Interactive EIA and public participation: An Australian case study

Christopher Serrano

OAIA 2018 Conference

Illabo, NSW

About me

City: Sydney, Australia

Position: Environmental Scientist/Planner at WSP

Background: Environmental impact assessment and planning

Why am I here?

Sydney, NSW

Bethungra, NSW

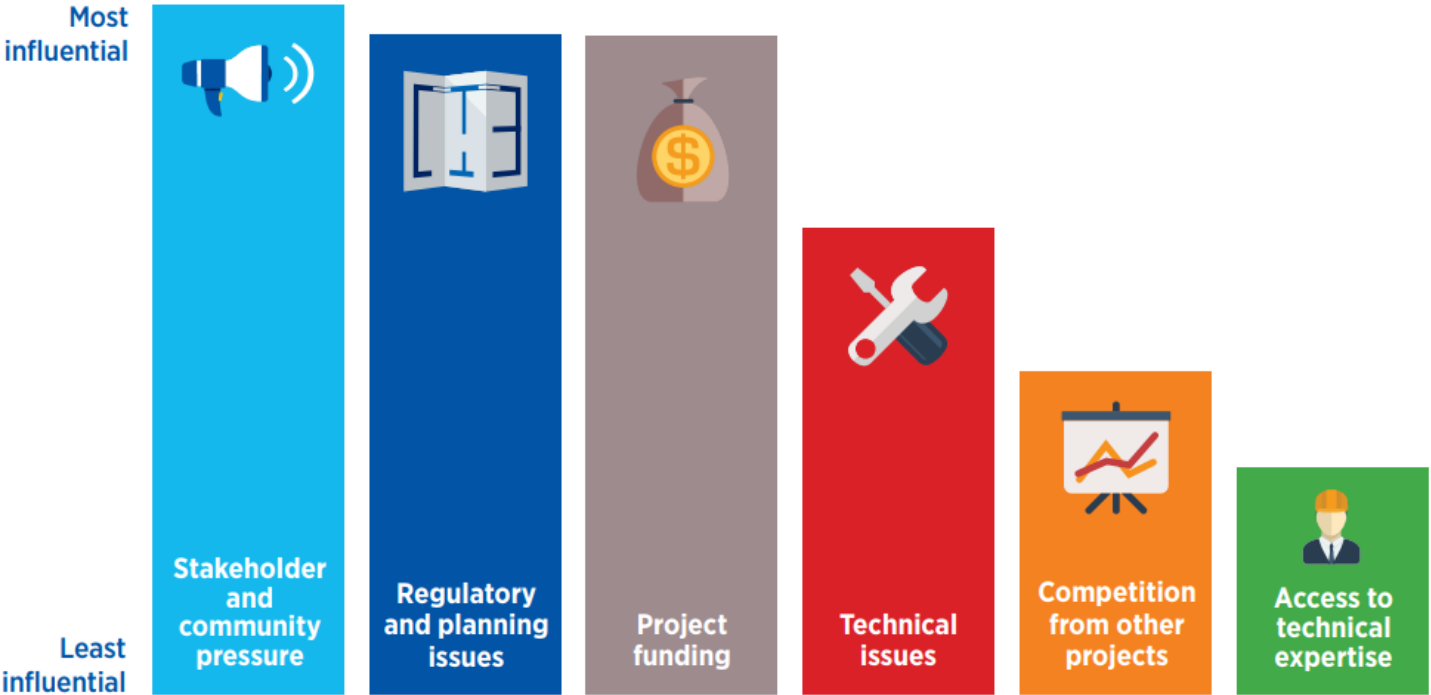# Contents

Interactive EIA and public participation

- Value of community engagement

- Problems with EIA

- Planning approval process

- Case studies – Participatory GIS and multimedia mapping

- Future uses

- Summary and conclusion

Community engagement

*More than **$20 billion** of Australian infrastructure projects have been cancelled, delayed or mothballed in the past decade due to community opposition*

- Australian Financial Review

Most influential factors affecting project delivery:

Most influential

Least influential

| Stakeholder and community pressure | Regulatory and planning issues | Project funding | Technical issues | Competition from other projects | Access to technical expertise |

