

CHAPTER 05

Engagement

ALBURY TO ILLABO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

ARTC

INLAND
RAIL
An Australian Government Initiative

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5. Engagement

This chapter summarises the community and stakeholder consultation undertaken prior to and during preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and the consultation proposed to be undertaken during design and delivery of the Albury to Illabo (A2I) section of the Inland Rail program (the proposal). Further information is in the consultation report, included in Appendix F: Engagement report.

5.1 Engagement approach, objectives, and strategy

5.1.1 Overall approach and objectives

The Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) developed a 10-year program to deliver Inland Rail, under the guidance of the Australian Government's Inland Rail Implementation Group. ARTC's values commit the organisation to active engagement with stakeholders and the community. ARTC's approach to communication and engagement is to:

- ▶ ensure engagement activities meet the needs of the community and stakeholders
- ▶ ensure the Department Planning and Environment's (DPE) draft guidelines on community and stakeholder engagement inform and shape engagement activities
- ▶ ensure project team members, stakeholders and the community understand their roles and responsibilities to deliver the Inland Rail Program
- ▶ support the overall program objectives through active engagement.

The ARTC *Inland Rail Reputation Strategic Plan FY21/22* provides the overarching communications and engagement framework for the Inland Rail program. Effective communication and stakeholder engagement are fundamental to reducing risk, optimising route alignment, minimising social and environmental impacts, securing statutory approvals, and gaining and maintaining a social licence to operate.

ARTC is committed to active engagement in accordance with the International Association for Public Participation's (IAP2) *Spectrum of Public Participation* (2018). Further detail on the IAP2's Spectrum, and the targeted approach to engagement, can be found in section 3 of Appendix F: Engagement report. ARTC's overarching strategy to communication and engagement is designed to:

- ▶ build trust: through quality engagement and interactions with our stakeholders, including landowners and communities. Providing stakeholders with meaningful avenues for input and accurate honest information. This allows them to have some certainty about what is happening and what they can expect so that they can make appropriate plans and decisions
- ▶ build credibility: through strong, timely engagement with key government and organisational stakeholders and communications to the wider community, including an increased focus on the events and milestones, and development
- ▶ build visibility: through broader communications and marketing, including active participation in, and/or support for, local and regional community events as well as broader industry conferences.

The strategic engagement principles that apply include:

- ▶ timing—early and regular engagement
- ▶ inclusivity—ensuring relevant stakeholders are consulted or involved
- ▶ transparency—views and opinions captured from the public are reflected during the engagement process and are available to participants
- ▶ equitability—relevant groups are included in the conversation with recognition of those voices that are not often heard as much as some others. This includes groups like Traditional Owners, people with disabilities, youth and the elderly
- ▶ accessibility—different socio-economic groups can participate
- ▶ materiality—focus on identifying and addressing the issues that matter to stakeholders
- ▶ responsiveness—including communication of how the engagement process has shaped the proposal, prior to each phase of engagement and delivery.

As engagement has been ongoing since 2017 for the proposal, new guidelines have come into effect over time. The primary engagement guideline is now *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects* (DPIE, 2021e) (Undertaking Engagement Guidelines), which came into effect from 1 October 2021 and applies to SSI projects. Undertaking Engagement Guidelines encourages engagement throughout the life cycle of a project, from early planning through to delivery, and forms part of a suite of guidelines under the overarching document the *State*

Significant Infrastructure Guidelines (DPIE, 2021c). Included as part of these guidelines is the *Social Impact Assessment Guidelines for State Significant Projects* (DPIE, 2021a), which has also shaped engagement activities for the proposal.

5.1.2 Stakeholder identification

Understanding the local community and identifying stakeholders is critical to the success of Inland Rail and community engagement activities. A stakeholder is defined as any individual, group of individuals, organisation, or political entity with an interest in the outcome of a decision. They may be, or perceive that they may be, affected directly or indirectly by the outcome of a decision.

The key stakeholders for Inland Rail include:

- ▶ elected members of the parliaments of NSW and Australia
- ▶ local councils
- ▶ government agencies
- ▶ landowners and affected site neighbours
- ▶ special interest groups
- ▶ local businesses and industry
- ▶ Traditional Owners.

Further information on engagement activities with identified stakeholders for Inland Rail and the proposal is in Appendix F: Engagement report.

5.2 Engagement process and activities

Engagement with community and key stakeholders was carried out as part of the following key periods:

- ▶ Inland Rail announcement and project scoping consultation—2015 to 2020
- ▶ 30 per cent reference design and EIS consultation—June 2020 to March 2021
- ▶ 70 per cent reference design and EIS consultation—March 2021 to July 2021
- ▶ 100 per cent reference design and EIS consultation—July 2021 to October 2021.

