APPENDIX

I

Rapid Assessment Framework Checklist

ALBURY TO ILLABO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

I.1 Introduction

The Rapid Assessment Framework is a comprehensive set of reforms implemented by the NSW Government to ensure State Significant Infrastructure (SSI) 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, 2021c), to which proponents must consider under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2021 (EP&A Regulation 2021).

The Albury to Illabo 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 However, under the superseded Environmental Planning & Assessment Regulation 2000 (EP&A Regulation), the EIS for an SSI project must be prepared with regard to the *State Significant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 the *State Significant Infrastructure Guidelines*.

I.2 Undertaking Engagement Guidance

This section compares the key requirements of *Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects* (DPIE, 2021e) (Undertaking Engagement Guidelines), which came into effect from 1 October 2021 and apply to SSI 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 the overarching *State Significant Infrastructure Guidelines* (DPIE, 2021c).

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

Reference is made to Chapter 5: Engagement and Appendix F: Engagement report of this EIS, which provide more specific detail for this EIS.

I.2.1 Consistency with requirements for developing an engagement strategy

The engagement strategy for the Albury to Illabo section of the Inland Rail was prepared in April 2020, based on the requirements of the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2). Table I-1 summarises how the strategy also aligns with the requirements of Chapter 3: Key factors when developing an engagement strategy of the Undertaking Engagement Guidelines. The sections and appendices referenced in Table I-1 refer to Appendix F: Engagement report.

TABLE I-1 CONSISTENCY WITH CHAPTER 3: KEY FACTORS WHEN DEVELOPING AN ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY REQUIREMENTS OF THE UNDERTAKING ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES

3. Key factors when developing engagement strategy	Comment on consistency
3.1 Plan early	ARTC's strategy is centred on community engagement practices that are open, transparent, ongoing and equitable. The strategy was built on activities that had occurred since endorsement of the Inland Rail Implementation Group's recommendations in 2015. Alongside Inland Rail's social performance initiatives and ARTC corporate values, the engagement strategy seeks to build trust and credibility to contribute to creating and maintaining the program's social licence to operate.
	The issues raised and the understanding gained through this period up to the point of the SSI application, were used to inform the engagement strategy for the EIS.
	Information on early consultation between 2017 and 2020 can be found in Appendix F: Engagement report attached to this EIS in Appendix A: Early community consultation activities.
	The engagement strategy was implemented in April 2020, following the SSI application, to establish a proactive strategy that would deliver effective and meaningful engagement during development of the reference design and EIS. This enabled identification of relevant stakeholders who may have an interest in or be affected by the proposal (see Appendix F, section 5); to consider the level of influence participants can have on elements of the proposal (see Appendix F, section 3.3.1); and to consider suitable engagement activities (see Appendix F, section 4).
3.2 Engage as early as possible	As described in Appendix A: Early consultation activities of Appendix F: Engagement report, EIS-specific engagement began in 2018 at the commencement of development of the EIS and the initial 30% reference design with members of the community,