N=(project funding, pressure=117, competition=118, technical=120, access=121, regulatory=122)
Source: Next Generation National Infrastructure Survey 2017
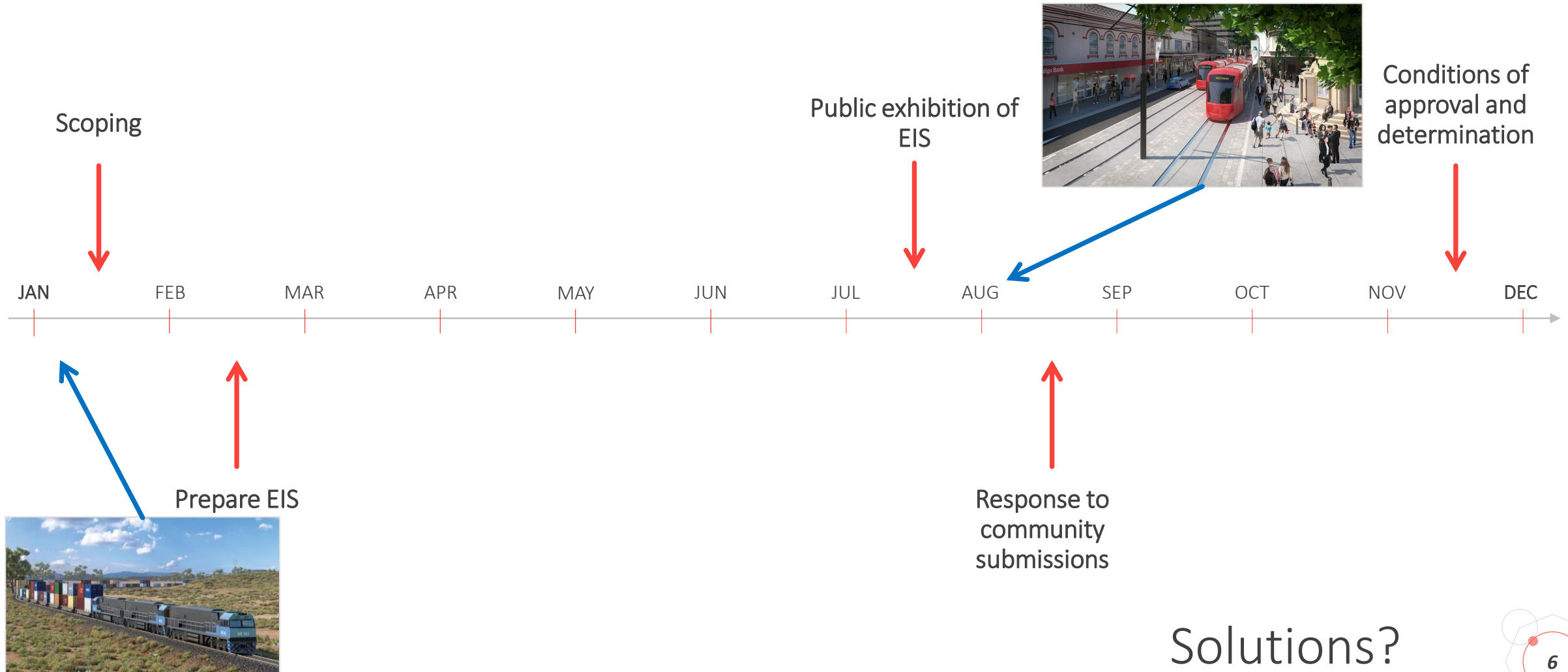
The problem

Lengthy	Complex	Presentation	Input & transparency	Relevance to individual

EIA and planning approval process

Approval process for major infrastructure in New South Wales

Scoping

Public exhibition of EIS

Conditions of approval and determination

JAN · FEB · MAR · APR · MAY · JUN · JUL · AUG · SEP · OCT · NOV · DEC

Prepare EIS

Response to community submissions

Solutions?

