



Preparing a Scoping Report

State Significant Infrastructure Guide

Exhibition Draft

Contents

1. Introduction	3
1.1 Proportionate Assessment	3
1.2 Applying for SEARs	3
1.3 Purpose of this Guide	3
1.4 Application of this Guide	4
2. General Requirements	5
2.1 Form	5
2.2 Structure & length	5
2.3 Presentation	5
2.4 GIS data specifications	6
2.5 General map requirements	6
2.6 Accessibility & navigation	6
3. Content of a Scoping Report	8
3.1 Introduction	8
3.2 Strategic context	8
3.3 Project	9
3.4 Statutory context	10
3.5 Engagement	11
3.6 Proposed assessment of impacts	13
4. Glossary	17
Appendix A – Recommended structure of a scoping report	20
Appendix B – Categories of assessment matters	21
Appendix C – Key factors to consider during scoping	23
Appendix D – Levels of assessment	24
Appendix E – Example of a scoping summary table	25

1. Introduction

1.1 Proportionate Assessment

State significant infrastructure (SSI) is important to the State for economic, environmental or social reasons.

While all SSI projects are subject to the same comprehensive assessment with extensive community engagement under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* (EP&A Act), the scale and impacts of these projects can vary significantly.

Consequently, it is important to ensure that the level of assessment and community engagement carried out for each project is proportionate to the scale and likely impacts of the project.

Under the EP&A Act, a proponent may apply¹ for the approval of the Minister to carry out an SSI project. The proponent's application must be in an approved form and made available on the Major Projects website² and should be accompanied by a Scoping Report, prepared having regard to any Guidelines approved by the Planning Secretary³ (this guide).

When such an application is made, the Planning Secretary must prepare environmental assessment requirements, or SEARs, which set out the requirements to be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the SSI.

The SEARs identify the information that must be provided in the EIS, including the matters that require further assessment in the EIS and the community engagement that must be carried out during the preparation of the EIS.

The SEARs seek to ensure that the level of assessment and community engagement required for each project is proportionate to the scale and likely impacts of the project. They also seek to ensure the EIS focuses on the key matters for decision-making.

1.2 Applying for SEARs

Following the application for approval of the Minister to carry out an SSI project, the Planning Secretary is required to issue the SEARs within 28 days after the application is made⁴.

Once the SEARs are issued, the applicant must prepare the EIS in accordance with the SEARs.

The SEARs will expire if the EIS is not submitted to the Department within 2 years of the setting of the SEARs. If the SEARs expire, the applicant must reapply for the SEARs for the project.

1.3 Purpose of this Guide

This guide provides a detailed explanation of the Department's form and content requirements for Scoping Reports.

It seeks to ensure that all Scoping Reports submitted to the Department are prepared to a high standard and consistent. It also seeks to ensure that they are as succinct as possible, easy to understand, and that they clearly identify the matters that the proponent proposes to assess in the EIS and the community engagement that the applicant proposes to carry out during the preparation of the EIS.

¹ See section 5.15 of the EP&A Act.

² See proposed clause 192 of the EP&A Regulation

³ See proposed clause 192 of the EP&A Regulation

⁴ See clause 3 of Schedule 2 of the EP&A Regulation 2000

This guide will improve the setting of SEARs for SSI projects and help to ensure that all SEARs are proportionate to the scale and likely impacts of the project.

1.4 Application of this Guide

Under the Environmental Planning & Assessment Regulation 2000 (EP&A Regulation), an application for SEARs for an SSI project must be prepared having regard to the SSD guidelines prepared by the Planning Secretary.

This guide forms part of the relevant SSD guidelines and requires the applicant of an SSD project to submit a Scoping Report with an application for SEARs if the project requires project-specific SEARs. It also requires the applicant to prepare the Scoping Report having regard to this guide.

2. General Requirements

The proponent should prepare the Scoping Report to a high standard and must comply with the following general requirements.

2.1 Form

The Scoping Report should be divided into two parts:

- the main report, which describes the project in simple terms, identifies the matters that will require further assessment in the EIS - including the proposed approach to assessing each of these matters - and describes the community engagement that will be carried out during the preparation of the EIS
- the appendices to the main report, which should include:
 - the scoping summary table
 - any supporting information, including any detailed community engagement or technical reports.

2.2 Structure & length

The structure for a Scoping Report is provided in Appendix A, and should be used as a guide for the preparation of all Scoping Reports for SSI projects. If some sections are not relevant, the proponent should adjust the structure of the report accordingly.

Further, the Scoping Report is not required to provide extensive information or carry out any detailed assessment of the relevant issues in each section of the report; this should be left to the EIS.

Instead, it should be specifically targeted at informing the setting of the SEARs for the project and identifying the key issues that must be assessed and evaluated in detail in the EIS, including the approach to assessment.