3. Key factors when developing engagement strategy	Comment on consistency
	adjacent residents and heavy/regular users of sites such as nearby schools and briefings with the various councils across the alignment. Prior to this, initial community engagement was carried out to inform the concept design.
3.3 Ensure engagement is effective	Stakeholders were engaged with using methods that were appropriate to the target audience with the tools outlined in Appendix F, section 4. Activities included workshops, information sessions, meetings and briefings to provide numerous opportunities for stakeholders 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 (CCC) was set up for the proposal in 2021. The CCC disseminated detailed information on design, property and impacts to stakeholders and community members and the information was discussed so engagement with the proposal was possible as it developed. The outcomes of the engagement and how it has been considered and has influenced the final reference design and EIS is in section 6.1 and 6.2.
3.4 Ensure engagement is proportionate to the scale and impact of the project	Section 4 outlines the consultation tools and their intended purpose and is used to guide appropriate, proportionate, and relevant engagement activities. These activities were carried out in the main towns where communities could be directly affected by the proposal.
3.5 Be innovative	As seen in section 4, there are a variety of different consultation tools used to reach a variety of audiences, such as the Inland Rail website, phone calls, emails, an interactive project map where comments can be pinned to the map, social media on multiple platforms, mailing of printed information and advertisements in local media. ARTC held or attended 20 community events over 2018–2020, such as regional shows, to provide information and collect feedback on early designs to reach members of the community who may not normally engage with social or local media. Social media engagement has been geotargeted to provide the community with updates or information specific to their local area. 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. A community session with the Albury Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) that was also extended to any members of the Indigenous community to attend was conducted during the preparation of the EIS. A similar opportunity was also provided to the Wagga Wagga LALC and ARTC found opportunities to engage with other groups (such as the Elders Group) when ARTC was unsuccessful in its contact with the Wagga Wagga LALC. This engagement was complementary to the engagement completed as part of the cultural heritage impact assessment.
3.6 Be open and transparent about what can be influenced	Where possible, Inland Rail has sought to incorporate stakeholder feedback directly into the design process as described in section 4. Aspects of the proposal development and design that were negotiable or non-negotiable were detailed within the strategy so that it could inform conversations with stakeholders. Where a particular aspect of the proposal could be influenced, engagement was carried out with the relevant stakeholders, e.g. refer to section 6.2.3 regarding stakeholder feedback that influenced the decision to replace the Wagga Wagga Station pedestrian bridge rather than remove it entirely.
3.7 Implement the community participation objectives	The Department of Planning and Environment (DPE) expects proponents to adopt their community participation objectives when engaging on state significant projects, which are: ▸ open and inclusive ▸ easy to access ▸ relevant ▸ timely ▸ meaningful. In preparation and implementation of the engagement strategy ARTC has followed the IAP2 and the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment—*Draft Environmental Impact Assessment Guidance Series, Community and Stakeholder Engagement*. This has included the Inland Rail program engagement principles as described in section 3.2, which align with the community participation objectives from the Undertaking Engagement Guidelines.

I.2.2   Consistency with Appendix A requirements for engagement

Appendix A of the Undertaking Engagement Guidelines makes note of the expectations for engagement at each phase in the 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 where they are detailed in Appendix F: Engagement report is shown in Table 2.

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

Phase	Expectation of the proponent	Comment	Where this has been addressed
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 from its announcement in 2015. From 2018, community workshops and information sessions were held that informed the scope and the issues for consideration in the EIS.	▸ Appendix F: Section 1.2 ▸ Appendix F: Appendix A: Early community 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 on Inland Rail, or that may be affected directly or indirectly 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 F: Chapter 5
	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	Chapter 7 of the A2I Scoping Report (ARTC, 2020) provided an outline of the proposed engagement strategy. This was informed by consultation and community engagement which has occurred since the feasibility stage. Stakeholder analysis was further informed by briefings with council executives and councillors within affected local government areas.	▸ Appendix F: Section 3 ▸ Appendix F: Section 4
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 the community and stakeholders since the scoping report was submitted is outlined in chapter 5.	▸ Appendix F: Section 5.1 ▸ Appendix F: Section 5.2
	Inform the community about the opportunities to engage	Information has been communicated to the community and stakeholders since the announcement of the proposal in the form of newsletters, emails, on the Inland Rail website, as well as briefings, committees, attendance at regional shows, and individual and group meetings. Various opportunities for engagement have been communicated and made available.	▸ Appendix F: Section 5.4
	Explain how community feedback will be considered and documented	Community information sessions have explained how feedback will be considered in the design development. All feedback provided is recorded in a database and considered relevant to the context it is provided. The program website hosts an interactive map of the current design. Comments dropped on the map as feedback will be used by Inland Rail to better understand the key issues from a community perspective.	▸ Communication material on Inland Rail project webpage ▸ Appendix F: Chapter 5
	Provide relevant information in plain English so that potential impacts and implications can be readily understood	All communication material is prepared with high standards of care, ensuring the information is timely, comprehendible, and relevant to the community. Technical	▸ Communication material on Inland Rail project webpage