Inland Rail

1,700km Melbourne to Brisbane regional freight rail line

ARTC

- Project value: ~$AU10 billion

- Length: ~1,700km

- 13 projects across Victoria, NSW and Queensland

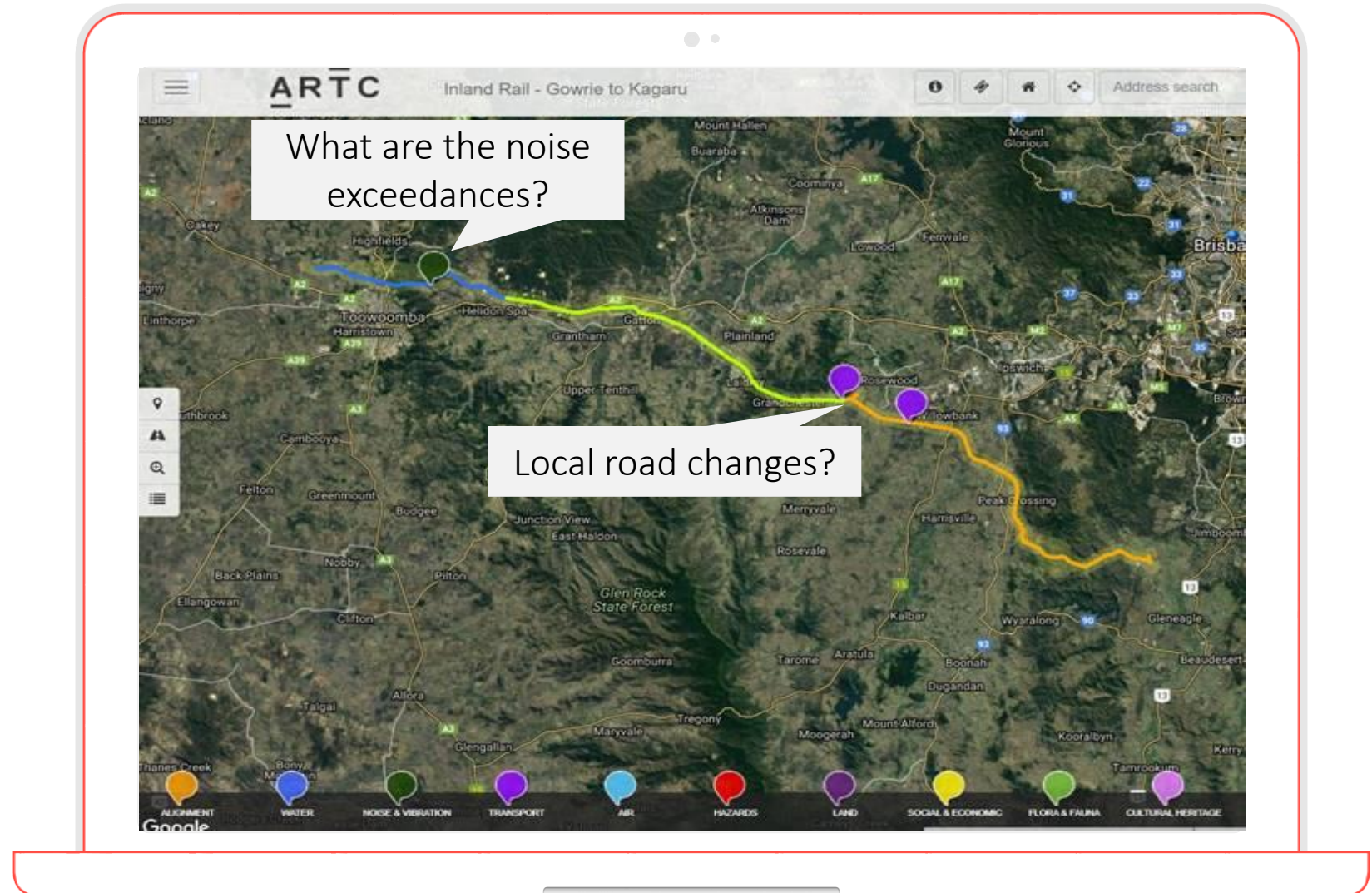- Double stacked 1,800m trains

- Melbourne to Brisbane <24hours

INLAND RAIL KEY WORKS

NEW	UPGRADING	ENHANCEMENT
709km	293km	709km
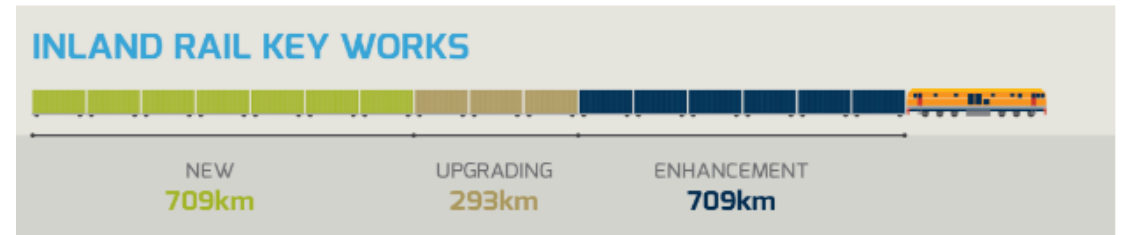
Proposed Inland Rail alignment