While the length of the Scoping Report will vary depending on the scale and nature of the project and the matters requiring detailed assessment, the main report should be as succinct as possible.

2.3 Presentation

The Scoping Report must make it easy for people to understand what is proposed and identify what matters should be considered in detail in the EIS.

To ensure the Scoping Report is prepared to a high standard, the applicant should:

- ensure the Scoping Report has a clear narrative, explaining the need for the project, how the site was selected, what alternatives were considered, what strategies will be used to avoid or minimise impacts, the key matters requiring further assessment, and how these issues will be addressed in the EIS
- structure the information in a clear and logical way, making it easy for readers to draw a clear link between the summary of the findings in the main report and any detailed appendices
- use objective analysis and provide reasons and evidence to support any conclusions
- use plain English to explain complex information simply
- avoid using jargon

- use maps, photographs, interactive digital tools, figures, graphics and tables to improve the presentation of information where possible
- ensure the visual presentation of material is consistent with the text presentation of the same material and that both presentations are located close to each other
- ensure the Scoping Report does not contain any false or misleading information⁵

2.4 GIS data specifications

The proponent must:

- maintain appropriate geo-referenced file formats of all the maps used in the Scoping Report
- supply all relevant GIS data to the Department as polygon datasets in one of the following file formats:
 - shapefile
 - file geodatabase or
 - MapInfo TAB
- use the following coordinate system details:
 - Datum: GDA 1994
 - Projection: GCS GDA 1994.

2.5 General map requirements

The maps in the Scoping Report must build in a standard base-map for the project and include:

- a north arrow (for maps in plan view)
- a scale (or where a cross section is not to scale, an indication of the elevation of key features and vertical exaggeration)
- a legend clearly indicating each line type that is not labelled on the map
- the source data of the base map (where applicable).

2.6 Accessibility & navigation

The Scoping Report must generally conform with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA and relevant material about creating accessible documents on the NSW Government's website.

In particular, the Scoping Report must:

- be provided as accessible PDF files⁶ (commonly referred to as "tagged" PDF files)
- have a navigable table of contents
- present information in a linear and easy to follow format
- use headings – in Microsoft Word this means using heading styles (e.g. Heading 1, Heading 2, Normal)

⁵ See section 10.6 of the EP&A Act

⁶ An accessible PDF file provides hidden, structured, textual representation of the PDF content that is presented to screen readers.

- use captions for tables, pictures and figures
- include a header row in any tables
- provide alternate text descriptions for all images (except for images that are decorative) - preferably under 100 characters
- use text to convey information rather than, or in addition to, images where possible
- use a contrast ratio of 3:1 for large text (18+ points or 14+ points bold) and at least 4.5:1 for text and images of text, unless the text is decorative or unimportant (use the [Vision Australia colour contrast analyser](#) to check the contrast ratio of colour combinations)
- not rely on colour to convey information and instead use text labels, patterns and symbols to supplement colour.

3. Content of a Scoping Report

The Scoping Report must contain the following information in each section of the main report.

3.1 Introduction

This section should provide a simple introduction to the project, which includes:

- the proponent's details
- a simple description of the project, including:
 - a statement of the objectives of the infrastructure⁷
 - maps of the site in its regional setting
- the background to the project, including:
 - any relevant history
 - a high level analysis of any feasible alternatives to the proposed manner of carrying out the infrastructure having regard to its objectives, including the consequences of not carrying out the infrastructure⁸
 - key strategies that will be adopted to avoid or minimise the impacts of the project
- a description of any related development or infrastructure, including any:
 - existing or approved development or infrastructure that would be incorporated into the project
 - development or infrastructure that is required for the project but would be subject to a separate approval process (e.g. upgrades to ancillary infrastructure, approvals for subsequent stages of the project).

The high level analysis of alternatives in this section should explain how the project has ended up in its current form, summarising the key alternatives that have been considered and not taken forward (e.g. alternative ways of achieving the objectives of the development; and alternative sites, designs, mitigation measures) and the reasons why they were rejected.

If there are any detailed studies supporting the analysis of alternatives, or the related development or infrastructure is complex and requires a detailed explanation, then this material should be included in the appendices to the Scoping Report.

3.2 Strategic context

This section must identify at a high level the key strategic issues that are likely to be relevant to the assessment and evaluation of the project and will be investigated in more detail in the EIS.

The level of detail included in this section should be proportionate to the importance of the strategic context to the project and tailored towards informing the setting of the SEARs for the project.

Key strategic issues may include:

⁷ See clause 7(1)(b) of schedule 2 of the EP&A Regulation.

⁸ See proposed clause 7(1)(c) of the EP&A Regulation in the *Environmental Planning and Assessment (Major Projects) Regulation 2020*.

