ABOUT INLAND RAIL

Inland Rail is a once-in-a-generation project that will enhance supply chains and complete the backbone of the national freight network by providing for a transit time of 24 hours or less for freight trains between Melbourne and Brisbane via regional Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

Inland Rail will transform the way we move freight around the country, connect regional Australia to markets more efficiently, drive substantial cost savings for producers and consumers, and deliver significant economic benefits.

Comprising 13 individual projects and spanning more than 1,700 km, Inland Rail is the largest freight rail infrastructure project in Australia and one of the most significant infrastructure projects in the world.

The Australian Government selected the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) to deliver Inland Rail, in partnership with the private sector.

The Australian Government has committed $9.3 billion to the delivery of Inland Rail, with construction having commenced in late 2018. Inland Rail is expected to be fully operational in 2024–25, and one 1,800 m double-stacked train operating on Inland Rail will carry the same volume of freight as 110 B-double trucks.

Better infrastructure and an effective national freight operation are key to delivering efficient supply chains, improving Australia’s global competitiveness and lifting our nation’s wealth and prosperity.

ABOUT THE ILLABO TO STOCKINBINGAL PROJECT

Illabo to Stockinbingal (I2S) in southern NSW is one of 13 projects that complete Inland Rail. The I2S project involves building 37 km of new rail track that will provide a direct route between Illabo and Stockinbingal, bypassing the townships of Cootamundra and Bethungra, and the winding and steep section of track known as the Bethungra Spiral.

WHAT’S THE CURRENT STAGE OF THE PROJECT?

In 2010, Inland Rail released the initial proposed area to investigate further. A concept assessment of the Illabo to Stockinbingal section was undertaken between 2016 and 2017 which established a 2 km wide study area. This study area was endorsed by the Australian Government as the investigation area to be narrowed down to the final 40 to 60 m wide rail corridor for construction.

Since then, Inland Rail has carefully investigated the area, taking a wide range of factors into consideration, and has now reduced the study area to an approximately 250 m wide focused area of investigation (FAI).

HOW DID INLAND RAIL SELECT THE FOCUSED AREA OF INVESTIGATION?

The process used to narrow the study area is called a Multi-Criteria Analysis (MCA) and it considers a broad range of factors. These include: environmental impacts, safety assessments, operations requirements, construction and schedule, technical viability, community and property impacts, Indigenous and non-Indigenous heritage and stakeholder engagement. The MCA process is recognised as an industry standard and is widely used in Australia and internationally.
ILLABO TO STOCKINBINGAL PREFERRED OPTIONS

Inland Rail divided the 2 km wide study area into northern, central and southern sections to investigate as part of the MCA process. The preferred options minimise community and property disruption as much possible and are more technically viable than other options considered.

NORTHERN SECTION

The preferred option runs next to the western boundary of Dudauman Road, then continues alongside the road for as far north as possible. The main reason for this route being the preferred option is the removal of Burley Griffin Way level crossing at Stockinbingal, which is a known accident hot spot.

Inland Rail plans to install a road bridge at Burley Griffin Way, rather than a rail bridge. This is the community preference, and it also supports Cootamundra-Gundagai Regional Council’s objective to improve road safety in the area.

This option is considered somewhat more difficult from a construction perspective, yet the community benefits when it comes to road safety outweighed the construction criteria.

BENEFITS

- Improves road safety by replacing the Burley Griffin Way level crossing at Stockinbingal with an overbridge.
- Improves rail connectivity with the existing Lake Cargelligo line.
- Reduces noise and visual impacts on Stockinbingal by positioning new overbridge away from town centre.
- Avoids an area of native vegetation along Dudauman Road.

RAIL CORRIDOR SELECTION

Inland Rail divided the 2 km wide study area into northern, central and southern sections to investigate as part of the MCA process. The preferred options minimise community and property disruption as much possible and are more technically viable than other options considered.

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- Avoids an area of native vegetation along Dudauman Road.
CENTRAL SECTION

The MCA process in the central section ruled out options which ran further to the west due to greater property impacts and the need for more and longer bridges to cross Ironbong Creek.

The preferred option is situated to the east of the study area and has less impact on productive properties, property severances and provides more distance between the rail line and residences to reduce noise.

The eastern option will require more earthworks due to the hills in the area. However, this was weighed up against the reduced productive property impacts, property severances and the benefit of avoiding Ironbong Creek.

SOUTHERN SECTION

The preferred option’s connection point to the Main South train line is further south than initially thought, and it avoids tight curves and reduces the work required on the existing line.

The preferred option also received the most positive community feedback due to reducing landowner impacts by running next to the eastern side of Ironbong Road.

BENEFITS

- Less impact on productive properties and property severances.
- Avoids Ironbong Creek, requiring fewer and shorter bridges.
- Improved location of earthworks will reduce heavy vehicle haulage during construction, improving safety.

- Less disruption on productive properties.
- Better road and rail interface at Ironbong Road.
- Improves rail operations and maintenance access to rail corridor.
PROJECT TIMELINE

Concept assessment
2016–2017

Project feasibility
early 2018–early 2020

Project assessment
early 2020–early 2021

Project approval
first half of 2021

Construction
early 2022–late 2023

Operation

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Inland Rail will continue its investigations within the 250 m wide focused area of investigation, consulting landowners and the community, and aiming to finalise the alignment throughout the second half of 2019.

During the next stage of work, further consideration of environmental and engineering opportunities and constraints, together with community and stakeholder feedback, will be undertaken.

Field investigations will also provide more information on the constraints within the corridor and provide input for the next stage of design.

This information will inform the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) of the I2S project. The final 40 to 60 m wide rail corridor will be released as part of the EIS in the first half of 2020.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

ARTC is committed to working with landowners, communities, state and local governments as a vital part of our planning and consultation work, and we value your input. If you have any questions or comments about this fact sheet, please let us know.

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The Australian Government is delivering Inland Rail through the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC) in partnership with the private sector.