



1. Introduction



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1.1 Purpose of this Document

This Route Identification Report (the report) documents the process undertaken to investigate the proposed upgrading of the North Coast Line between Landsborough and Nambour. This report is a precursor to the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and will form part of the supporting documentation for the EIS.

1.2 Limitations of this Document

1.2.1 General

This report has been prepared solely for Queensland Transport to provide a record of the process for the identification of a preferred route for the upgrade of the North Coast Rail Line between Landsborough and Nambour.

Whilst Arup and its consultants have taken care in the preparation of this report, it does not accept any liability or responsibility whatsoever in respect of:

- Any use of this report by any third party
- Any third party whose interests may be affected arising out of or in connection with this document, including any decision made or action taken by our clients.

1.2.2 Data and Technical Investigations

The investigations documented in this report were based on a review of available information with appropriate field reconnaissance and verification. More detailed analysis will be undertaken where necessary to comply with the finalised Terms of Reference for the Environmental Impact Statement. Information provided by the community through submissions and discussions with members of the study team at community information sessions has also been considered in the assessments and evaluations. Whilst anecdotal in most circumstances, this information has been reviewed for relevance during the option identification and evaluation process.

Comparative cost estimates have been prepared as part of the route identification and evaluation process. The cost estimates for each route option are high level, and have been used comparatively to inform the route evaluation process. These cost estimates can not yet be used as a construction cost estimate for this project. More detailed costs will be prepared as an outcome of the preliminary design and EIS process.

1.3 The Project and the Study

1.3.1 The Project

The upgrade of the North Coast Line between Landsborough to Nambour is defined as the ‘Landsborough to Nambour Rail Project’ (the project).

The project will include construction of a double track railway along a predominantly new route, with provision to accommodate up to two additional tracks if required in the future. The project will improve the efficiency, service frequency, operating speeds and reliability of trains, and cater for the increasing demand for rail services in the corridor arising from population and freight transport growth.

The project has been declared a State Significant Project for which an Environmental Impact Statement will be required under Section 26(1)(a) of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971* (SDPWO Act). This is as a result of the following considerations:

- *s. 27(c) the project’s potential effect on relevant infrastructure;*
- *s. 27(e) the potential environmental effects of the project;*
- *s. 27(h) the strategic significance of the project to the locality, region or the State.*

Only the most important or complex projects are generally declared to be significant projects, signalling that a robust assessment process is warranted involving whole-of-government coordination.

The Coordinator-General’s decision to declare a project to be a ‘significant project’ does not infer Queensland Government backing of the project, rather it signals that the project warrants a robust environmental impact statement.

http://www.infrastructure.qld.gov.au/major_projects/index.shtm

Therefore the project proponent, Queensland Transport, is required to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement that complies with the requirements of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971* (SDPWO Act). This process will be managed by the Queensland Department of Infrastructure and Planning, to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Act. This process will include:

- The preparation of and public notification of a Draft Terms of Reference
- Public notification of the EIS, which must address the finalised Terms of Reference

- Reviewing and responding to public submissions through the preparation of a supplementary Report (if required)
- Reporting on the evaluation of the EIS, public submissions and additional information by the Coordinator-General (within the Department of Infrastructure and Planning).

The EIS process is discussed further in section 10 of this report.

1.3.2 The Study

The Landsborough to Nambour Rail Corridor Study (the study) is an early phase of the Landsborough to Nambour Rail Project. The study will provide for a greater level of certainty around future development and land use of the area surrounding the North Coast Line. By identifying the corridor requirements for the future upgrade now, Queensland Transport is providing for the future needs of both rail users and the surrounding communities.

Three key elements are required to deliver this objective. These are:

- **Route Identification.** This report documents the outcome of this process, which is the identification of a preferred route for the upgrade corridor
- **Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)** for the preferred route under the provisions of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971 (SDPWO Act)*. This process will be managed by the Department of Infrastructure and Planning
- **Design** the corridor to a sufficient level of detail to allow corridor acquisition to occur at the completion of the study phase of the project (preliminary design).

Consultation with stakeholders including government agencies, the local community and other interested parties provides important information that is of value to the study, and will be considered as part of all three elements that make up the study.

Figure 1.4 shows the staging and timeframes for both the project and the study, which are subject to:

- Future infrastructure delivery priorities and funding decisions of the Queensland Government
- Outcomes of community consultation and technical issues identified during the study.

It is important to note that the completion of each subsequent stage of the project is dependent upon the completion of the preceding phase of the project.