- the justification of the project, including whether any government strategies, policies or plans provide strategic support for the project
- key features of the site and surrounds that could affect or be affected by the project, including:
 - the local and regional community, having regard to land uses in the area, land ownership and the proximity of population centres and residences to the infrastructure
 - important features in the natural or built environment such as National Parks, scenic landscapes, conservation areas, culturally important landscapes, and major infrastructure (roads, rail, pipelines, transmission lines)
 - key risks or hazards that warrant further consideration, such as flooding, bushfire prone land and contaminated land
- whether the project is likely to generate cumulative impacts with other relevant future projects in the area or to induce other impacts upstream or downstream of the site; and if so, identify the likely nature of these impacts
- identify whether the proponent has entered into any agreements with other parties to mitigate or offset the impacts of the project (acknowledging that public authority proponents have powers under other legislation to undertake projects).

3.3 Project

This section should provide an overview of the project using supporting maps, plans, figures and tables.

This overview must provide further detail on the following key aspects of the project:⁹

- the project area, including the area likely to be physically disturbed by the project
- the conceptual physical layout and design of the project at a conceptual level, including any mitigation measures that would be built into the design of the project, to the extent known at the scoping stage (e.g. a noise barrier)
- the main uses and activities that would be carried out on site during construction and operation including
- the likely timing of the delivery of the project, including:
 - any stages of the project
 - phases of the project (e.g. site preparation, construction, operations)
 - the sequencing of any stages and phases of the project over time, identifying the periods when the greatest impacts are likely to occur.

While detailed information is unlikely to be available on all four of the key aspects of the project, the proponent must provide enough detail in the Scoping Report to allow the Department to get a good understanding of the project and identify its likely impacts.

⁹ For further detail on these aspects, see the *Preparing an Environmental Impact Statement* guide.

The overview in this section should also clearly identify:

- the key alternatives to the proposed manner of carrying out the project that will be investigated further during the preparation of the EIS (e.g. alternative layouts, designs, uses and activities and mitigation measures)
- those aspects of the project where some flexibility may need to be incorporated into the design of the project to allow the final design of the project to be refined or changed over time within the limits set by the project description in the EIS and without further approval.

3.4 Statutory context

This section must provide a simple overview of the key statutory requirements¹⁰ for the project, having regard to:

- the EP&A Act and EP&A Regulation
- other relevant legislation (e.g. *Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016*, *Fisheries Management Act 1994*, *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*, *Water Management Act 2000*, *Pipelines Act 1997*, *Roads Act 1993* and the *Commonwealth Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act 1999*)
- relevant environmental planning instruments¹¹ and associated plans and guidance
- relevant approvals (e.g. concept plan approvals, staged approvals).

However, it should not include any detailed consideration of these statutory requirements unless they are important to setting the SEARs for the project.

These statutory requirements should be grouped into the categories listed in the table below and summarised in a table (see examples in the Department’s *Preparing an Environmental Impact Statement* guide).

Table 1. Categories to be used to identify the statutory requirements for a project

Matter	Guidance
Power to grant approval	Identify the legal pathway for approval, why the pathway applies, and who the approval authority is.
Permissibility	Identify the relevant provisions affecting the permissibility of the project, including any land use zones. If there are inconsistencies in these provisions, identify the inconsistencies and explain which provisions prevail to the extent of any inconsistency.
Other approvals	Identify any other approvals that are required to carry out the project and why they are required. These approvals should be grouped into the following categories: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consistent approvals</i>: approvals that cannot be refused if the project is approved and must be substantially consistent with the approval (see sections 5.24 of the Act). • <i>EPBC Act approval</i>: and whether the bilateral agreement applies.

¹⁰ See www.legislation.nsw.gov.au

¹¹ As per Section 5.22. of the Act, environmental planning instruments do not apply to SSI except in limited circumstances. However, the Scoping Report should identify relevant EPIs that will be considered in the EIS.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Other approvals</i>: approvals that are not expressly integrated into the State significant assessment process (e.g. water access licenses under the <i>Water Management Act 2000</i>, leases under the <i>National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974</i>). <p>Also identify the approvals that would have been required if the project was not an SSI project (see section 5.23 of the Act)</p>
Pre-conditions to exercising the power to grant approval	Where relevant, identify pre-conditions to exercising the power to grant approval for the project that should be considered when setting SEARs.
Mandatory matters for consideration	Identify matters that the decision-maker is required to consider in deciding whether to grant approval that may be relevant to setting the SEARs.

3.5 Engagement

This section must explain what engagement has been carried out for the project, give an early indication of community views on the project, and describe what community engagement will be carried out during the preparation of the EIS

Engagement carried out

In this section, the proponent must identify any engagement that has been carried out that is relevant to setting the SEARs for the project.

