



Our ref: DOC20/998664

Mick Fallon
Senior Planner, Transport Assessments
Department of Planning and Environment
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Sydney NSW 2000
By email: mick.fallon@planning.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Fallon

Notice of Exhibition of application for Inland Rail– Narromine to Narrabri (SSI-9487)

Thank you for your referral dated 7 December 2020 inviting comments from the Heritage Council of NSW on the above State Significant Infrastructure (SSI) proposal.

The proposed development involves construction of an interstate freight rail corridor between Melbourne and Brisbane, running through central-west New South Wales and Toowoomba, Queensland. Within New South Wales, the main components of the proposed development would involve:

Rail infrastructure

- A new 306km long rail corridor between Narromine and Narrabri;
- A single-track standard-gauge railway and track formation within the new rail corridor;
- Seven crossing loops located at Burroway, Balladoran, Curban, Black Hollow/Quanda, Baradine, The Pilliga and Bohena Creek;
- Bridges over rivers and other watercourses (including the Macquarie River, Castlereagh River and the Narrabri Creek/Namoi River system), floodplains and roads;
- Level crossings;
- New rail connections and possible future connections with existing Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) and Country Regional Network rail lines, including a new 1.2km long rail junction between the Parkes to Narromine section of Inland Rail and the existing Narromine to Cobar Line (the Narromine West connection).

Road infrastructure

- Road realignments at various locations, including realignment of the Pilliga Forest Way for a distance of 6.7km;
- Limited road closures.

Ancillary infrastructure

- Various signalling and communications, drainage, signage and fencing, and services and utilities.

The following Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) report was considered in our assessment:

- *Inland Rail– Narromine to Narrabri: Environmental Impact Statement* (JacobsGHD and ARTC, 2020).

The proposed SSI does not affect any State Heritage Register (SHR) items. Within the study area designated for the project– the rail alignment site with a 500m buffer zone either side– are situated seven heritage items of local heritage significance that are listed on Local Environment Plans (LEPs). Additionally, 15 potential heritage items were identified during

investigations for the project, of which 11 have been assessed as of local heritage significance and four have been assessed as not meeting the threshold for significance. Of the 18 heritage items identified within the study area, it has been assessed that 12 of the heritage items would be directly or indirectly impacted by the construction phase of the proposed development, and that three of the heritage items would (currently) be impacted during operation of the proposed development.

As delegate of the Heritage Council of NSW, I provide the following comments:

- It is noted that the route of the proposed development, including a designated 500m buffer zone either side of the rail alignment, has been subject to detailed assessment involving the identification of historical heritage items with the aim of avoiding or minimising impacts to the items as far as practicable through the design process. This approach is supported by Heritage NSW.
- It is noted that where impacts to archaeology would occur, it is proposed that an archaeological assessment, research design and methodology be produced, and that test excavation should be undertaken in the development footprint within the heritage item curtilage. Heritage NSW supports this approach, further observing that the development design is yet to be finalised and therefore the actual archaeological impacts are yet to be quantified. If the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment (DPIE) approves the SSI, condition(s) for the management of historical archaeology may be included which require the following: the preparation of a detailed archaeological assessment by a suitably qualified historical archaeologist for each archaeological/heritage item(s) subject to impact; all archaeological investigations must be undertaken by a suitably qualified Excavation Director; and a final report should be prepared to publication standard within twelve (12) months of the completion of the archaeological activity(s), with an electronic copy to be submitted to Heritage NSW.
- If DPIE approves the SSI, an Unexpected Finds condition could also be included to manage historical archaeology, as 'relics' have statutory protection under section 146 of the *Heritage Act 1977* and their discovery requires the Heritage Council of NSW to be notified.

As the proposed development route in New South Wales passes through the curtilage of local heritage items and other heritage items are situated in the vicinity, advice should be sought from the relevant local councils to ensure appropriate management of the archaeological resource. Please note that comment on Aboriginal Cultural Heritage will be made separately.

If you have any questions regarding the above advice, please contact Dr Hana Lewis, Senior Historical Archaeologist, Specialist Services at Heritage NSW, Department of Premier and Cabinet on (02) 9585 6323 or hana.lewis@environment.nsw.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



11 January 2021

Dr Siobhan Lavelle OAM
Senior Team Leader Specialist Services
Heritage NSW
Department of Premier and Cabinet
As Delegate of the Heritage Council of NSW

