuals, special interest groups, councils and government agencies with an interest in or that are likely to be affected by the project)	The Engagement Strategy was based around an understanding of the local community with an interest in the outcome of a decision about Inland Rail or that may be directly or indirectly affected by the proposal. In addition, an extensive list of stakeholders is identified in the EIS and includes elected members of the parliament, local councils, government agencies, landowners and affected site neighbours, special interest groups, local businesses and industry, and Traditional Owners.	Appendix D: section D2.8

Phase	Expectation of the proponent	Comment	Where addressed in the EIS
	Plan how they intend to engage with the community, council and government agencies, so that the engagement is proportionate to the scale and nature of the project and the likely level of community interest in the project	<p>Section D2.7 of the consultation technical report outlines the proposed Engagement Strategy.</p> <p>The Engagement Plan details the approach to engagement in section 2.</p> <p>The Engagement Implementation Plan includes an Action Plan in Appendix A which is a high-level outline of the consultation and engagement activities that will be undertaken up until construction of N2NS Phase 2.</p> <p>This approach to consultation and engagement for the proposal was informed by consultation and community engagement from the feasibility stage. Stakeholder analysis was further informed by briefings with council executives and councillors within affected local government areas.</p>	<p>Appendix D: section D2.7</p> <p>Engagement Plan: section 2</p> <p>Engagement Implementation Plan: Appendix A</p>
Preparing the EIS	Implement any engagement activities required by the SEARs (including engagement with relevant government agencies, council and the community)	A summary of the extensive engagement with community and stakeholders since the scoping report was submitted is outlined in Appendix D and Chapter 4 of the EIS.	<p>Appendix D: section D4</p> <p>EIS Chapter 4: section 4.3</p>
	Inform the community about the opportunities to engage	Information has been delivered to the community and stakeholders since the announcement of the proposal in the form of newsletters, mail-box drops, email, website information, as well as briefings, committees, attendance at regional shows, individual and group meetings. Various opportunities for engagement have been communicated and made available.	<p>Appendix D: section D3</p> <p>Appendix D: Appendix M</p>
	Explain how community feedback will be considered and documented	<p>An explanation about how feedback will be considered in the design development was included in community information sessions.</p> <p>All feedback is recorded in a project database and considered relevant to the context it is provided.</p>	<p>Communication material on Inland Rail program webpage: inlandrail.artc.com.au</p> <p>Appendix D: section D4.3</p>
	Provide relevant information in plain English so that potential impacts and implications can be readily understood	All communication material is prepared to high standards, ensuring the information is timely, comprehensible, and relevant to the community. Technical information is presented in plain English with the use of graphic tools where appropriate.	<p>Appendix D: appendices C, E, F, G, H, I, J, L and O</p> <p>Communication material on Inland Rail program webpage: inlandrail.artc.com.au</p>

Phase	Expectation of the proponent	Comment	Where addressed in the EIS
	Be clear about the level of influence engagement will have by identifying what elements can be changed as a result of feedback	Where possible, Inland Rail has sought to incorporate stakeholder feedback directly into the design process as described in section D4.3. Aspects of the proposal development and design that were negotiable or non-negotiable were detailed within the strategy to inform conversations with stakeholders.	Appendix D: section 2.7
	Give the community the opportunity to voice their concerns or share local knowledge so that this information can be considered early on in the planning, design and assessment	Extensive feedback options have been provided to affected communities to enable feedback on the proposal. Specific opportunities have included stakeholder meetings and briefings, workshops, landowner face to face meetings, door-knocks, community information sessions, the community information phone line, the Inland Rail email, and the Inland Rail website.	Appendix D: section D3.1
	Consider the issues raised by the community, council and relevant government agencies when making project refinements and accurately reflect how these issues have been addressed in EIS documentation	Stakeholders and community members raised various key issues during the preparation of the EIS in meetings, briefings information sessions, and via email and phone. The issues raised and how they have been reflected in the EIS are documented in section D4 and D4.3 of Appendix D.	Appendix D: section D4 and D4.3
	Keep the community, council and relevant government agencies informed with up-to-date information on the project.	The approach for ongoing consultation is comprehensive to ensure regular information is provided on proposal progress. The team meets regularly with impacted landowners and has monthly meetings with Moree Plains Shire Council and Transport for New South Wales.	Appendix D: section D5