This may include:

- community engagement that has been carried out by other parties and is relevant to the project (e.g. engagement undertaken by Government to develop a strategy; engagement undertaken by the applicants or proponents for other projects in the vicinity of the infrastructure)
- any actions taken to identify key groups or individuals within the community that may have an interest in the project (e.g. local councils, specialist interest groups, and individuals living close to the site t/ corridor)
- any actions taken to inform, consult or engage with the community during the development of the project or preparation of the Scoping Report:
 - get an early indication of community views on the project and what are likely to be the key matters requiring further assessment
 - determine what community engagement should be carried out during the preparation of the EIS.
 - to identify their preliminary views on the project and what engagement should be carried out during the preparation of the EIS.

This engagement should be proportionate to the scale and nature of the project and the likely level of community interest in the project. It should also be carried out having regard to the community participation objectives in the *Engagement guide for State significant projects*.

For some projects, this may only involve informing the community about the project and seeking written feedback on key issues.

For complex projects, it may involve targeted engagement with key groups and individuals, to get an early indication of community views on the project and what community engagement should be carried out during the EIS.

If any detailed community engagement reports are prepared during scoping, these must be included as appendices to the Scoping Report.

Community views

In this section, the proponent must summarise the key findings of any community engagement carried out to date and give an early indication of community views on the project using suitable maps, graphics and tables.

In summarising the findings of the community engagement, the proponent must categorise the key issues raised by the community in a systematic and impartial way and avoid oversimplifying these issues.

For consistency, the issues should be grouped into one of the following categories:

- the strategic context, including identifying the key natural and built features that are valued and could affect or be affected by the project and the potential cumulative impacts of the project combined with other relevant future projects in the area.
- the project and any alternatives considered (e.g. the site / corridor, the physical layout and design, uses and activities, timing)
- any relevant statutory issues
- the community engagement that should be carried out during the preparation of the EIS
- the proposed approach to assessing the impacts of the project (e.g. amenity, air, biodiversity, heritage), having regard to the requirements in relevant Government plans, policies and guidelines
- issues that are beyond the scope of the project (e.g. broader policy issues) or not relevant to the project.

This will make it easier for the Department to link the key issues raised by the community with the other information in the Scoping Report and inform the setting of the SEARs for the project.

Any detailed reports on the community engagement that was carried out during scoping should be included as an appendix to the Scoping Report.

Engagement to be carried out

In this section, the proponent must summarise the community engagement that will be carried out during the preparation of the EIS, having regard to the findings of any community engagement carried out during the scoping and the community participation objectives in the Department's *Undertaking Engagement* guide.

The engagement must be proportionate to the scale and nature of the project and the likely level of community interest in the project.

The summary in this section must

- identify the key stakeholders (local councils, special interest groups, people living close to the site) for further engagement to the extent that this will be known at the scoping stage,

- describe what actions will be taken to identify and engage with other interested stakeholders during the preparation of the EIS
- describe the key actions that would be carried out to:
 - keep the community informed about the project
 - obtain feedback from the community on the project
 - engage with certain stakeholders on the detailed assessment of key matters (e.g. Aboriginal cultural heritage, biodiversity, water, air quality; local councils; State and Commonwealth agencies)
- demonstrate that these actions are consistent with the community participation objectives in the *Undertaking Engagement* guide
- describe how the effectiveness of this engagement will be monitored, reviewed and adapted over time to encourage community participation in the project.

For complex projects with a high level of community interest, the proposed engagement may include:

- establishing a Community Consultative Committee for the project, in accordance with the Department's *Community Consultative Committee* guide
- setting up a website for the project
- publishing regular updates on the project on the website
- seeking feedback from the community on the project in general
- carrying out targeted engagement with certain stakeholders on the detailed assessment of key matters
- providing feedback to the community on the findings of any community engagement and the detailed assessment of the impacts of the project.

3.6 Proposed assessment of impacts

In this section, the proponent must identify the matters requiring further assessment in the EIS and the proposed approach to assessing each of these matters, having regard to key findings in each section of the Scoping Report and the guidance below.

This information is critical for setting the SEARs for the project and ensuring that the EIS will focus on the key matters for decision-making. It will also help to ensure that the assessment of each matter is proportionate to the likely impacts of the project on that matter.

Categorising matters

For consistency, the Department has grouped the matters that should be considered during scoping into 11 broad categories (see Appendix B) and published a list of relevant Government plans, policies and guidelines that aligns with these categories on the Major Projects website¹².

The proponent must use these categories to scope the assessment of the impacts of the project.

¹² See <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects/assessment/policies-and-guidelines>

These broad categories can be divided into specific matters within each category (see Appendix B), and these specific matters can then be divided further into different components of the specific matter.

For example, noise may be a specific matter within the broader category of amenity, and noise can be divided further into the different types of noise (e.g. construction noise, operational noise, road noise and rail noise).

There may also be clear links between the specific matters of different categories of impacts. For instance, the noise impacts of a project may be a key factor for assessing the social impacts of the project.

