



Ms Sarah Connelly
Program Environmental Manager
Inland Rail
Australian Rail Track Corporation
Level 16, 180 Ann Street
Brisbane QLD 4000

Our ref: SSI-9371

File:

Attn: Andrew Skele

Dear Ms Connelly

Subject: Inland Rail North Star to NSW/Qld Border – Preferred Infrastructure Report

The exhibition of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the above project ended on 6 October 2020. The Department has reviewed the EIS and submissions received and has sought expert flooding and hydrology advice.

There is a significant difference between the 1% AEP presented as the basis for assessment and mitigation in the EIS, compared to the large design flood that the Border Rivers Valley Floodplain Management Plan (BRVFMP) establishes as its basis for assessment. The Department notes your ongoing participation in the Hydrology Working Group to resolve flooding and hydrology issues. The Department considers that the BRVFMP's large design flood (based on the 1976 flood event) ensures consistency in assessing impacts of structures on the floodplain.

In accordance with Section 5.17(6)(b) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, the Department requires you to provide a PIR, in addition to a Response to Submissions Report, that:

- a) reassesses the hydrology and flooding impacts of the project, as presented in the EIS, using the greater of, the large design flood as defined in the Border Rivers Valley Floodplain Management Plan (1976 flood event), or the 1% AEP flood;
- b) reconsiders the proposed mitigation measures to address impacts identified in a);
- c) assesses the impacts in a) against the Quantitative Design Limits (QDLs) specified in the Narrabri to North Star Infrastructure Approval, unless otherwise agreed to by the Department;
- d) includes a framework outlining the process for determining appropriate mitigation, where the QDLs can't be met, in consultation with the affected landowners.

The Department notes that ARTC has proposed to complete a Joint Probability Analysis, to reconsider the original modelling and define new AEPs. This approach is considered unlikely to resolve the inconsistency and uncertainty surrounding the use of an AEP event that is different to the large design flood in the BRVFMP. While ARTC may undertake this task to refine its infrastructure design, it is not a requirement of the PIR and will not affect the Department's requirement that impacts are assessed and mitigated against the BRVFMP's large design flood.

The Department also reminds ARTC that the Department's assessment timeframes do not include the seeking of further information, re-exhibition (if required) and condition negotiation. It is the proponent's responsibility to accommodate these actions in its own timeframes and to ensure that requested documentation is of a standard to allow the Department to complete its assessment.



Should you have any inquiries regarding this matter, please contact Alexander Scott on (02) 8217 2096.

Yours sincerely,

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to read "Glenn Snow", written in a cursive style.

10 December 2020

Glenn Snow
Director
Transport Assessments

As delegate of the Planning Secretary