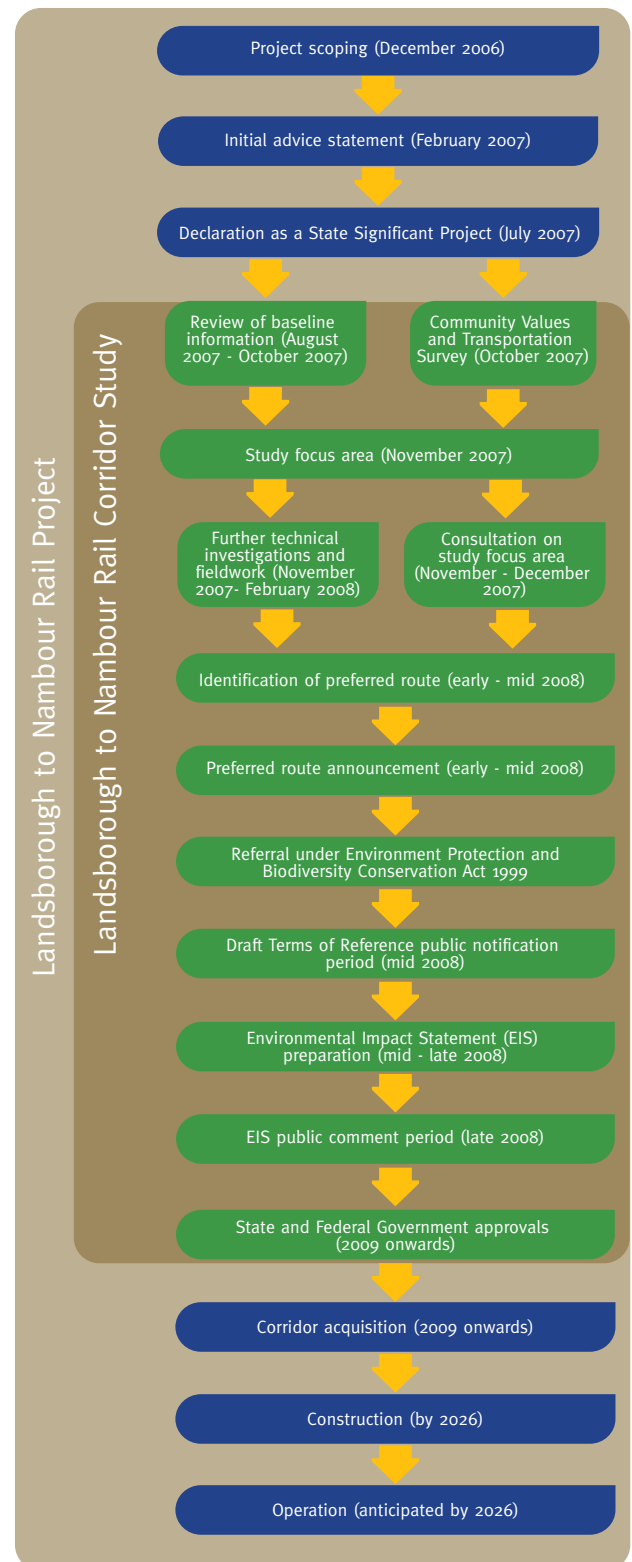


Figure 1.4 The Project Process

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1.3.3 Study Objectives and Aims

The objective of this phase of the study is to identify a preferred route for the upgrade of the North Coast Line between Landsborough and Nambour, taking the following matters into consideration:

- Environmental constraints (significant vegetation or fauna habitat and protected areas)
- Physical constraints (topography, geology, hydrology)
- Property issues
- Existing land uses (urban, rural, open space/environmental)
- Social constraints (social/economic impacts, cultural heritage)
- Local and regional transport needs
- Interfaces/integration with other public transport modes
- Future flexibility of the corridor (i.e. the ability to provide additional tracks)
- The need to provide a modern rail service that is fast, efficient, and reliable
- The potential capacity of the corridor to cater for the mix of services using it.

The following aims have been identified for this study:

- Minimise environmental effects
- Minimise property and social impacts
- Seek to identify opportunities where the rail upgrade can bring land use or transport network benefits
- Consider government agency and community input in the decision making process
- Identify a realistic upgrade solution that can be constructed whilst maintaining an operational rail line.

Whilst a project of this nature is anticipated to have significant regional and strategic benefits, the local impacts and effects also must be recognised. It is important to ensure that its effects are understood and ways to mitigate or manage these effects are considered at the local level.

1.3.4 The Study Team

The study team contributing to this study and report consists of:

- Queensland Transport, Rail Ports and Freight Division: Project Proponent, Project Management
- Arup: Project Management, engineering and rail design, environmental assessment, planning, transport analysis, water quality and hydrology, geotechnical and cost estimates, preliminary noise assessment.