To inform the setting of the SEARs, the proponent must:

- structure the discussion in this section of the Scoping Report in a clear and logical way, starting with the key matters requiring further assessment in the EIS and ending with those matters that require no further assessment
- group the matters having regard to the specific characteristics of the project
- highlight any key linkages between the assessment of different matters.

Key factors to consider during scoping

To identify the matters requiring further assessment in the EIS and the level of assessment that should be carried out for each matter, the proponent must consider the following key factors:

- scale and nature of the likely impacts of the project and the sensitivity of the site and surrounds having regard to the factors identified in Appendix C
- whether the project is likely to generate cumulative impacts with other relevant future projects in the area (see the Department's *Assessing Cumulative Impacts* guide)
- ability to avoid, mitigate and offset the impacts of the project having regard to:
 - factors that could be incorporated into the detailed design of the project (e.g. changes to the project area, layout and design, key uses and activities carried out in site, timing)
 - whether reasonable and feasible mitigation measures are readily available or known or will require detailed investigation
 - whether the use of negotiated agreements or offsets is feasible and appropriate to address any residual impacts following mitigation
- the complexity of the technical assessment having regard to:
 - data requirements (e.g. baseline data, the availability of data from other projects for cumulative impact assessment)
 - investigations required to identify the specific mitigation measures or offsets for the project
 - methods available for predicting the impacts of the project
 - criteria for evaluating the acceptability of the impacts of the project
 - uncertainties relating to all of the above

- ability to deal with these uncertainties (e.g. further monitoring, review, technical investigations, adaptive management).

It is important to stress that the proponent is only expected to consider these factors to determine the key matters for further assessment in the EIS and the proposed approach to assessing each of these matters. It is not required to carry out a detailed assessment of each factor and document this assessment in the Scoping Report.

This must be done in the detailed assessment of the project in the EIS.

Further, in some cases it may be quite simple to determine that something will be a key matter for assessment and require a detailed technical assessment in the EIS - in accordance with the relevant government plans, policies and guidelines governing this sort of assessment – even though the actual assessment of these matters may be complex. For example, the assessment the transport and management of spoil is certain to be a key matter for assessment for a road or rail tunnel project.

While there are several methodologies that could be used during scoping to help identify the key matters for further assessment in the EIS (e.g. risk assessment in accordance with the Australian standard), the Department is not requiring the use of any specific methodology. Proponents should ensure that any methods used are fit for purpose.

Matters requiring further assessment in the EIS

For each matter requiring further assessment in the EIS, the proponent must document the following in the Scoping Report:

- the proposed level of assessment (e.g. minor, standard and detailed – see Appendix D)
- the proposed approach to this assessment, having regard to:
 - the key factors to consider during scoping (see above)
 - relevant government plans, policies and guidelines
- whether any specific community engagement will be carried out on the matter during the preparation of the EIS.

In relation to the proposed approach to assessment, if the government has clear guidance in place governing how the impacts of the project on the matter (e.g. biodiversity, heritage, noise, air quality, traffic, water) must be assessed, the proponent must simply identify the relevant guidance documents in the Scoping Report.

However, if there is no clear guidance in place or there are gaps in the existing guidance (e.g. how to assess cumulative impacts) or there are matters requiring clarification in the existing guidance (e.g. what projects to include in the cumulative impact assessment), the proponent must describe the proposed approach to addressing each of these issues in more detail in the Scoping Report.

If the approach to addressing these issues is complex, the proponent should summarise the proposed approach in the Scoping Report and include a detailed explanation of the proposed approach in the appendices of the Scoping Report.

Finally, the proponent must include a scoping summary table (see example in Appendix E) for the project as an appendix to the Scoping Report. This table must group the matters requiring further assessment in the EIS by the level of assessment required, and identify:

- whether any cumulative impact assessment is required, and the likely level of this assessment (e.g. standard or detailed)
- whether any specific community engagement will be carried out on the matter during the preparation of the EIS

- the relevant government plans, policies and guidelines that will be considered during the assessment of the impacts of the project on the matter
- the relevant section of the Scoping Report where the assessment of the impacts on the matter are discussed in more detail.

Matters requiring no assessment

The proponent must document the matters requiring no further assessment in the EIS in a table in the Scoping Report. This table should identify the matter and explain why no further assessment is necessary.