Phase	Expectation of the proponent	Comment	Where this has been addressed
		information is presented in plain English, using graphic tools where appreciate.	▸ Appendix F: Engagement Report
	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 4. Aspects of the proposal development and design that were negotiable or non-negotiable were detailed within the strategy to inform conversations with stakeholders.	▸ Appendix F: Chapter 5
	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 given to enable feedback on the proposal— one example is the CCC set up specifically for the proposal. Meetings with the CCC have been held since February 2021. They allow engagement throughout the proposal's progress, facilitate broader community involvement, and act as a conduit between the project team and the community to provide information or address issues and concerns.	▸ Appendix F: Chapter 5
	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.	▸ Appendix F: Chapter 6 ▸ EIS Section 5.3
	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 information is provided on the progress of the proposal.	▸ Appendix F: Chapter 7

I.3 State significant infrastructure guidance

This section presents a response to the requirements of the DPE *State significant infrastructure guidelines— preparing an environmental impact statement* (DPIE, 2021d). The guidelines came into effect on 1 October 2021, with all EISs prepared from this time required to consider the requirements. This section includes a review of the *General Requirements* as outlined in Chapter 2 of the guideline and a review of the requirements of Chapter 3: Content of an EIS and where the requirements have been addressed in this EIS. The requirements in Table I-3 and Table I-4 are a summary of the requirements set out in the guidelines.

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

I.3.1   General requirements

TABLE I-3 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PROJECT

Requirement	Comment on consistency
2.1 Form	
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.	The EIS follows this structure. The EIS contains the main report and key appendices. Technical papers are provided separately. Changes to the structure and content of chapters have been made to better align with the suggested content detailed in the guideline.
The second part is made up of the appendices to the main report. This should include: ▸ 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.	The EIS contains the following appendices: ▸ a SEARs table in Appendix A: Secretary's Environmental Assessment Requirements ▸ 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. Producing a separate appendix to provide a 'mapbook' would lead to duplication ▸ a statutory compliance table in Appendix C: Statutory compliance ▸ community engagement and key issues raised in the engagement completed by ARTC is provided in Chapter 5: Engagement and Appendix F: Engagement report ▸ the summary of mitigation measures is provided in Chapter 27: Approach to mitigation and management instead of within the appendix. Presentation within the chapter is considered to be acceptable and provides the same outcome for readers (i.e. provision of a consolidated mitigation table) ▸ various other appendices supporting the EIS.
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.	The Summary at the start of the EIS has been revised to include additional context for the proposal (need, alternatives, and an expanded summary of the potential impacts from the project). The Summary will be available to download as a separate chapter in addition to being part of the complete EIS exhibited on the DPE website. Separate to the EIS, ARTC has also prepared a 'Summary of Findings' document, which will also be available on the ARTC website to support the exhibition of the EIS. The Summary of Findings serves a different purpose than the Summary as it is structured by precinct to enable the reader to easily view the information most relevant to them based on their geographic location.
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.	The EIS has been prepared as an accurate summary of the specialist reports written to inform the EIS and contains cross referencing, where appropriate. The proposal described in the specialist reports is consistent with the proposal described in the EIS. Full repetition of the proposal description has been avoided in the specialist reports, with reference to the EIS instead.
2.2 Structure and Length	
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.	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 of the proposal and receipt of the SEARs, which defined key or complex issues for in-depth analysis. Changes have been made to the EIS chapter titles, where practical, to align more closely to the suggested structure in the SSI guideline.

Requirement	Comment on consistency
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.	The suggested page limits are provided for guidance only. A summary has been provided at the start of each impact assessment chapter (chapters 9 to 26) 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 the supporting technical papers. Chapter lengths are considered appropriate for a complex linear infrastructure project.

2.3 Presentation

Requirement	Comment on consistency
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 WSP and within ARTC (and its subject matter experts) at key stages of the EIS and technical report production. A component of this 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 on the Inland Rail program and the Albury to Illabo proposal through to the description and impact assessment of the proposal, and overall justification and evaluation of the proposal. This in turn provides a clear and logical structure of the document ▸ succinctly summarise the key matters documented in the technical papers. These chapters 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. Reasoning and evidence for conclusions have been provided ▸ maps, figures and tables have been used where it provides benefit to the reader and to support the written content of the EIS ▸ provide cross referencing to other content within the EIS to assist the reader navigate the EIS and to avoid duplication of content ▸ summaries at the start of each impact assessment chapter (chapters 9 to 26) provide a succinct summary of the key findings of the chapter ▸ not contain any false or misleading content, as per the EIS declaration at the front of the report.