G2 Significant Infrastructure Guidelines—preparing an environmental impact statement

This section presents a response to the requirements of the *State Significant Infrastructure Guidelines—preparing an environmental impact statement* (DPIE, 2021b). The guidelines came into effect on 1 October 2021, with all EISs prepared from this time are required to consider the guidelines. Tables G2.1 and G2.2 below include a review of Chapter 2: General requirements and Chapter 3: Content of an EIS of the guidelines and where they have been addressed in this EIS. It should be noted that the specific requirements listed in the left-hand column of the tables below are a slightly abridged version of those provided in the guidelines. This is to ensure the information is presented in a logical and legible format for inclusion in this Appendix.

These requirements are in addition to those provided in the project Secretary's environmental assessment requirements (SEARs) issued on 14 October 2020 and in addition to the requirements of Division 5 of Part 8 of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021 (NSW), which lists the information to be included in an EIS. Refer to Appendix A of the EIS for a checklist demonstrating where this information has been included within this EIS.

G2.1 General requirements

TABLE G2- 1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE STATE SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE GUIDELINES—PREPARING AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE PROPOSAL

Requirement	Consistency with N2NS Phase 2 Engagement Plan
2.1 Form	
<p>The EIS should be divided into two parts. The first part is made up of the main report. The main report clearly describes the project, summarises the findings of any community engagement and the detailed assessment of the impacts including mitigation measures. It provides a justification and evaluation of the project as a whole having regard to its economic, environmental and social impacts and the principles of ecologically development.</p>	<p>The EIS follows this structure. The EIS contains a main report followed by appendices and technical papers provided in subsequent groupings.</p> <p>Changes to the structure and content of chapters have been made to better align with the suggested content detailed in the guideline.</p>
<p>The second part is made up of the appendices to the main report. This should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ a SEARs table, which identifies where each of the SEARs has been addressed in the EIS including specialist assessment reports ▶ supporting maps or graphics that illustrate the project ▶ a statutory compliance table ▶ a community engagement table ▶ a table of the proposed mitigation measures ▶ any supporting information, including any detailed community engagement or technical reports. 	<p>The EIS contains the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ a SEARs table in Appendix A ▶ maps and graphics are provided throughout the EIS to support the corresponding text in the proposal description, impact assessment and other chapters. Cross references have been provided if singular figures are referenced repeatedly. Production of a separate appendix to provide a ‘mapbook’ would lead to duplication and has not been included ▶ a statutory compliance table in Appendix B ▶ an environmental risk assessment in Appendix C ▶ community engagement and key issues raised in the engagement completed by ARTC is provided in Chapter 4: Consultation and Appendix D: Consultation technical paper ▶ the summary of all mitigation measures is provided in Chapter 27: Approach to Environmental Management instead of within the appendix. Presentation within the chapter is considered acceptable and provides the same outcome for readers (i.e. provision of a consolidated mitigation table). Appendix F: CEMP outline includes all mitigations during construction ▶ various other appendices supporting the EIS.
<p>In addition, the Summary of the EIS (see section 3.1) should be provided as part of the main report and be made available as a separate document so that it can be downloaded or accessed easily.</p>	<p>The Proposal summary has been revised to include additional context of the proposal (need, alternatives, and an expanded summary of the potential impacts from the project). The Proposal summary will be available to download as a separate chapter in addition to being part of the complete EIS. Separate to the EIS, ARTC has also prepared a ‘Summary of findings’ document, which will support the exhibition of the EIS.</p>
<p>The main report should contain an accurate summary of the specialist assessment reports in the appendices and use suitable cross-referencing to reduce repetition between the two parts of the EIS. The description of the project in the specialist assessment reports should be consistent with the description of the project in the EIS.</p>	<p>The EIS has been prepared to be an accurate summary of the specialist reports and contains cross referencing, where appropriate. The proposal described in the specialist reports is consistent with the EIS description. Full repetition of the proposal description has been avoided in the specialist reports with reference to the EIS instead.</p>
2.2 Structure and length	
<p>A recommended structure for an EIS is shown in Appendix A7. If some sections are not relevant, the proponent should adjust the structure of the EIS accordingly.</p>	<p>The EIS has been structured to align with the SEARs and generally approaches the requirements for the suggested ‘detailed or standard assessment’ through the effort made by ARTC and DPE during the Scoping Report stage and receipt of the SEARs, which define key or complex issues for in-depth analysis.</p> <p>Changes have been made to the EIS chapter titles, where practical, to align more closely to the suggested structure in the <i>Significant Infrastructure Guidelines—preparing an environmental impact statement</i>.</p>