- Bayly Willey Holt: Community Engagement
- Systemwide Pty Ltd: Operational Analysis
- SGS Economics and Planning: Social and Economic conditions
- Archaeo Cultural Heritage Services: Cultural Heritage
- WBM BMT: Ecology, water quality monitoring
- Biodiversity Assessment and Management: Fauna survey.

1.3.5 Technical Steering Committee

A Technical Steering Committee has been established to oversee the approach and outputs of the Study. Members of this committee provide broad level advice on corridor and land use issues, relevant to their respective agency. This Technical Steering Committee includes representatives from:

- Queensland Rail
- TransLink
- Office of Urban Management/Department of Infrastructure and Planning.

1.3.6 Local and State Government consultations to date

A number of State Government Departments were contacted as part of the route identification study process. Relevant departments were represented at a study presentation and tour. A broader cross section of relevant departments were contacted in writing to advise of the study process and opportunities for input.

Meetings and discussions were also held with Caloundra City Council officers and Maroochy Shire Council officers. This has allowed the study team to discuss relevant issues and identify constraints and issues for route identification.

It is recognised that Caloundra City and Maroochy Shire Councils are undergoing an amalgamation process and this will be formalised by the local government elections on the 15th March 2008, prior to the public release of this report. However for the duration of the study and at the time of writing this report the councils were separate entities with separate strategic directions, policies, planning schemes and management structures. Therefore reference is made to the two separate council entities throughout the report in relation to the jurisdiction of planning schemes and to describe other Council documents and consultation that formed part of the study process.

1.4 Community Engagement

1.4.1 Aims

The community engagement strategy for the study has a number of overall aims. These are:

- To undertake engagement activities to reach a wide audience of identified stakeholders and encourage those affected by the study to take an active interest in engagement activities
- To provide opportunities for the community to input into the route option identification and evaluation process
- To support the preparation of the EIS
- To increase knowledge within the community about the study and the EIS process
- To build a knowledge base within the community to assist people and groups in assessing the EIS
- To advise stakeholders of the outcome of the EIS process on completion.

1.4.2 Tools

The tools described in Table 1.4.2 have been used to communicate study information, and to encourage feedback from the community during the route identification process.

1.4.3 Community Engagement Outcomes

Outcomes of the community engagement activities completed to date are discussed further in sections 6 and section 7 of this report, including analysis of the Community Values and Transportation Survey, and the study focus area submissions analysis.

Table 1.4.2: Community Engagement Tools

Tool/ Activity	Description
Stakeholder Database	A comprehensive stakeholder database has been developed for the Landsborough to Nambour Rail Corridor Study. This allows the study team to track and respond to inquiries, submissions and other forms of contact from the community
Information Line	An information line has been established for the duration of the study. This provides the means for stakeholders to request materials, provide input, ask questions and provide feedback on the project. The information line phone number is published on all engagement materials and is staffed between 9.00am and 5.00pm Monday to Friday, with a message bank available to take messages after hours. Where questions of a technical nature arise that cannot be answered immediately, details of the query are recorded and a response provided as soon as the information is available. All calls to the information line are logged in the stakeholder database.

Tool/ Activity	Description
Website	A website has been established for the Landsborough to Nambour Rail Corridor Study. This site contains information related to the Study, the route option identification and evaluation process and the (future) preparation of the EIS. It also provides access to downloads of the newsletters/study updates, study area maps, and fact sheets. It provides contact details for the study team, including how to provide feedback or comment on study issues.
Enquiry Email	A project specific enquiry email address has been established to facilitate community enquiries and responses from the study team. The email address is included in engagement materials as a key contact point for the community. Enquiries sent via email are answered in a timely manner with details of email contact logged in the stakeholder database.
Study Updates and Newsletters	To date there have been two study newsletters which have been distributed to relevant stakeholders and the community, and a third planned to announce the preferred route. These were developed to communicate key messages and notify the community of the opportunity to provide feedback to the study. The first newsletter also contained the Community Values and Transportation Survey (see below). Study updates (similar to newsletters) have been included in the community engagement strategy as a way of engaging with the community during the options identification and analysis and preparation of the EIS. These would contain information about route option identification and evaluation stages, the rail corridor, the progress of the EIS the public comment period, the formal submissions process and the announcement of the study's EIS outcomes. Distribution methods to date have included the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mail box drop (insert post code areas covered) • Direct mail to identified stakeholders • Email distribution to identified stakeholders • Upload to the study website • Hand outs at train stations in the study focus area • Available at static display locations and mobile display/community information sessions