Open Consultation

Community input

- Locate and store community comments

- Categorisation

- Open forum

Strengths

- Transparency
- Anecdotal information
- Options analysis
- Categorisation of community interests
- Identify misconceptions

Issues to consider

- Conflicting information
- Accuracy
- Not all stakeholders are comfortable participating in online forums

Dirnaseer, NSW

## Stage 1 - Parramatta Light Rail

New 12km light rail line through Parramatta CBD, NSW

- 16 stops along 12km light rail line

- Services every 7.5 minutes

- Capacity to transport up to 27,500 passengers per day

- A new shared pedestrianised zone in the Parramatta CBD

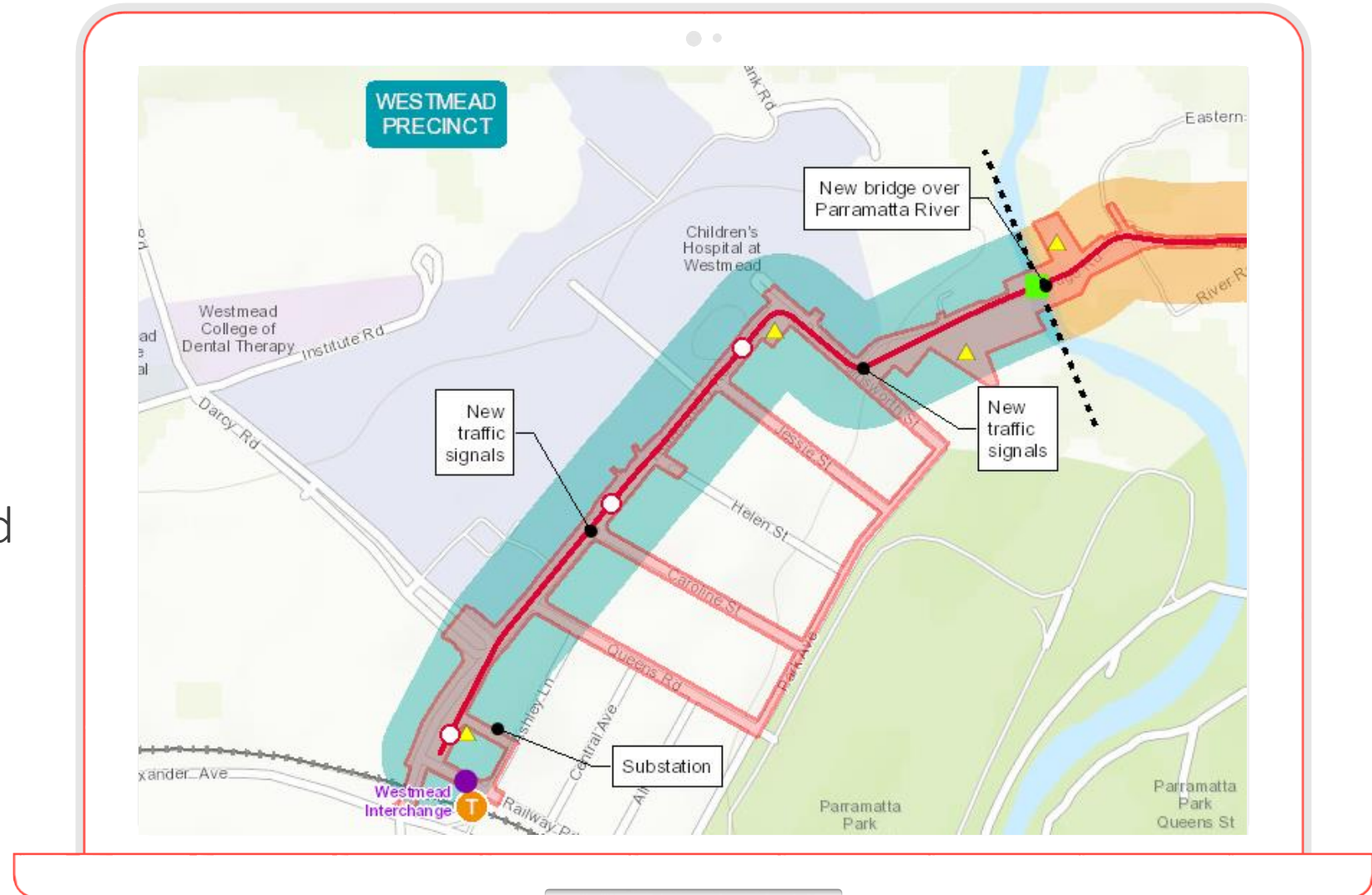- Active transport corridors (cycling and walkways)