4. Glossary

Amendment	A change in what the proponent is seeking approval for during the assessment process. It requires changes to the project description in the EIS or Modification Report and amendments to the associated infrastructure application or modification application. Applications can only be amended with the agreement of the Planning Secretary.
Amendment Report	A report prepared by the proponent to support amendments to an infrastructure application or modification application (see the <i>Preparing an Amendment Report</i> guide).
Approval authority	The approval authority for an SSI application or SSI modification application. This will be the Minister or the Minister's delegates in the Department.
Certify	A REAP may certify an EIS for an SSI project and other environmental assessment reports required for SSI projects against the criteria in the <i>Registered Environmental Assessment Practitioner</i> guide before they are submitted to the Department.
Cumulative impacts	The combined impacts of a project on a matter with other relevant future projects (see the Department's <i>Assessing Cumulative Impacts</i> guide)
Department	Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.
Determination	A decision by an approval authority for an SSI application to either approve the application subject to modifications or conditions or refuse to approve the application.
EIS	An Environmental Impact Statement prepared by the proponent to support an SSI application (see the <i>Preparing an EIS</i> guide).
Environmental assessment reports	Reports required to be submitted to the Department by a proponent seeking approval for an SSI application or modification application. These reports include Scoping Reports, EISs, Submissions Reports, Amendment Reports, Preferred Infrastructure Reports and Modification Reports.
Environmental planning instrument	Means an environmental planning instrument (including a SEPP or Local Environmental Plan) made under part 3 of the EP&A Act.
EP&A Act	<i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979.</i>
EP&A Regulation	<i>Environmental Planning and Assessment Regulation 2000.</i>
Major Projects website	www.majorprojects.planningportal.nsw.gov.au
Matter	An element of the environment that may be affected by an SSI (e.g. air, amenity, biodiversity, economic, social).

Amendment	A change in what the proponent is seeking approval for during the assessment process. It requires changes to the project description in the EIS or Modification Report and amendments to the associated infrastructure application or modification application. Applications can only be amended with the agreement of the Planning Secretary.
Minister	The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.
Mitigation	Actions or measures to reduce the impacts of a project.
Modification	Changing the scope or terms of an SSI approval, including revoking or varying a condition of approval. A modification requires approval under the EP&A Act.
Modification application	An application seeking to modify an SSI approval under section 5.25 of the EP&A Act.
Modification Report	A report prepared by the proponent to support a modification application (see the <i>Preparing a Modification Report</i> guide).
Planning Secretary	The Planning Secretary of the Department
Preferred Infrastructure Report	A report prepared by an SSI proponent at the request of the Planning Secretary that outlines any proposed changes to the SSI to minimise its environmental impact or to deal with any other issue raised during the assessment of the application concerned (see the <i>Preparing a Preferred Infrastructure Report</i> guide).
Project	An SSI proposal, which is the subject of an infrastructure application or modification application.
Proponent	The proponent seeking approval for an SSI application or modification application.
REAP	A registered environmental assessment practitioner who is a member of a professional scheme that is accredited under the EP&A Regulation. REAPs may certify the EISs for SSI projects and other documents required for SSI projects before they are submitted to the Department (see the <i>Registered Environmental Assessment Practitioner</i> guide).
Refinement	A change that fits within the limits set by the project description and does not change what the proponent is seeking approval for or require an amendment to the infrastructure application for the project.
Scoping	The process of identifying the matters that require further assessment in an EIS.
Scoping Report	A report prepared by the proponent to inform the setting of SEARs for an SSI project (see the <i>Preparing a Scoping Report</i> guide).

Amendment	A change in what the proponent is seeking approval for during the assessment process. It requires changes to the project description in the EIS or Modification Report and amendments to the associated infrastructure application or modification application. Applications can only be amended with the agreement of the Planning Secretary.
SEARs	The Planning Secretary's environmental assessment requirements for the preparation of an EIS for an SSI project.
SSI / CSSI	Development that is declared to be State significant infrastructure under section 5.12 of the EP&A Act and critical State significant infrastructure under section 5.13 of the EP&A Act.
SEPP	State Environmental Planning Policy.
Submission	A written response from an individual or organisation, which is submitted to the Department during the public exhibition of an EIS, Amendment Report, Preferred Infrastructure Report or Modification Report for State significant infrastructure.
Submissions Report	A report prepared by the proponent to respond to the issues raised in submissions (see the <i>Preparing a Submissions Report</i> guide).

Appendix A – Recommended structure of a scoping report

Scoping report	
Section	
1	Introduction
2	Strategic context
3	Project
4	Statutory context
5	Engagement
6	Proposed assessment of impacts
7	References
Appendices	
A	Scoping summary table
B	Supporting information, including any detailed engagement or technical reports

Appendix B – Categories of assessment matters

Group	Specific matters	
Access	Access to property Traffic and parking	Port and airport facilities Road and rail facilities
Air	Atmospheric emissions Gases	Particulate matter
Amenity	Noise Odour	Vibration Visual
Biodiversity	Conservation areas Terrestrial flora and fauna a	Aquatic flora and faun
Built environment	Private property Public land	Public infrastructure
Economic	Natural resource use Livelihood	Opportunity cost
Hazards and risks	Biosecurity Bushfire Coastal hazards Dams safety Dangerous goods Environmental hazards	Flooding Groundwater contamination Hazardous and offensive development Land contamination Land movement Waste

Appendix B – Categories of assessment matters (continued)