The purpose of consultation was to raise awareness about Inland Rail and the proposal, understand community and stakeholder issues, and obtain important feedback to help shape the proposal's route, design, and environmental assessment (refer to section 5.3.2).

A summary of the tools employed during the above stages is located in Table 5-1. A summary of engagement activities employed during the above stages is provided in Table 5-2. Specific consultation activities and information relating to each stakeholder group is found in Appendix F: Engagement report.

TABLE 5-1 CONSULTATION TOOLS

Tool	Purpose	Date
Toll-free community information line (1800 732 761)	▶ Inland Rail has a toll-free community information line for any queries about the Inland Rail program. This line is staffed during business hours Monday to Friday 8:30am–5pm. A team of community and engagement advisors take these calls and direct them to the appropriate engagement advisor for response.	Established Jan 2015 and continues to be managed
Project Email (inlandrailenquiries@artc.com.au) (inlandrailnsw@artc.com.au)	▶ Online communication channel where stakeholders can ask questions, share their views, issues and concerns, provide feedback, and request additional information ▶ Record and respond to enquiries by email.	Established 2014 and continues to be managed
Inland Rail website (inlandrail.artc.com.au)	▶ Raise awareness and understanding of the proposal ▶ Provide information to stakeholders, allowing them to ask questions, share their views, issues, and concerns, and request additional information ▶ The website also includes minutes from Community Consultative Committee (CCC) meetings, updated project maps, project newsletters, and historical documentation (such as route alignment documents) ▶ The website is updated, as required, to reflect the stages of the proposal.	Established 2014 and updated regularly

Tool	Purpose	Date
Inland Rail social media channels: ▶ LinkedIn ▶ Facebook ▶ Instagram	▶ Online communication provides information about the Inland Rail program ▶ Online communication channel where stakeholders can ask questions, share their views, issues and concerns, provide feedback and request additional information.	Established 2019 and ongoing
Printed information—distributed to people on the project mailing list and at communication sessions: ▶ Fact sheets ▶ Project information packs ▶ Mail outs ▶ Project maps	▶ Raise awareness and understanding of the proposal ▶ Provide information and details about specific projects as well as features and activities ▶ Provide information on land access guidelines and procedures	Commenced in 2016 and ongoing
Stakeholder e-newsletter	▶ E-newsletters have been sent to stakeholders to provide project updates, invite them to attend community drop-in sessions and advise them of community information sessions ▶ Individuals can sign up for e-news project updates online, through the ARTC website, or at any of our public information displays.	Established April 2019 and ongoing
Submissions	▶ Submissions from local councils and businesses have been invited to provide an opportunity for local knowledge and views to be shared with the proposal team, e.g. investigating pre-construction legacy opportunities.	As required
E-blast emails/emails	▶ Promote engagement channels and opportunities to learn more about the proposal ▶ Promote when community feedback and inputs are required	As required
▶ Local media ▶ Advertisements ▶ Media releases ▶ Media briefings	▶ Raise awareness and understanding of Inland Rail and the proposal ▶ Provide information and promote channels through which stakeholders can communicate their views, issues and concerns ▶ Celebrate project milestones publicly.	Ongoing
▶ Briefing papers	▶ Provided to the state and the Australian Government to outline key issues and strategies.	As required
▶ Project database	▶ Record all correspondence relating to the proposal, including feedback, concerns and commitment (via Consultation Manager).	Established 2016 and ongoing
ARTC community investment/ sponsorship	▶ Opportunity for direct or in-kind community support ▶ Sponsorship of regional shows and local community organisations (Henty, Junee, Illabo and Albury), demonstrating a commitment to local communities. ▶ Regional shows as required (all 2020 shows cancelled due to COVID) with plans to include 2021 shows and field days in the program, dependent on COVID restrictions.	Sponsorship and donations program quarterly.

TABLE 5-2 CONSULTATION ACTIVITIES

Activities	Purpose	Date
Community information sessions	▶ To provide information on the proposal to the local community and seek input to inform the design process and develop the EIS.	Commenced in 2018 and held as required. Recent sessions occurred in May, June, and July.
Workshops	▶ Discuss the proposal and address specific questions and concerns in person ▶ Provide an opportunity for stakeholder input to inform the design process and EIS ▶ To seek targeted feedback from stakeholders to develop the EIS.	Commenced in 2018 and held as required.