Nominal length 45m
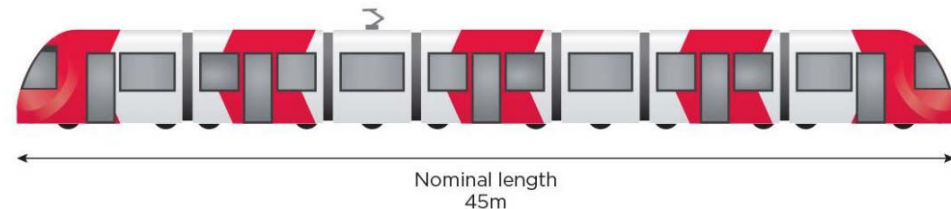
Stage 1 – Parramatta Light Rail alignment
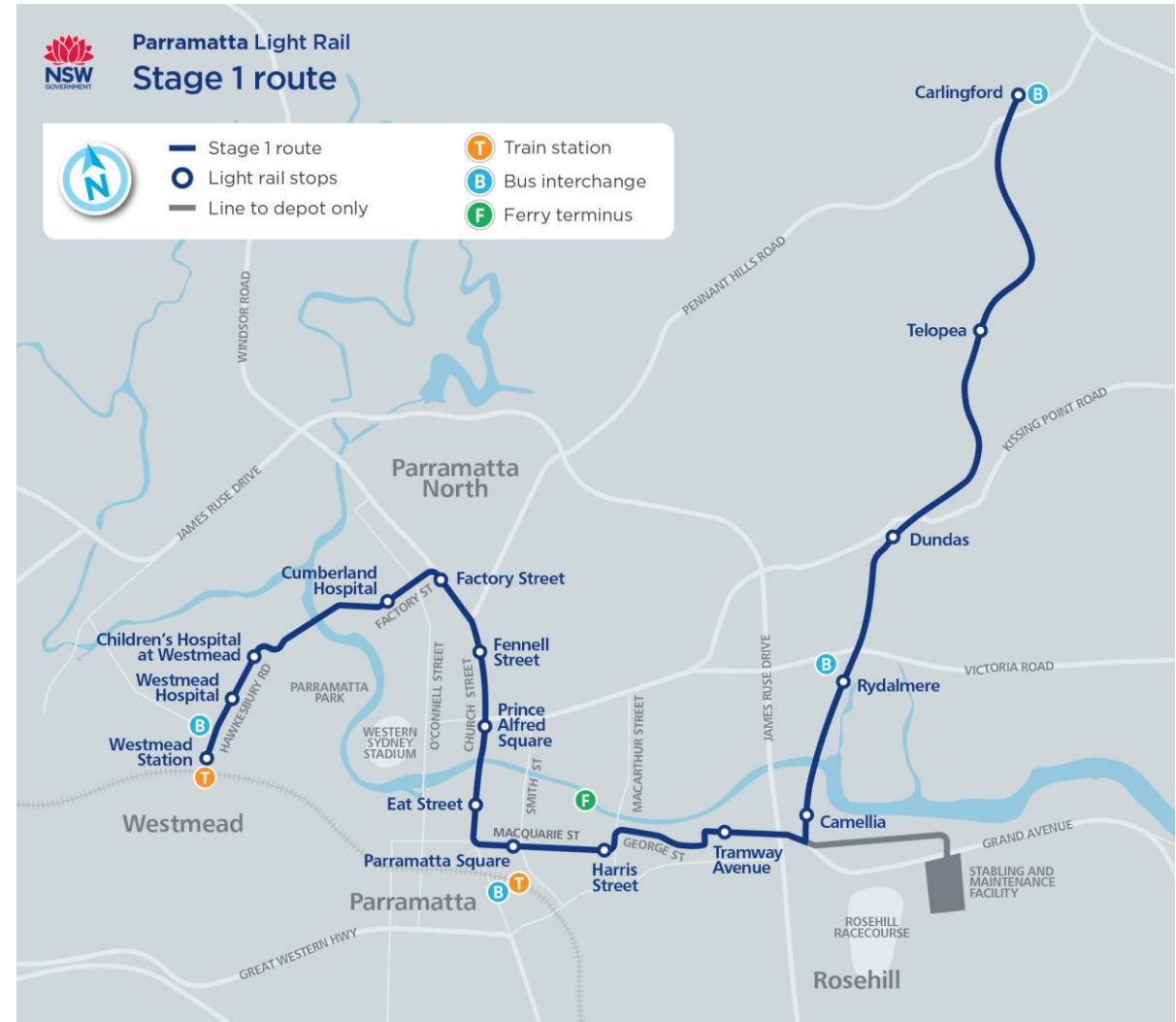
EIS Navigator