Requirement

While the length of the EIS will vary depending on the scale and nature of the matters requiring detailed assessment, the main report should be as succinct as possible.

To assist in this regard, the Department has set indicative page limits for each section of the main report in Appendix A. These limits should only be used as a guide, as the primary objective is to ensure the EIS provides a justification and evaluation of the project as a whole.

Consistency with N2NS Phase 2 Engagement Plan

The suggested page limits are guidance only. A brief summary has been provided at the start of each chapter, where relevant, to provide a quick overview of the key findings, impacts and mitigation/management responses. Chapters have been drafted to support the more in-depth analysis provided in supporting technical papers. Chapter lengths are considered appropriate for a complex, linear infrastructure project and vary in length based on the complexity of the matter assessed.

2.3 Presentation

The EIS should make it easy for people to understand what is proposed and identify community views on the project and the likely impacts so they can make informed submissions or decisions on the project.

The EIS has been prepared by experienced practitioners and has been subject to technical reviews within IRDJV and within ARTC (and its subject matter experts) at key stages of the EIS and technical report production. A component of this work includes a critical review of the assessment methodology, analysis, reasoning and readability of the document.

To ensure the EIS is prepared to a high standard, the proponent should:

- ▶ ensure the EIS has a clear narrative, including the development of the project and the consideration of feasible alternatives, the findings of any community engagement, the detailed assessment of its potential impacts, and the justification and evaluation of the project as a whole
- ▶ structure the information in the EIS in a clear and logical way, making it easy for readers to draw a clear link between the summary of the findings of the detailed assessment in the main report and the appendices of the EIS, and between these findings and the justification and evaluation of the project as a whole
- ▶ use objective analysis and provide reasons and evidence to support any conclusions
- ▶ use plain English to explain complex information simply avoid using jargon
- ▶ use maps, photographs, interactive digital tools, figures, graphics and tables to improve the presentation of information where possible
- ▶ ensure the visual presentation of material is consistent with the text presentation of the same material and that both presentations are located close to each other
- ▶ ensure the EIS does not contain any false or misleading information.

The content of the EIS has been prepared to:

- ▶ to provide a logical narrative on the proposal, providing background to the program and proposal through to the description and impact assessment of the proposal, and overall justification and evaluation of the proposal, with a clear and logical structure of the document
- ▶ succinctly summarises the key matters documented in the technical papers. The chapters within the EIS have been prepared to provide a plain English summary of the technical assessments. Key findings as summarised in the chapters are linked to the justification and evaluation of the proposal as a whole (including residual impacts)
- ▶ avoid jargon and to use plain English, with definitions provided where technical terms could not be avoided
- ▶ provide an objective analysis of the positive and negative impacts of the proposal, with reasoning and evidence provided for conclusions
- ▶ use maps, figures and tables where it benefits the reader and supports the written content of the EIS
- ▶ provide cross referencing to other content to assist the reader to navigate the EIS and to avoid duplication of content
- ▶ provide summaries at the start of each assessment chapter to provide a succinct summary of the key findings
- ▶ not contain any false or misleading content, as per the EIS declaration at the front of the report.

