

### Focus on the environment

**Work has now begun on a 12.6 km dual-track passenger rail line between Petrie and Kippa-Ring, including six new rail stations at a cost of \$1.15 billion.**

The Moreton Bay region has experienced significant population growth in recent years and continues to be one of the fastest-growing local government areas in Australia. The area has already seen a great deal of development in order to accommodate this growth with large housing estates, shopping centres, childcare centres and schools being built.

Just as this development has impacted on the natural environment, it is inevitable that provision of much-needed public transport in the area will also have an effect on the environment, including the need for clearing and removal of vegetation in the corridor.

Most of the vegetation to be cleared is within the existing government-owned corridor, which has been earmarked for construction

of a rail line for several decades. As this rail corridor has remained undeveloped for many years, there are significant sections of established vegetation to be cleared and removed, before construction of the rail line can begin.

The project team is committed to caring for the environment and to maintaining the highest standards of environmental practice during planning, design and construction phases of the project.

#### Flora and fauna

Following environmental assessments carried out in 2008, a report was prepared detailing the likely environmental impacts of the project works on ecological communities

and habitats. While there is considerable diversity of flora and fauna in the area, the report concluded that the risk posed to most of these species is low, and careful strategies will be put in place during planning and construction to reduce the impact on the natural environment.

Field surveys have identified a significant community of koala habitats within the corridor. The project team is working with environment agencies to develop a Koala Management Plan to ensure appropriate rehabilitation and revegetation measures are undertaken to help mitigate impacts on koala habitats. Planning is already underway to provide land crossing points throughout the corridor.



#### Moreton Bay ‘Ramsar’ Wetland

The Ramsar Convention is a global environmental treaty concerned with the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The treaty was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in the early 1970s.

In 1993 an area of around 113 000 hectares in the Moreton Bay region was included in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance, due to the existence of vulnerable or endangered species of fish, birds, coral and mangroves. This included a section of land in the area which had already been earmarked for a rail corridor in the late 1970s.

Although provision of the new rail line will impact only a very small section of the wetlands, mitigation strategies are vital in minimising effects on the wetlands. As this land was already government-owned for the purpose of providing a future rail corridor, project planning has taken into account these specific environmental considerations from the beginning.

## Minimising impacts

Direct impact on the Ramsar Wetland as a result of construction will be confined to an area of around 0.15 hectares. The rail line has been designed to include a bridge structure over the wetland to minimise aquatic impacts. The use of a bridge over the waterway will ensure the continued passage and flow of fauna in the area.

A series of other mitigation measures have been devised to avoid or minimise potential impacts including:

- clear definition of all construction areas to minimise the construction 'footprint'
- identifying species present in the locality and providing wildlife with effective crossing points in the corridor
- relocating any fallen logs from the construction zone into adjacent rehabilitation or retained habitat areas
- directional felling of all trees to be removed in development areas to minimise potential damage to retained vegetation
- landscaping with nectar-producing native species once construction is complete
- implementing sediment and erosion controls prior to and during construction to minimise adverse impacts of construction downstream.

## Working together

The project team recently submitted a self-assessment referral to the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Community after identifying potential impacts to the natural environment. This is the Australian Government Department that administers *The Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.

*The Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* is the Australian Government's central piece of environmental legislation. It provides the legal framework to protect and manage nationally and internationally significant flora, fauna, ecological communities and heritage places.

The project team will continue to work with the Queensland Government's Department of Environment and Resource Management and the Australian Government's Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Community to determine the best approach to mitigating impacts on animal and plant species and habitats.

The project team will also devise a detailed Environmental Management Plan for each section of work, to analyse specific impacts and minimise construction impacts on local flora and fauna.

## Air quality

A well-patronised public transport corridor in the region will result in lower private vehicle use and have beneficial impacts on air quality.

The reduction in traffic congestion on the region's roads will also allow for more free-flowing vehicle movements and reduce air pollution from stationary vehicles.



## Contact us

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