Group	Specific matters	
Heritage	Aboriginal Historic	Natural
Land	Stability Soil chemistry	Land capability Topography
Social	Community services and facilities Health Housing availability	Safety Social cohesion
Water	Hydrology Water quality	Water availability

Appendix C – Key factors to consider during scoping

Factor	Components of factor	Description and examples
Scale of the impact	Severity	<p>The scale or degree of the impact relative to the current situation or adopted standards or performance measures.</p> <p>The severity may be measured quantitatively and compared to reference values (e.g. area of vegetation cleared, air and water quality, noise levels, change or disruption to ecological community function) or qualitatively.</p>
	Geographical extent	The geographical reach of the impacts of the project or the range within which the impacts are observable
	Duration	<p>The timeframe over which the impact occurs (e.g. for a short period, during construction only; during operations; permanently).</p> <p>It may also refer to the period/s in which the impact is observable and the regularity of impact (e.g. irregular, intermittent, regularly during certain operations).</p>
Nature of the impact	Direct/indirect	Impacts caused directly by the project, normally in the vicinity of the project and while it is being carried out (e.g. vegetation clearing, air emissions)
	Indirect impacts	<p>Impacts that are induced by the direct impacts of the project or a by-product of the project.</p> <p>They may occur as a result of a complex impact pathway, involving interactions between several matters (groundwater drawdown as a result of excavation or dewatering may over time affect the water in certain wetlands with high conservation value, which may in turn affect several threatened aquatic flora and fauna).</p> <p>They may also occur as a result of land use changes or growth induced by the project.</p>
	Cumulative impacts	The successive, incremental and combined impacts of the project with other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future development.
	Perceived impacts	Different perceptions of the same impacts by people or groups.
Sensitivity of the receiving environment	Existing regulations and guidance	The degree of sensitivity expressed in legislation or relative to adopted standards and performance measures (e.g. Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016, National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974, Australian and New Zealand Guidelines for Fresh and Marine Water Quality, Noise Policy for Industry)
	Value to society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic values (e.g. water supply, critical transport routes). Social value (e.g. community value, landscape, recreation, lifestyle disturbance). Environmental values (e.g. natural habitat).
	Vulnerability to change	The degree to which the environment is vulnerable to the impacts of the project, having regard to the likely scale and nature of the impacts of the project and the sensitivity and adaptive capacity of the environment.

Appendix D – Levels of assessment

Level of assessment	Explanation
Detailed	<p>The project may result in significant impacts on the matter, including cumulative impacts.</p> <p>The assessment of the impacts of the project on the matter will require detailed studies and investigations to be carried out by technical specialists.</p> <p>During this assessment, these specialists may need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work closely with the specialists assessing the impacts of the project on other matters to determine the likely indirect impacts of the project • undertake a detailed cumulative impact assessment for the project. <p>Also, the assessment is likely to involve several uncertainties in relation to one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data collection (e.g. baseline information, availability of data for cumulative impacts assessment) • identifying the specific mitigation measures or suitable offsets for the project • the methods available for predicting the impacts of the project, including the indirect and cumulative impacts • criteria for evaluating the acceptability of the impacts of the project. <p>Consequently, specific strategies may be required to address these uncertainties (e.g. further monitoring, review, technical investigations and adaptive management).</p>
Standard	<p>The project is unlikely to result in significant impacts on the matter, including cumulative impacts.</p> <p>While the assessment of the impacts of the project on the matter will involve technical specialists, these impacts are likely to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • well understood • relatively easy to predict using standard methods • capable of being mitigated to comply with relevant standards or performance measures <p>Also, the assessment is unlikely to involve any significant uncertainties, or require any detailed cumulative impact assessment.</p>
Minor	<p>The project may result in minor impacts on the matter.</p> <p>These impacts can be avoided either during the design of the project or mitigated to comply with a relevant standard or performance measure using commonly used mitigation measures.</p> <p>Also, the assessment of these impacts is unlikely to require the use of technical specialists.</p>
Not relevant	<p>The project will have no impact on the matter, or the impacts of the project on the matter will be so small that they are not worth considering.</p>