Activities	Purpose	Date
Landowner meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To provide information on the proposal and discuss and complete land access agreements from landowners to conduct environmental investigations to inform the reference design and the EIS ▶ Meetings for property requirements, and temporary land occupation 	Commenced in 2020 and ongoing.
Stakeholder meetings and briefings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Opportunity to address specific questions and issues in person ▶ Includes meetings with local council and NSW Government agencies ▶ Build relationships and trust. Provide an opportunity for stakeholders input to inform the design process and development of the EIS. 	Commenced in 2018 and ongoing
Traditional Owners consultation and meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Opportunity to foster links with all the relevant Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) and associated organisations within the proposal alignment. ▶ Involve Traditional Owners and knowledge holders in the proposal as part of the Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Assessment Report (ACHAR) and to seek cultural input to inform the development of the EIS. 	Commenced in 2018 and ongoing
A2I CCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Provide a forum for the discussion between the proponent and representatives of the community, stakeholder groups and the local council on issues directly relating to a specific State significant proposal ▶ Forum for the public to gain an understanding of the proposal and source information, and is an effective channel for stakeholders to communicate their views, issues and concerns. 	Established in February 2021 and recent meeting conducted June 2021

5.3 Summary of issues raised and responses to feedback received

5.3.1 Where issues relevant to the EIS have been addressed

A summary of the key issues raised during consultation relevant to the EIS, including the potential impacts to be considered and the information to be provided by the EIS, is in Table 5-3. More detailed information on the issues raised by stakeholders is in Appendix F: Engagement report and is considered in relevant chapters in the EIS, as identified in Table 5-3.

TABLE 5-3 SUMMARY OF ISSUES RAISED RELATING TO THE EIS

Issue category	Issues raised	Where addressed in the EIS
Hydrology/flooding	A number of key stakeholders have raised concerns around flooding, particularly at track lowering sites.	Chapter 18: Hydrology, flooding and water quality
Pedestrian access	Councils, Department of Education, community groups and general community members have a strong desire to include <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> (Cth) (DDA) compliant pedestrian access over any newly constructed bridges (road and foot).	Chapter 7: Proposal features and operation Chapter 9: Transport and traffic
Number of trains running/impacts to local traffic	Community concerned with number of trains running per day and the impact, i.e. traffic, wait times at crossings.	Chapter 9: Transport and traffic and Chapter 13: Social
Heritage	Key stakeholders concerned about heritage issues at a number of locations, including Murray River bridge, Albury Yard, Culcairn, Wagga Yard and Junee Yard.	Chapter 11: Non-Aboriginal heritage
Future proofing	A number of key stakeholders are concerned about the limited scope of the Inland Rail program and that adequate collaboration is not taking place with other departments/entities to investigate improved outcomes for communities.	Chapter 5: Consultation
Feedback not incorporated	A number of communities are concerned that their feedback is not being adequately reflected in design decisions.	Chapter 5: Consultation
Local business participation	Local businesses want to ensure they are prepared to contract to the Inland Rail program.	Chapter 13: Social Chapter 14: Economic

Issue category	Issues raised	Where addressed in the EIS
Workforce capacity	Business chambers, Regional Development Australia committees, and councils are concerned that Inland Rail is not considering its program within the context of the wider regional setting and that the workforce demands of the proposal will cause negative impacts to the local economy, instead of opportunity for local businesses.	Chapter 13: Social, Chapter 14: Economic Chapter 26: Cumulative impacts
Noise	Construction and operation noise and vibration impacts to close residents and businesses.	Chapter 15: Noise and vibration
Traffic and transport access	Property access impacts, construction traffic management plans and detours a concern for community and councils.	Chapter 9: Transport and traffic

5.3.2 How the proposal has responded to the inputs received

The proposal's route, reference design and construction methodology have been developed to avoid and minimise impacts on the local and regional environment, and impacts on the community and landholders, as far as practicable. The consultation that has been undertaken to date has contributed to the project team's understanding of the potential impacts and has enabled the design to respond to and minimise potential impacts, where practicable. Where possible, measures to minimise and manage impacts that cannot be avoided have been developed as an outcome of the environmental assessment process. Impacts would continue to be minimised throughout the detailed design and construction planning phases, taking into account the input of stakeholders and the local community, where feasible.

The selection of the preferred design solution at each enhancement site included consideration of potential environmental and social issues, including issues raised during consultation (refer to Chapter 6: Alternatives and proposal options). Further information on the options considered and justifications for the options selected is in Chapter 6.