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Tool/ Activity	Description
Community Values and Transportation Survey	<p>This survey sought to gather information from the community to assist the study team with the identification and refinement of the study focus area, prior to publishing this area. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix A. Aims of the survey included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify features of importance within each township – i.e. historical, natural, recreational, business, transport routes. • Identify how people get to ‘places’ within the region for work/recreation – i.e. car, train, bus, walking. • Identify the community’s relationship with the current North Coast Line – i.e. patronage, use of OLCs in the region, the rail corridor’s proximity to ‘places’ that they utilise, feelings about safety, visual amenity, noise. • Better understand the impact of the current North Coast Line and available public transport services on people’s lives and lifestyles. • Better understanding of the community’s vision for the future of their township and if changing the rail corridor could positively or negatively impact on this vision. • Better understand business’ reliance on the rail corridor for customers. <p>The survey was administered in early October 2007, and analysed at the end of the survey period (end October- early November 2007). It was distributed via letterbox drop to residents and businesses within the study area, and was also administered within the broader study area, identified in section 1.5 above via unaddressed mail delivery. It was also available for download via the project website, and was posted directly to stakeholders identified through analysis of available information about community groups. It was also distributed by hand to passengers travelling during the ‘peak’ times at railway stations within the study area, and was also available at staffed community displays within townships. It was also provided to elected representatives offices and local government offices, as well as at Queensland Transport Customer Service Centres in Caloundra, Maroochydore and Nambour.</p>
Print Advertising	<p>Newspaper advertisements were placed to advise the community of the commencement of the study and of the community information sessions held in November- December 2007. Newspaper advertisements will also be placed to advertise future project announcements and information opportunities.</p>

Tool/ Activity	Description
Fact Sheets	<p>Fact sheets were developed for use at the Community Information sessions held in November – December 2007. These were to assist the study team in communicating information about the release of the study focus area. These were available at the sessions, and also for download from the study website.</p>
Information sessions, community displays and events	<p>Static displays are included in the community engagement strategy to provide a location where community members can view information on the project at a convenient location and time within their township. These displays are typically located at public centres including Queensland Transport Customer Service Centres, local libraries, council administration centres, and offices of elected state government representatives.</p> <p>Public displays are included in the community engagement strategy for the study to administer values surveys, to display the study focus areas during the route option identification and evaluation stage, to the display the preferred route and to display the EIS. These would be either staffed or non-staffed displays depending upon the study stage. Displays would be held in places frequented by targeted stakeholders including, shopping centres, libraries, rail stations or other community facilities.</p> <p>Information sessions are included in the community engagement strategy to provide a forum where community members can learn, ask questions and provide feedback about the study. These will be used during the public comment period for the EIS.</p>
Feedback Database	<p>A feedback database has been established to assist in the tracking and analysis of community feedback during the various phases of the study.</p>

1.5 Previous Work

Queensland Transport completed a technical feasibility study (the 'scoping study') in December 2006 that examined the potential for upgrading the Landsborough to Nambour section of the NCL. The purpose of this exercise was to provide decision makers with a fundamental understanding of the issues associated with the existing corridor between Landsborough and Nambour as well as the potential constraints and implications of upgrading the corridor. Essentially the scoping study was conducted to confirm whether it would be physically possible and broadly economically feasible to upgrade the corridor, and therefore reasonable to progress to the next stages of the project.

The outcome of the scoping study phase was confirmation that it would be possible to further consider the upgrade of the North Coast Line between Landsborough and Nambour. 'Bands of interest' (preliminary to the study focus area) were defined on the basis of preliminary corridor objectives and constraints information gathered through desk-based assessments. The bands of interest encompassed areas where it was considered suitable routes could possibly be located. The bands of interest provided flexibility for future refinement of the study focus area and allowed for the development of route options in response to new constraints information, and provided varying opportunities for maintaining rail access for the towns along the corridor.

No community consultation was undertaken during the scoping study phase. It was recognised that without community input on the areas where it was considered possible to locate routes, any upgrade routes identified during the scoping study could have no status. Therefore it was recommended that bands of interest be refined through community consultation in future stages of the project to ensure all relevant information could be considered prior to the recommendation of the preferred route.

1.5.1 Initial Advice Statement (Completed February 2007)

An Initial Advice Statement was prepared for the project. The project was declared a significant project and gazetted on 3 July 2007. The Initial Advice Statement is available on the Coordinator-General's website at http://www.infrastructure.qld.gov.au/major_projects/nambour_rail.shtm

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