2.4 GIS data specifications

The proponent must:

- ▶ maintain appropriate geo-referenced file formats of all the maps used in the EIS
- ▶ supply all relevant GIS data to the Department as polygon datasets in one of the following file formats:
 - ▶ shapefile
 - ▶ file geodatabase or
 - ▶ MapInfo TAB
- ▶ use the following coordinate system details:
 - ▶ Datum: GDA 1994
 - ▶ Projection: GCS GDA 1994.

Datasets have been prepared to meet these requirements.

2.5 General map requirements

Maps in the EIS must build on a standard base map for the project and include:

- ▶ a north arrow (for maps in plan view)
- ▶ a scale (or where a cross section is not to scale, an indication of the elevation of key features and vertical exaggeration)
- ▶ a legend clearly indicating each line type that is not labelled on the map
- ▶ the source data of the base map (where applicable).

All maps are prepared with these requirements met.

2.6 Accessibility and navigation

The EIS must generally conform with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA and material relevant to creating accessible documents on the NSW Government's website.

The EIS has been prepared to conform to the WCAG requirements for accessible documents. All specifications will be met within tagged PDF files.

2.7 Declaration

To ensure the EIS is prepared to a high standard, a registered environmental assessment practitioner (REAP) must provide a declaration in respect of completeness, accuracy, quality and clarity of the information in the EIS before it is submitted to the Department.

The document does not include a REAP declaration, noting that transitional provisions of the Regulations do not require a REAP declaration for the proposal (because the SEARs were issued before July 2022), if the EIS is lodged before 31 December 2022.

Nevertheless, it is noted that the EIS has been certified by a Principal Consultant who has 30 years of environmental assessment and planning experience.

This declaration must be made to the effect that:

- ▶ the EIS has been prepared in accordance with Schedule 2 and Part 10 of the EP&A Regulation
- ▶ the EIS contains all available information relevant to the environmental assessment of the development, activity or infrastructure to which the EIS relates
- ▶ the information contained in the EIS is neither false nor misleading
- ▶ for SSD and SSI, it contains information required to be provided under the Registered Environmental Assessment Practitioner Guidelines.

The certification at the start of EIS reflects these requirements, except for the REAP-specific aspects.

Requirement

The information required to be provided under the Registered Environmental Assessment Practitioner Guidelines are that the EIS:

- ▶ addresses the SEARs for the project
- ▶ identifies and addresses the relevant statutory requirements for the project, including any relevant matters for consideration in environmental planning instruments
- ▶ has been prepared having regard to the Department's State Significant Infrastructure Guidelines - Preparing an Environmental Impact Statement
- ▶ contains a simple and easy to understand summary of the project as a whole, having regard to the economic, environmental and social impacts of the project and the principles of ecologically sustainable development
- ▶ contains a consolidated description of the project in a single chapter of the EIS
- ▶ contains an accurate summary of the findings of any community engagement
- ▶ contains an accurate summary of the detailed technical assessment of the impacts of the project as a whole.

A pro forma declaration has been provided at Appendix B. A signed copy of this declaration should be included as a page within each EIS.

Consistency with N2NS Phase 2 Engagement Plan

The EIS:

- ▶ has been prepared to address the SEARs of the proposal
- ▶ Chapter 3: Statutory context and Appendix B: Statutory requirements identify the statutory requirements for the proposal, and relevant consideration of other EPIs. Where appropriate, the statutory requirements are addressed within this chapter (or appendix) or within the impact assessment chapter
- ▶ has had regard to the key elements of the *Significant Infrastructure Guidelines—preparing an environmental impact statement*, despite preparation of the EIS commencing ahead of the finalisation of the guidelines
- ▶ provides a simple and easy to understand summary of the proposal as whole in the Proposal summary and Chapter 28: Justification of the proposal
- ▶ contains a consolidated description of the proposal split across two chapters (Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 for readability and is according to the operational and construction phases of the proposal
- ▶ provides an accurate summary of the findings of community engagement undertaken by ARTC in Chapter 4: Consultation and Appendix D: Consultation technical paper and has provided a detailed review against the consultation guidelines in Appendix B: Statutory requirements and Appendix G: Rapid Assessment Framework checklist
- ▶ the impact assessment chapters (chapters 9–26) provide an accurate summary of the technical assessments prepared for the proposal
- ▶ a signed copy of the certification can be found at the start of EIS.

G2.2 Content of an EIS

TABLE G2-2 REQUIRED CONTENT OF AN EIS FROM THE STATE SIGNIFICANT INFRASTRUCTURE GUIDELINES—PREPARING AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE PROPOSAL

Requirement

Where addressed in the EIS

3.1 Summary

The EIS must include a summary of the EIS in nontechnical language (not an executive summary as usually understood). The summary should be concise, providing a description of the findings of the EIS in a way that is easy to read and understand by the general public.

The summary should aim to tell the story about what is proposed and what else was considered, what the environmental implications are of the proposal and how they will be managed. There should be a logical flow, which does not need to reflect the order of chapters in the EIS. Images and graphics should be used to help communicate the summary, avoiding jargon and acronyms.

Content should be summarised accurately and objectively. It should report all the assessment's key conclusions and be consistent with the rest of the EIS. Issues should be described at an appropriate level of detail tailored to the potential for significant impacts described in the EIS.

The Proposal summary has additional detail to sufficiently meet this intent. A Summary of Findings document will also be published to support the exhibition of the EIS.

Requirement

Where addressed in the EIS

3.2 Introduction

This section should set the context for the detailed assessment of the project in the next sections of the EIS, and include:

- ▶ the proponent's details, address and ABN
- ▶ a simple description of the project, including:
- ▶ a statement of the objectives of the development
- ▶ maps of the site in its regional setting
- ▶ the background to the project, including:
- ▶ any relevant history
- ▶ key strategies that have been adopted to avoid, minimise or offset the impacts of the project
- ▶ a description of any related development or infrastructure that is required for the project or may be developed as a result of the project, but would be subject to a separate approval process (e.g. new or upgraded ancillary infrastructure, approvals for subsequent stages of the project).

The EIS provides:

- ▶ details of ARTC's headquarters and ABN in the certification, and has not been duplicated in Chapter 1: Introduction
- ▶ a simple description of the proposal and provides an overview figure in its regional setting
- ▶ the objectives of Inland Rail and the proposal
- ▶ an overview of the Inland Rail program and the proposal
- ▶ given the range of sites that make up the proposal, a summary of the key strategies taken to avoid, minimise or offset the impacts of the proposal has not been provided in Chapter 1, with the intent of maintaining a succinct chapter. This information is in Chapter 6: Inland Rail Program development, alternatives and the proposal
- ▶ a description of the adjoining sections of the Inland Rail program, as well as the potential for early works as per the exclusions provided in the State Significant Infrastructure declaration.

3.3 Strategic context

This section must identify the key strategic context issues that are relevant to the assessment of the project.

If the strategic context for the project is complex, this section should contain a simple summary of the key strategic issues and include a detailed analysis of the strategic context in the appendices of the EIS.

This section should also include an analysis of feasible alternatives considered having regard to the objectives of the project, including the consequences of not carrying out the project. The analysis of alternatives should explain how the project has ended up in its current form, summarising the key alternatives that have been considered and rejected (e.g. alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the project; and alternative sites, designs, mitigation measures) and the reasons why they were rejected.