The reference design process is iterative and dependent on rigorous engineering and ongoing stakeholder engagement, and has involved iterations and refinements, incorporating a range of considerations at each stage. Key environmental issues were considered throughout the design development process. Consultation has been carried out with affected stakeholders to identify key potential impacts at an early stage. Where practicable, impacts have been avoided or appropriate mitigation measures developed in response to this input. This has resulted in a number of design changes that have mitigated some of the potential impacts. Further information about this process is in Chapter 6.

Where practicable, ARTC has sought to incorporate stakeholder feedback directly into the design process. This has included:

Albury

Albury City Council and the community indicated the importance of DDA-compliance on the Albury Station pedestrian bridge, during consultation meetings and community information sessions. As a result, ARTC have incorporated DDA-compliant ramps on the eastern and western connections for the pedestrian bridge at Albury Station.

Greater Hume and Lockhart

Greater Hume Shire Council indicated their interest in repurposing the current decommissioned pedestrian bridge. The gifting of the Culcairn pedestrian bridge for the purpose of reuse elsewhere would be investigated with Greater Hume Shire Council prior to removal.

Wagga Wagga

Consultation with Wagga Wagga City Council, surrounding residents, schools and the wider community confirmed that Wagga Wagga Station pedestrian bridge (also known as Mothers bridge) is a key pedestrian access point for the city. Replacement rather than removal of the footbridge was concluded as the preferred solution to meet the needs of community and schools.

Traffic detours associated with the temporary closure of the Edmondson Street bridge during construction were refined following consultation with Wagga Wagga City Council as well as the community, businesses and surrounding residents. A previous version of the traffic detour proposed diverting vehicles via Coleman Street to reach the Sturt Highway, and was not supported. The traffic detour was revised to use Urana Street to reach Docker Street and then the Sturt Highway.

Wagga Wagga Show Society indicated in property discussions in June 2022 that it is no longer preferable that ARTC use the proposed compound site within the showground located adjacent to the rail corridor. An alternative location within the showground for a compound site is being progressed with the Wagga Wagga Show Society.

During consultation with Wagga Wagga City Council, they indicated their potential desire to undertake works on the current culvert at the Pearson Street bridge track lowering enhancement site. ARTC has agreement to work collaboratively with Wagga Wagga City Council on associated culvert works at Pearson Street bridge. Discussions are ongoing between ARTC and Wagga Wagga City Council, including closing out comments raised by Wagga Wagga City Council relating to the potential future interaction of the Pearson Street bridge track lowering with a potential future project.

Wagga Wagga City Council's Active Travel Plan incorporates the Cassidy Parade pedestrian bridge. ARTC have worked collaboratively with Wagga Wagga City Council to incorporate the requirements of the active travel route plan and DDA-compliance at the Cassidy Parade pedestrian bridge. ARTC will continue to work with Wagga Wagga City Council on the integration of the new Cassidy Parade pedestrian bridge to align and minimise impacts to the Wagga Wagga Active Travel Plan.

The pedestrian footpaths on the existing Edmondson Street bridge are narrow paths that are not DDA compliant, with no vehicle separation. Through consultation with the surrounding schools, community, residents, businesses, Wagga Wagga City Council and the Department of Education, the proposal includes shared paths (with pedestrian safety fences, and a barrier between the road and the footpaths) on both sides of the Edmondson Street bridge (rather than on one side) to meet the needs of the adjacent schools and the wider community. Further consultation with Wagga Wagga City Council has confirmed the requirement for achieving DDA compliance. ARTC is committed to revising the existing design to achieve DDA compliance. To achieve this, it is expected that a footbridge independent of the road bridge may be required as a substitute for the footpath on one side of the road bridge.

June

The traffic detour for heavy vehicles during the temporary closure of the Kemp Street bridge was refined following consultation with Junee Shire Council. This identified an out-of-town heavy vehicle detour, which would minimise impacts on local roads through the town.

Junee Shire Council indicated their interest in repurposing the current decommissioned pedestrian footbridge. The gifting of the Junee pedestrian bridge for the purpose of reuse elsewhere would be investigated with Junee Shire Council prior to removal.

A compound site is proposed in a vacant area of the Locomotive Hotel to support construction work at the Kemp Street bridge enhancement site. After meeting with the owners of the Locomotive Hotel, the area required for the compound site was reduced to avoid direct impact on a proposed development in part of the vacant land. The compound was refined to be in an area identified for a future stage of development that the landowner has advised would occur after construction of the proposal concludes.

Junee Shire Council proposed the addition of a pedestrian switch-back ramp on to Edgar Street from the Kemp Street bridge eastern pedestrian footpath. ARTC communicated to Junee Shire Council that this was out of scope of the proposal.

