

Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure

Our ref: SSI-9406-PA-77

Your ref: 6-0000-210-EEC-00-LT-0070

Inland Rail Pty Ltd
via Major Projects Portal

2 April 2026

Attention: Belinda Jones, Head of Program Environment

Inland Rail – Illabo to Stockinbngal (SSI-9406) – refusal of extension regarding final Fauna Connectivity Strategy

Dear Belinda,

I refer to your request, lodged 27 February 2026, requesting the Planning Secretary's agreement to extend the timeframe for submission of the final Connectivity Strategy required under condition E44 of the Inland Rail Illabo to Stockinbngal infrastructure approval (SSI-9406) until 28 April 2026.

The Connectivity Strategy is required to mitigate the impacts of the project and aims to maintain or improve threatened species connectivity. The Connectivity Strategy must be submitted for approval prior to construction commencing.

I note that:

1. construction commencement was notified as 9 September 2025 and 27 November 2025 (our refs. PA-40 and PA-62)
2. extensions were previously granted until 9 December 2025 and 28 February 2026 (our refs. PA-47 and PA-64)
3. consultation with the Regional Delivery Division of DCCEEW (previously BCS) and Fisheries has not been closed out
4. early construction activities, including clearing and fauna fencing, were to be managed under the approved Biodiversity Management Sub-plan (PA-45) however:
 - (a) there was an incident on 2 December 2025 where a superb parrot habitat tree, north of Dirnaseer Road, was felled while three fledglings were present in the hollow
 - (b) during site inspections on 18 February and 19 March 2026, there was no observable demarcation of clearing limits or habitat features or signage
5. the draft Connectivity Strategy (rev G) provided for agency consultation on 25 February 2026:
 - (a) remains non-committal regarding connectivity measures to be implemented, including structures, access pathways (strategic revegetation) and fencing (exclusion and funnelling)

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- (b) did not discuss whether potential connectivity measures have been affected by clearing conducted to date
- (c) did not include the map series locating the fauna connectivity measures
- (d) did not include the Operational Fauna Connectivity Monitoring, Predator Prevention and Adaptive Mitigation Program required by Condition D7.

Notwithstanding the valuable discussions onsite on 19 March 2026 and subsequent meeting on 25 March 2026, I am unable to agree to the current extension request due to the concerns raised at point 5 above. However, I would be pleased to consider a further extension request should Inland Rail demonstrate:

- improvements in the implementation of the approved Biodiversity Management Sub-plan, including but not limited to minimising soil disturbance and native vegetation clearing especially in riparian and fauna connectivity zones, demarcating and protecting retained native vegetation, reusing landscape features (including in the Gum Flat Biodiversity Stewardship Agreement site) and strategically rehabilitating disturbed areas
- genuine progress as was required under the most recent extension agreement (our ref. PA-64), including but not limited to finalising the location and the detailed design of fauna connectivity structures and fencing, finalising the locations and species for strategic revegetation, and finalising the Operational Fauna Connectivity Monitoring, Predator Prevention and Adaptive Mitigation Program
- justification for any additional extension period, including progressive milestones towards closing out outstanding matters.

If you wish to discuss this, please contact Alex McGuirk, Principal Planning Officer, or myself.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Scott", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Alexander Scott

Director, Freight Assessment and Management

As nominee of the Planning Secretary