These requirements are satisfied across Chapter 5: Need for the Inland Rail program and the strategic context of the proposal, and Chapter 6: Inland Rail program development, alternatives and the proposal. Specifically:

- ▶ Chapter 5: Need for the Inland Rail program and the strategic context of the proposal provides an overview of the need for both the proposal and the program in the context of government policies and guidelines relevant to Inland Rail
- ▶ Chapter 6: Inland Rail program development, alternatives and the proposal provides an overview of strategic alternatives (i.e. non-rail), alternative locations and routes, and options within the proposal.

3.4 Project description

A project description, including but not limited to -

- ▶ project area
- ▶ physical layout and design, including an overview of the project in a table that captures the main elements of the project and all construction and operational mitigation measures
- ▶ uses and activities, including a description of any related development or infrastructure that is required for the project or may be developed as a result of the project, but would be subject to a separate approval process
- ▶ timing and sequencing.

This aspect of the EIS has been kept as two chapters—Chapter 7: Proposal features and operation and Chapter 8: Construction of the proposal, to maintain a clear document structure and to respond to community interest in the construction methodology.

Both chapters provide:

- ▶ a description of the proposal area, which is also depicted in figures throughout the chapters
- ▶ the physical layout and design of features during operation and construction to an appropriate level (throughout the chapters)
- ▶ an overview section at the start of each chapter of the key features and components (Section 7.1 and Section 8.1)
- ▶ uses and activities associated with the construction and operational phases of the proposal throughout the chapters
- ▶ related development (ancillary to the proposal) is described in section 7.3: Ancillary works and infrastructure
- ▶ timing and sequencing is in Section 8.3.

Requirement

Where addressed in the EIS

3.5 Statutory context

This section must identify the relevant statutory requirements for the project, having regard to:

- ▶ the EP&A Act and Regulation
- ▶ other relevant legislation
- ▶ environmental planning instruments and associated plans and guidance
- ▶ relevant approvals (e.g. staged infrastructure approvals).

Chapter 3: Statutory context and the supporting Appendix B: Statutory requirements includes:

- ▶ an overview of the approvals required under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (NSW)
- ▶ (Section 3.2) and a discussion of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (Cth) (section 3.5)
- ▶ a summary of the other NSW and Commonwealth legislation relevant to the proposal (sections 3.3 and 3.4), has been included in Chapter 3. Appendix B is a summary of applicable legislation in a tabular format to meet the general intent of the Significant Infrastructure Guidelines—preparing an environmental impact statement. This consideration identifies the Environmental Planning Instruments (EPIs) in the proposal area
- ▶ the content identifies legislation and supporting regulations that apply to the proposal (at approval or delivery stages), with cross references, where applicable, to considerations in the EIS
- ▶ Section 3.6 is a summary of the approval requirements at the conclusion of the chapter.

3.6 Community engagement

In this section, the proponent should describe the community engagement that was carried out during the preparation of the EIS.

This description should:

- ▶ identify the key stakeholders for the project (e.g. councils, government agencies special interest groups and individuals who may be affected by the project)
- ▶ describe what actions were taken to:
- ▶ keep the community informed about the project
- ▶ obtain feedback from the community on the project
- ▶ engage with certain stakeholders on the detailed assessment of key matters
- ▶ demonstrate that this engagement was consistent with the community participation objectives in the Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects and complied with the community engagement requirements in the SEARs.

Chapter 4: Consultation and Appendix D: Consultation technical paper provides a summary of the key stakeholders, the engagement tasks completed and the key matters identified through consultation.

A comparison of the engagement completed to date against *Significant Infrastructure Guidelines—preparing an environmental impact statement* is provided in Section G.1.

3.7 Assessment and mitigation of impacts

The level of assessment of likely impacts must be proportionate to the significance of, or degree of impact on, the issue, within the context of the proposal location and the surrounding environment. The level of assessment must be commensurate to the degree of impact and sufficient to ensure that the Department and other government agencies are able to understand and assess impacts.