2.4 GIS Data Specifications

Requirement	Comment on consistency

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.

Requirement	Comment on consistency
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 have been prepared to meet these requirements.
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 with the WCAG requirements for accessible documents. All specifications will be met within the tagged PDF file.
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 does not require a REAP declaration for the proposal (as 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 20 years of environmental planning experience within NSW.
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.
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.	The EIS: ▸ has been prepared to address the SEARs of the project ▸ Chapter 4: Statutory context and Appendix C: Statutory compliance identifies the statutory requirements for the proposal, and relevant consideration of other Environmental Planning Instruments (EPIs). Where appropriate, the statutory requirements are addressed within this chapter (or appendix) or within the impact assessment chapter ▸ has regard for the key elements of the DPE SSI guidelines, despite preparation of the EIS commenced ahead of the finalisation of the SSI guidelines ▸ provides a simple and easy-to-understand summary of the proposal as whole in the Summary and Chapter 28: Justification of the proposal chapters ▸ the project description is split across two chapters (Chapter 7: Proposal features and operation and Chapter 8: Construction of the proposal) for readability and is split according to the operational and construction phases of the proposal ▸ a summary of the findings of community engagement is in Chapter 5: Engagement and Appendix F: Engagement report and a detailed review against the Undertaking Engagement guidelines in section I.2 ▸ the impact assessment chapters (Chapters 9–26) provide an accurate summary of the technical assessments prepared for the proposal.

Requirement	Comment on consistency
	A signed copy of the certification can be found at the start of EIS.

I.3.2   Content of an EIS

TABLE I-4 REQUIRED CONTENT OF AN EIS

Requirement	Where this has been addressed
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 Summary chapter at the start of the EIS with additional detail to meet this intent. A Summary of Findings document prepared by ARTC will also be published on the ARTC website to support the exhibition of the EIS. The Summary of Findings serves a different purpose than the Summary as it is structured by precinct to enable the reader to easily view the information most relevant to them based on their geographic location.
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 an overview figure showing the proposal in its regional setting ▸ the objectives of the Inland Rail program and the proposal ▸ an overview of the Inland Rail program and 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 due to the range of sites that make up the proposal, in order to maintain a succinct chapter. This information is presented in Chapter 6: Alternatives and proposal options (specifically section 6.4) ▸ 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 SSI 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	These requirements are satisfied across Chapter 2: Strategic context and need; Chapter 3: Location and setting; and Chapter 6: Alternatives and proposal options, specifically: ▸ Chapter 2: Strategic context and need provides an overview of the proposal and program need in the context of government policies and guidelines relevant to Inland Rail and is supported by Appendix B: Strategic planning review. ▸ Chapter 3: Location and setting provides an overview of the regional and local planning context ▸ Chapter 6: Alternatives and proposal options provides an overview of the strategic alternatives (i.e. non-rail),

Requirement	Where this has been addressed
sites, designs, mitigation measures) and the reasons why they were rejected.	alternative locations/routes and other options within the proposal.

3.4 Project Description

Requirement	Where this has been addressed
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 is presented as two chapters—Chapter 7: Proposal features and operation and Chapter 8: Construction of the proposal to maintain document structure and 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 chapter ▸ the physical layout and design of features during operation and construction to an appropriate level of detail (throughout the chapters) ▸ overview tables at the start of each chapter of the key features or components (Section 7.1 and Section 8.1) ▸ uses and activities associated with the construction and operational phases of the proposal are provided throughout the chapters ▸ related development (i.e. other IR projects) is not described in these chapters as it does not form part of the proposal. Section 1.4 in Chapter 1: Introduction provides this description. Some early works may occur that do not form part of the proposal are described in Section 8.9 ▸ timing and sequencing is provided in Section 7.6.1 (with respect to operations at 2025 and 2040) and Section 8.3 (for construction sequencing).