Interactive tool to support the EIS

- Project key features
- Project alignment and options
- Construction information
- Local environment

Successes

- Visualisation
- Ease of use
- Links to EIS and technical information
- Location based

Lessons learned

- Effective for community information sessions
- Potential to be used through other phases in the project
- Received well by community
- Likely to be used for other projects

Future of interactive GIS tools
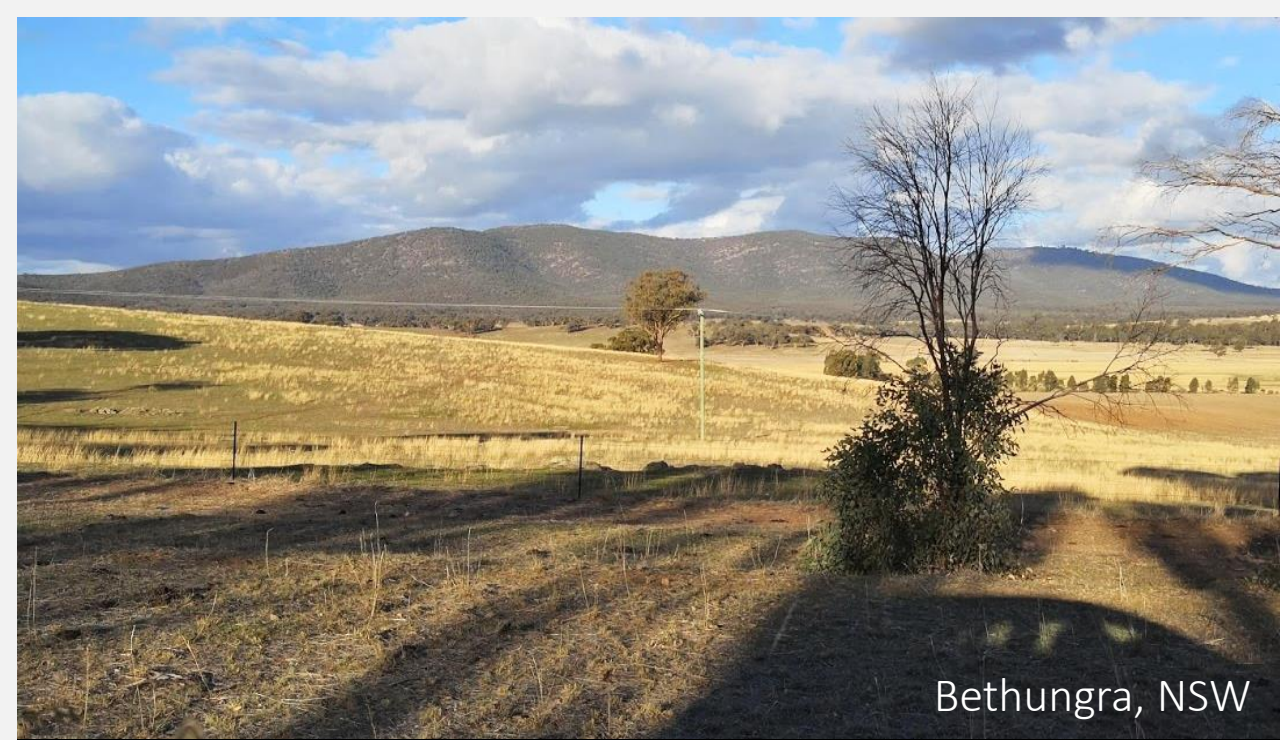
How can these be applied to other areas of EIA?

Strategic environmental assessments

Cumulative impacts

New standard?

Bethungra, NSW

Summary

Conclusion

- Current EIS documentation is lengthy and often daunting to the broader community

- Interactive tools and GIS can address some of these shortcomings

- Public participation and engagement benefits

- Alternate uses and future adoption in EIA

Thank You

Christopher Serrano

christopher.serrano@wsp.com

linkedin.com/in/christopherserrano

Dirnaseer, NSW