The *Significant Infrastructure Guidelines—preparing an environmental impact statement* include a framework to identify aspects that require a detailed or standard assessment approach. The level of assessment provided in this EIS has been informed by the Scoping Report, SEARs and completion of the environmental risk assessment (Appendix C). This approach mirrors the intent of the guidelines in which key issues have been elevated to require a 'detailed assessment and, where appropriate, are supported by a technical assessment report. The EIS chapters have been drafted to suit public and agency audience, with technical reports providing a greater in depth of analysis to meet regulatory agency requirements. The content and length of each chapter has been prepared to reflect the importance or significance of the impact (and therefore level of assessment).

Requirement	Where addressed in the EIS
For each key issue, the EIS must include a summary of the results of the assessment of the potential impacts of the project undertaken in detailed studies.	<p>The EIS has been structured to present the 'key issues' first, with assessments reflecting the 'standard' assessment approach following these chapters.</p> <p>Chapters 9–26 of the EIS contain a summary of the key findings at the start of each chapter to provide a quick overview of the key impacts and responses. Where appropriate, consultation feedback and outcomes have been identified. The EIS contains:</p>
a) a summary of the condition of the existing environment;	▶ a summary of the existing environment
b) a summary of the key findings of the detailed technical studies in the appendices of the EIS, using suitable cross-referencing to reduce repetition between the two parts of the EIS;	▶ a summary of the key findings of the supporting technical reports (where connected to the impact area), with cross references, where appropriate, to further detail. In preparing the chapters, the focus has been to succinctly describe the impacts of the proposal and focuses on enhancement sites with key or significant impacts
c) description of the scale and nature of the predicted impacts, including any cumulative impacts, and whether these impacts will comply with the relevant statutory requirements, standards or performance measures;	▶ impacts are considered in terms of the potential scale and nature of the predicted impacts. Where a statutory requirement or standards apply to the impact in question, compliance (or otherwise) is identified. Where non-compliance is identified, further discussion and justification is provided
<p>d) demonstrated ability to avoid, mitigate or offset the impacts of the project having regards to:</p> <p>i) mitigation measures incorporated into the design of the project (e.g. changes to the project area, project layout and design, key uses and activities carried out on site, timing),</p> <p>ii) other mitigation measures that will be implemented</p> <p>iii) any negotiated agreements or offsets proposed to address residual impacts of the project following mitigation;</p>	▶ mitigation measures are identified in each assessment chapter linked to the impact or issue assessed. Each chapter also contains a discussion on the effectiveness of the mitigation measures and identifies the potential expected residual impacts following the implementation of the mitigation measures. This is to meet the specific SEARs requirements issued for this proposal, but also relate to the requirement for demonstrating the ability to mitigate the impacts of the proposal
e) detailed reasons justifying any predicted exceedances of relevant standards or performance measures;	▶ the impact assessments of each matter identify performance against standards and consistency with outcomes and desired measures. The chapters reach conclusions that align with the intent of the guidelines for the EIS to demonstrate consistency with performance standards and obligations
f) identification of key uncertainties associated with the assessment and what action will be taken to address these uncertainties; and	Chapter 27: Approach to mitigation and management discusses the performance outcomes for the proposal and key uncertainties
g) highlight any key linkages between the assessment of different matters or likely cumulative impacts of the project.	<p>Where relevant, key linkages between different matters and impact areas are discussed</p> <p>▶ the cumulative impact assessment is consistent with assessment practice prior to the introduction of <i>Cumulative Impact Assessment Guidelines for State Significant Projects</i> (DPIE, 2021c), but considers potential impacts in the context of the impact 'topic' (or issue-specific cumulative impact assessment), spatial extent of potential impacts, temporal extent of potential impacts, and the potential for sensitive receivers to be impacted by multiple impacts and projects (e.g. a combined cumulative impact assessment). As such, the assessment generally meets the intent of the new impact assessment guidance issued by DPE (DPIE, 2021c)</p>

3.8 Project justification

This section must provide a justification and evaluation of the project as a whole, having regard to:

- ▶ its economic, environmental and social impacts and the principles of ecologically sustainable development.
- ▶ the design of the project and what action has been taken to avoid or minimise the impacts of the project (e.g. objectives of the project, alternatives considered, project area, physical layout and design, uses and activities, timing, proposed mitigation measures),
- ▶ the consistency of the project with the strategic context (e.g. supported by Government policy, consistent with regional plans, avoids impacts on key natural and built features with significant conservation value, provides economic benefits to regional community, the corridor is suitable for the project),
- ▶ compliance with any relevant statutory requirements
- ▶ community views about the project and how they have been addressed in the design of the project or the assessment of the impacts of the project,
- ▶ the scale and nature of the economic, social and environmental impacts of the project, including any cumulative impacts, and
- ▶ any key uncertainties associated with the impact assessment and actions proposed to address these.

Chapter 27: Approach to mitigation and management, and Chapter 28: Justification of the proposal include:

- ▶ Section 28.3 provides an overall justification for the proposal, in the context of strategic need; the biophysical, economic and social impacts of the proposal; the residual impacts of the proposal, consideration of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) provisions as well as the Objects of the EP&A Act
- ▶ Section 28.3.5 provides a succinct summary of the key strategies taken to avoid or minimise impacts
- ▶ Section 28.4 provides an overview of consultation undertaken for the project, including community views
- ▶ Section 28.3.4 provides a summary of the key impacts (including cumulative impacts). These summaries discuss key impacts, the scale and nature of the impacts, and, where relevant, compliance with statutory requirements, standards, and guidelines
- ▶ Section 28.2 provides a summary of the statutory approvals required.

Appendices

The EIS must include the following appendices:

- a) a SEARs table, identifying the sections and subsections where the SEARs have been addressed in the EIS and in the specialist assessment reports;
- b) a statutory compliance table, identifying where the relevant statutory requirements have been addressed in the EIS;
- c) a community engagement table, identifying where the issues raised by the community during engagement have been addressed in the EIS;
- d) a table of the proposed mitigation measures for the project (excluding any mitigation measures that are built into the physical layout and design of the project and captured in the project description); and
- e) any supporting information, including any detailed technical reports prepared by specialists.

- a) Appendix A: Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements checklist. Appendix A details the SEARs required to be assessed in the EIS and identifies where each requirement has been addressed in the Chapters, Technical Papers and/or Appendices.
- b) Appendix B: Statutory requirements and Appendix G: Rapid Assessment Framework Checklist. Appendix B provides a summary of the statutory considerations required for the EIS under the *State significant infrastructure guidelines*, and references where each requirement has been addressed in the EIS. Appendix G identifies how and where in the EIS the requirements of the DPE Rapid Assessment Framework have been considered and addressed.
- c) Chapter 4 of the EIS and Appendix D provide a summary of the key issues raised in stakeholder engagement and how they have been addressed. An additional appendix has not been created in order to avoid further duplication
- d) Chapter 27: Environmental management provides a table of consolidated mitigation measures
- e) Technical papers 1–11 provide the technical reports prepared to support the impact assessment as documented in the EIS.

References

- Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC). (2015). *Inland Rail Communications and Engagement Strategy* (Document number 0-0000-900-PCS-00-ST-0002)
- ARTC. (2020). *N2NS Phase 2 Engagement Implementation Plan* (Document number 3-0000-262-PCS-00-PL-0001)
- Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE). (2021a). *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects*, NSW Government, July.
- DPIE. (2021b). *State Significant Infrastructure Guidelines*, NSW Government, November.
- DPIE. (2021c). *Cumulative Impact Assessment Guidelines for State Significant Projects*, NSW Government, November 2021.
- Department of Planning and Environment (DOE). (2017). *Improving Environmental Impact Assessment in NSW*. Available at: planning.nsw.gov.au/-/media/Files/DPE/Brochures/improving-environmental-impact-assessment-in-nsw-brochure-2017-07.pdf.
- IRDJV. (2020). *N2NS Phase 2 Engagement Plan* (Document number 3-0001-262-PCS-00-RP-0001).