Inland Rail is a once-in-a-generation project connecting regional Australia to domestic and international markets, transforming the way we move freight around the country. It will complete the 'spine' of the national freight network between Melbourne and Brisbane via regional Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland.

This new 1,700km line is the largest freight rail infrastructure project in Australia. It will connect our farms, mines, cities and ports to global markets and will support Australia’s four richest farming regions; provide supply chain benefits and substantial cost savings for producers.

**WHAT IS BEING DELIVERED IN VICTORIA?**

The Inland Rail Tottenham to Albury (T2A) project is an enhancement to 305km of the existing North East Rail corridor. This project will see enhancements of existing structures and increased clearances along the rail corridor for sites that currently do not have enough height or width to support the running of taller trains along the existing rail corridor.

Further information on the project can be found on the Inland Rail website at inlandrail.com.au/T2A

**ARTC'S COMMITMENT**

We know people living close to railway lines experience varying levels and types of noise generated by rail activity. ARTC is committed to limiting the impact of operational activities on the communities in which we work.

For concerns relating to existing operational noise please call the ARTC Enviroline on 1300 550 402.

**WHAT CAUSES RAIL NOISE?**

Rail noise and vibration varies depending on track and train conditions, track alignment, and the operational environment.

The most common sources of rail noise are locomotives, movement of rail wagons, track defects, wheel squeal, horns (used for warnings) and track maintenance - which is essential to ensure a safe, reliable and efficient network.

Maintenance work tends to take place at night and on weekends to minimise disruption to passenger rail and freight customers using the network. We aim to reduce the impacts of these works as much as we can.

**INLAND RAIL NOISE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Whilst some noise is unavoidable, our goal is to reduce and manage it as much as is possible through a range of of noise management measures.

In Victoria, the Environment Protection Authority (EPA Victoria) requires noise from the operations of trains is kept as low as possible without adversely impacting rail activities in the state.

The strategy for Inland Rail is to assess existing and future rail noise levels, evaluate these levels against the relevant criteria, then design and implement appropriate mitigation.
ASSESSING NOISE AND VIBRATION IN VICTORIA

In Victoria we will be applying the New South Wales Rail Infrastructure Noise Guideline (RING) to measure existing noise and vibration and model it against future predictions. There is currently no requirement to manage freight noise in Victoria.

Where the level of change between existing noise and vibration levels and future predictions hit a defined threshold, the investigation and implementation of noise mitigation measures.

In addition, because both passenger and freight trains share the North East Line, the project will need to adhere to the Victorian Passenger Rail Infrastructure Noise Policy (PRINP) if any works are required to alter the existing track location.

PRINP and RING will only apply to those sites in Victoria earmarked for change as part of the Inland Rail Programme, not the whole of the alignment between Tottenham and Albury.

As part of the project, we are proposing to replace bridges and realign associated roads, meaning that changes in road traffic noise and vibration will also be assessed. Details of the enhancement sites in Victoria can be found at inlandrail.com.au/T2A

Changes to road traffic noise levels as a result of any proposed road realignment will be assessed. Baseline monitoring is being undertaken as part of design development. These findings will be reviewed when Inland Rail is operational in 2025 to test predicted noise levels against actual levels to confirm the appropriateness of any attenuation provided.

HOW WILL INLAND RAIL MANAGE NOISE AND VIBRATION ISSUES?

We have developed the Inland Rail Noise and Vibration Strategy, which is based on:

- regulatory policy and acceptable noise levels applicable to each state – with a practical and best for community approach applied across the programme
- management of potential impacts through rail alignment design and location of signals, passing loops and bridges
- addressing and responding to complaints in a timely and effective manner
- identifying opportunities for other management opportunities – future proofing.

We are aware enhancement works required between Tottenham and Albury may generate ‘new’ noise and vibration impacts during construction operation and maintenance. We will manage potential impacts through rail alignment design and location of signals, passing loops and bridges.

To better understand how our works and the introduction of double stack freight trains might affect our neighbours, we will be assessing existing operational noise and vibration and modelling this against potential changes when Inland Rail is operational.

WHAT MITIGATION MEASURES MIGHT BE CONSIDERED?

We want to talk with neighbours throughout our design and planning process. This has included seeking permission from some residents to place noise loggers on their property to gather the required data. Once operational and construction noise and vibration impacts are understood, we will be able to share the findings with our neighbours and discuss how the impacts will be managed.

Mitigation will only be explored where noise levels at enhancement sites are found to exceed guidelines.

NOISE AND VIBRATION DURING CONSTRUCTION

While temporary, construction will involve periods of intense activity which can also impact communities, buildings, structures and sensitive equipment.

A Construction Noise and Vibration Management Plan will be developed to guide management of our works to, as much as practicable, mitigate adverse effects for communities where works are being undertaken.

All works will additionally be managed in accordance with the EPA publications “Guidelines for Major Construction Sites” and “Noise Control Guidelines”.

We’ll be sharing details around our works and proposed mitigation closer to construction. Construction is proposed to begin in late 2020, though there may be some enabling works prior.