Engagement with Junee Shire Council and TfNSW has resulted in a proposed bridge that will provide the structural capacity for Heavy Mass Loading (HML).

ARTC has incorporated an extra-wide shared path on Kemp Street bridge to allow for a viewing area across the rail corridor. The importance of a viewing area was raised during consultation with Junee Shire Council and the community. Further investigation is also taking place regarding the safety fence material and the ability to see through to the rail corridor. Following further consultation with Junee Shire Council, ARTC is committed to revising the existing design to achieve DDA compliance. To achieve this, it is expected that a footbridge independent of the road bridge may be required as a substitute for the footpath on the road bridge.

5.4 Future engagement

5.4.1 Engagement during exhibition of the EIS

As described in section 4.1, the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW) (EP&A Act) requires an EIS to be exhibited for a minimum of 28 days. The EIS will be placed on public exhibition by DPE and submissions will be invited. The EIS will be made available for viewing on DPE's Major Projects website (mpweb.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects).

To support public exhibition and provide opportunities for the community and stakeholders to ask questions, and find out more information before making a submission, a range of consultation and communication tools will be used by ARTC, including:

- ▶ advertisements in the local media giving information regarding the proposal and display of the EIS
- ▶ making the EIS available for viewing on the Inland Rail website (inlandrail.artc.com.au/)
- ▶ issuing of newsletters to the community (council newsletters, e-newsletter, other)

- ▶ briefings to key stakeholders, including councils
- ▶ community information sessions
- ▶ the public will be able to register to have a copy of the EIS on a USB mailed to them when the public exhibition period begins.

When the exhibition period of the EIS has closed, ARTC will prepare a submissions report as outlined in section 4.1. If required, an amendment report or preferred infrastructure report may also be prepared.

While all submissions received will be posted on the major projects page on DPE's Major Projects website, if requested, the privacy of submitters will be protected by removing names from submissions.

5.4.2 Engagement during design and delivery of the proposal

Engagement and community feedback

Comprehensive and appropriate communication and consultation with the community and other key stakeholders will play a key role in managing the potential for impacts during detailed design, construction and operation. Effective communication and engagement are fundamental to reducing risk and minimising potential impacts. Identifying, engaging and effectively communicating with stakeholders is critical to the successful delivery of the proposal.

ARTC would continue to engage with stakeholders and the community in the lead up to, and during, construction. A communication management plan would be developed for the construction phase to ensure that:

- ▶ landowners, landholders and community members with the potential to be affected by construction activities are notified in a timely manner
- ▶ enquiries and complaints are managed and a timely response is provided for concerns raised
- ▶ accurate and accessible information is made available
- ▶ feedback from the community is encouraged
- ▶ opportunities for input are provided where appropriate.

The contact facilities (including 1800 phone number and email address) would continue to be available during construction, along with a 24-hour construction response line. Targeted consultation methods, such as letters, notifications, signage and face-to-face communications, would continue to be used. The Inland Rail website and social media platforms would also include updates on the progress of the proposal.

Other communication tools and activities that would be used in the lead up to, and during, construction include:

- ▶ a community complaints management system
- ▶ notifications regarding work outside standard working hours and work that might impact residents, businesses and stakeholders
- ▶ email/SMS updates
- ▶ newsletters, information brochures and fact sheets
- ▶ Inland Rail website
- ▶ Social media platforms, including: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram
- ▶ regular community updates on the progress of the construction program
- ▶ meetings with key stakeholders, as needed
- ▶ traffic alerts
- ▶ site signage around construction facilities.

Complaints management

A complaints management system would be developed and implemented before construction begins. It would be maintained throughout the construction period and for a minimum of 12 months after construction finishes. The complaints management system would include the following at a minimum:

- ▶ a 24-hour, seven days a week response line for complaints and enquiries
- ▶ a postal and email address to which complaints and enquiries may be sent
- ▶ publication of contact details in local newspapers and proposal website
- ▶ management and resolution of complaints in accordance with ARTC's complaints management procedure and the conditions of approval for the proposal, including:

- ▶ steps to receive, manage and take appropriate action in relation to community enquiries and complaints
- ▶ verbal and written responses describing what action will be taken provided to the complainant within agreed time limits
- ▶ a complaints register to record all enquiries, complaints and contact with community members and stakeholders
- ▶ a system for managing unresolved complaints
- ▶ reporting requirements in accordance with the conditions of approval.

TABLE 5-4 ENQUIRY MANAGEMENT

Nature of enquiry	Response time
All enquiries	Initial acknowledgment within 24 hours
General or information enquiries	48 hours
Technical enquiries	Up to 5 working days