Appendix E – Example of a scoping summary table

Level of assessment	Matter	CIA	Engagement	Relevant government plans, policies and guidelines	Scoping report reference
Detailed	Amenity - noise	N	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Construction Noise Strategy (Transport for NSW, 2012) Interim Construction Noise Guideline (Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water, 2009) NSW Industrial Noise Policy (Environment Protection Authority, 2000) Rail Infrastructure Noise Guideline (Environment Protection Authority, 2013) NSW Road Noise Policy (Environment Protection Authority, 2011) Assessing Vibration: A Technical Guideline (Department of Environment and Conservation, 2006) German Standard DIN 4150-3: Structural Vibration – Effects of Vibration on Structures Environmental Noise Management Assessing Vibration: A Technical Guideline (Department of Environment and Conservation, 2006) Technical Basis for Guidelines to Minimise Annoyance due to Blasting Overpressure and Ground Vibration (Australian and New Zealand Environment Council, 1990). 	Section 7.1.2
	Social – community services / facilities	N	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to Scoping Report 	Section 7.10
	Heritage – historic (NAH)	Y	Specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commonwealth EPBC 1.1 Significant Impact Guidelines – Matters of National Environmental Significance (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013) Commonwealth EPBC 1.2 Significant Impact Guidelines – Actions on, or Impacting upon, Commonwealth Land and Actions by Commonwealth Agencies (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013) NSW Skeletal Remains: Guidelines for Management of Human Remains (Heritage Office, 1998) Criteria for the Assessment of Excavation Directors (NSW Heritage Council, 2011). 	Section 7.1.5

Built environment – private property	N	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental Planning and Impact Assessment Practice Note: Socio-economic Assessment (Roads and Maritime Services, 2013). Refer to Scoping Report for further discussion on approach to assessment 	Section 7.1.3
Amenity - visual	N	General	Refer to Scoping Report	Section 7.1.7
Water – water quality	N	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acid Sulfate Soils Assessment Guidelines (Department of Planning, 2008) Managing Land Contamination: Planning Guidelines SEPP 55 – Remediation of Land (Department of Urban Affairs and Planning and Environment Protection Authority, 1998) Managing Urban Stormwater: Soils and Construction Volume 1 (Landcom, 2004) Managing Urban Stormwater: Soils and Construction Volume 2 (Department of Environment and Climate Change, 2008) Guidelines for Consultants Reporting on Contaminated Sites (Office of Environment and Heritage, 2000) Guidelines on the Duty to Report Contamination under the Contaminated Land Management Act 1997 (Department of Environment and Climate Change, 2009) Approved Methods for the Sampling and Analysis of Water Pollutants in NSW (Department of Environment and Climate Change, 2008) Australian and New Zealand Guidelines for Fresh and Marine Water Quality (ANZECC / ARMCANZ, 2000) Using the ANZECC Guidelines and Water Quality Objectives in NSW (Department of Environment and Conservation, 2006). 	Section 7.1.9
Hazards and risk – land contamination	N	General		

Standard	Access – road/rail network	N	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide to Traffic Management – Part 3 Traffic Studies and Analysis (Austroads, 2013) • NSW Bicycle Guidelines (RTA, 2003) • Guide to Traffic Generating Developments Version 2.2 (RTA, 2002). 	Section 7.1.1
	Water – hydrological flows (incl flooding)	N	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managing Urban Stormwater: Soils and Construction Volume 1 (Landcom 2004) and Volume 2 (A. Installation of Services; B. Waste Landfills; C. Unsealed Roads; D. Main Roads; E. Mines and Quarries) (DECC 2008) • NSW Government’s Floodplain Development Manual (2005). 	Section 7.2.2
	Air – atmospheric emissions and particulate matter	N	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to Scoping Report 	Section 7.2.3
	Air - gases	N	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSW’s Sustainable Design Guidelines (Version 3.0) (Transport for NSW, 2013) • Greenhouse Gas Inventory Guide for Construction Projects (Transport for NSW, 2012). 	Section 7.2.4
	Hazards and risks – dangerous goods	N	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazardous and Offensive Development Application Guidelines: Applying SEPP 33 (DoP 2011) • International Standard (ISO / IEC 31010) Risk Management – Risk Assessment Technique • Australian Code for the Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road and Rail (7th edition) (National Transport Commission, 2007) • Code of Practice for the Safe Removal of Asbestos 2nd edition (National Occupational Health and Safety Commission, 2005) • Storage and Handling of Dangerous Goods Code of Practice (WorkCover, 2005). 	Section 7.2.6
	Hazards and risks - waste	N	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste Classification Guidelines (DECCW, 2009) • Refer to Scoping Report 	Section 7.2.7

Minor	Biodiversity – native vegetation and native fauna	N	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth EPBC 1.1 Significant Impact Guidelines – Matters of National Environmental Significance (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013) • Commonwealth EPBC 1.2 Significant Impact Guidelines – Actions on, or Impacting upon, • Commonwealth Land and Actions by Commonwealth Agencies (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013) • Commonwealth Department of the Environment – Nationally Threatened Ecological Communities and Threatened Species Guidelines (various) • Commonwealth Department of the Environment – Survey Guidelines for Nationally Threatened Species (various) • Threatened Species Survey and Assessment Guidelines at http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/threatenedspecies/surveyassessmentgdlns.htm • NSW Biodiversity Offsets Policy for Major Projects (Office and Environment and Heritage, 2014) • Framework for Biodiversity Assessment (Office and Environment and Heritage, 2014). 	Section 7.2.1
-------	---------------------------------------------------	---	---------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------