3.5 Statutory Context

Requirement	Where this has been addressed
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 4: Statutory context and the supporting Appendix C: Statutory compliance includes: ▸ an overview of the approval required under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (NSW) (EP&A Act) (Section 4.2) and a discussion on the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (Cth) (EPBC Act) and the decision that it is not a controlled action (section 4.4) ▸ a summary of the other NSW and Commonwealth legislation relevant to the proposal (sections 4.3 and 4.4) has been included in Appendix C in a tabular format to meet the general intent of the DPE SSI guideline and identifies the EPIs in the proposal area ▸ the content generally identifies legislation and supporting regulations that apply to the proposal (at approval or delivery stages) with cross references, where applicable, to where it has been considered in the EIS ▸ Section 4.5 provides a summary of the approval requirements at the conclusion of the chapter.

3.6 Community Engagement

Requirement	Where this has been addressed
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	Chapter 5: Engagement and Appendix F: Engagement report provide a summary of the key stakeholders (Section 5.1.2 of the EIS, and section 5.1 of Appendix F); the engagement tasks completed (Section 5.2 of the EIS chapter, Chapter 5 of Appendix F); and the key matters identified through this engagement (Section 5.3 of the EIS chapter; Chapter 6 of Appendix F). A comparison of the engagement completed to date against the DPE guidelines is provided above (Section I.2). Please refer to that section for a more detailed comparison.

Requirement	Where this has been addressed
Undertaking Engagement Guidelines for State Significant Projects and complied with the community engagement requirements in the SEARs.	

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 DPE SSI guidelines include a framework to identify what requires 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 E). This approach mirrors the intent of the DPE guideline approach in which key issues have been elevated to require a 'detailed assessment' and, where appropriate, supported by a technical assessment report.
	The EIS chapters have been drafted to suit a 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 reflects the importance or significance of the impact (and therefore level of assessment).
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.	The EIS has been structured to present the 'key issues' first, with assessments reflecting the 'standard' assessment approach following these chapters.
	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:
(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 focus 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.
(d) demonstrated ability to avoid, mitigate or offset the impacts of the project having regards to - ▸ 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), ▸ other mitigation measures that will be implemented, and ▸ any negotiated agreements or offsets proposed to address residual impacts of the project following mitigation;	Mitigation measures are identified in each chapter, linked to the impact or issue identified in the assessment summaries. 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 relates to the requirement to demonstrate 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 in the preceding discussions, which 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 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.	Where relevant, key linkages between different matters and impact areas is discussed.

Requirement	Where this has been addressed
	The cumulative impact assessment is consistent with assessment practice prior to the introduction of Cumulative Impact Assessment Guidelines for State Significant Projects (DPIE, 2021f), but considers potential impacts in the context of the impact 'topic' (or issue-specific cumulative impact assessment), spatial extent of potential impacts, and the potential for sensitive receiver 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.

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: ▸ Section 28.3 provides an overall justification for the proposal, in the context of strategic need and context, the biophysical, economic and social impacts of the proposal, the residual impacts of the proposal, consideration of environmentally sustainable development provisions as well as the Objects of the EP&A Act. ▸ Section 28.2 provides a succinct summary of the key strategies taken to avoid or minimise impacts, as well as key responses in light of community views. ▸ Section 28.2.2 provides a summary of the key impacts (including cumulative). These summaries provide discussion of the key impacts in that impact area, the scale and nature of the impacts and, where relevant, compliance with statutory requirements, standards and guidelines. ▸ Section 28.1.7 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 (b) Appendix C: Statutory compliance (c) Section 5.3.1 of the EIS and Chapter 6 of Appendix F provides a summary of the key issues raised in stakeholder engagement and cross references to where these issues have been addressed in the EIS. An additional appendix has not been created to avoid further duplication. (d) Chapter 27: Approach to mitigation and management provides the consolidated mitigation measures, noting these measures do not include mitigation approaches that have been embedded into the proposal (as described in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 of the EIS) (e) Technical papers 1–14 were prepared to support the impact assessment as documented in the EIS.