



2. Background to the Study



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2.1 Strategic Purpose of the North Coast Rail Line

South East Queensland (SEQ) is recognised as one of Australia's fastest growing regions with a high demand for sustainable growth management measures to be implemented. The *South East Queensland Regional Plan 2005–2026* (the SEQ Regional Plan) provides a framework for managing rapid growth, associated change, land use and development through a series of strategic directions and regional policies over the next 20 years. The Regional Plan identifies an integrated transport system throughout the south east as a 'desired regional outcome' with rail playing a key role in achieving this outcome.

In support of the SEQ Regional Plan, the *South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program 2007–2026* (SEQIPP 07) outlines the Queensland Government's infrastructure priorities for the region and provides support for longer-term planning goals of the Regional Plan. SEQIPP 07 has identified the Landsborough to Nambour section of the North Coast Line (NCL) in the Infrastructure Priorities and Projects (Part B), with an additional line anticipated by 2025–2026.

The North Coast Rail Line connects Brisbane and Cairns, stretching for a distance of approximately 1,661 km. It faces unique operational pressures due to the various types of rail traffic it carries, the wide variation in operating characteristics of the rolling stock involved and the limitations of the existing single track line. Traffic on the line includes CityTrain, TravelTrain, TiltTrain and Freight train.

More about its operational characteristics can be found in section 5 of this report.

The strategic purpose of the North Coast Line can be defined as the following:

- To support and enhance the regional and state economies through efficient freight movement
- To support and enhance the transport needs of the region and State
- To provide a reliable alternative for longer distance intrastate travel.

The development of rail transport infrastructure that can compete with road based private vehicle and freight transport will aid in the achievement of these objectives.

2.1.1 Regional Context

The Landsborough to Nambour rail corridor provides a strategically important function in offering choice and travel options not only for residents within the corridor, but the wider Sunshine Coast area through a combination of park and ride facilities at Nambour, Woombye and Mooloolah (the later two recently delivered under TransLink's *Network Plan*) and co-ordination of bus services to Nambour and Landsborough. Bus services to Landsborough provide connectivity to Caloundra as well as Maroochydore via the University of the Sunshine Coast, while bus services from Cooroy, Eumundi and Noosa connect with trains at Nambour.

This corridor forms part of the wider South East Queensland rail network which offers options of travel to many locations in South East Queensland including Brisbane, the Gold Coast and Ipswich.

2.2 The Original Study Area

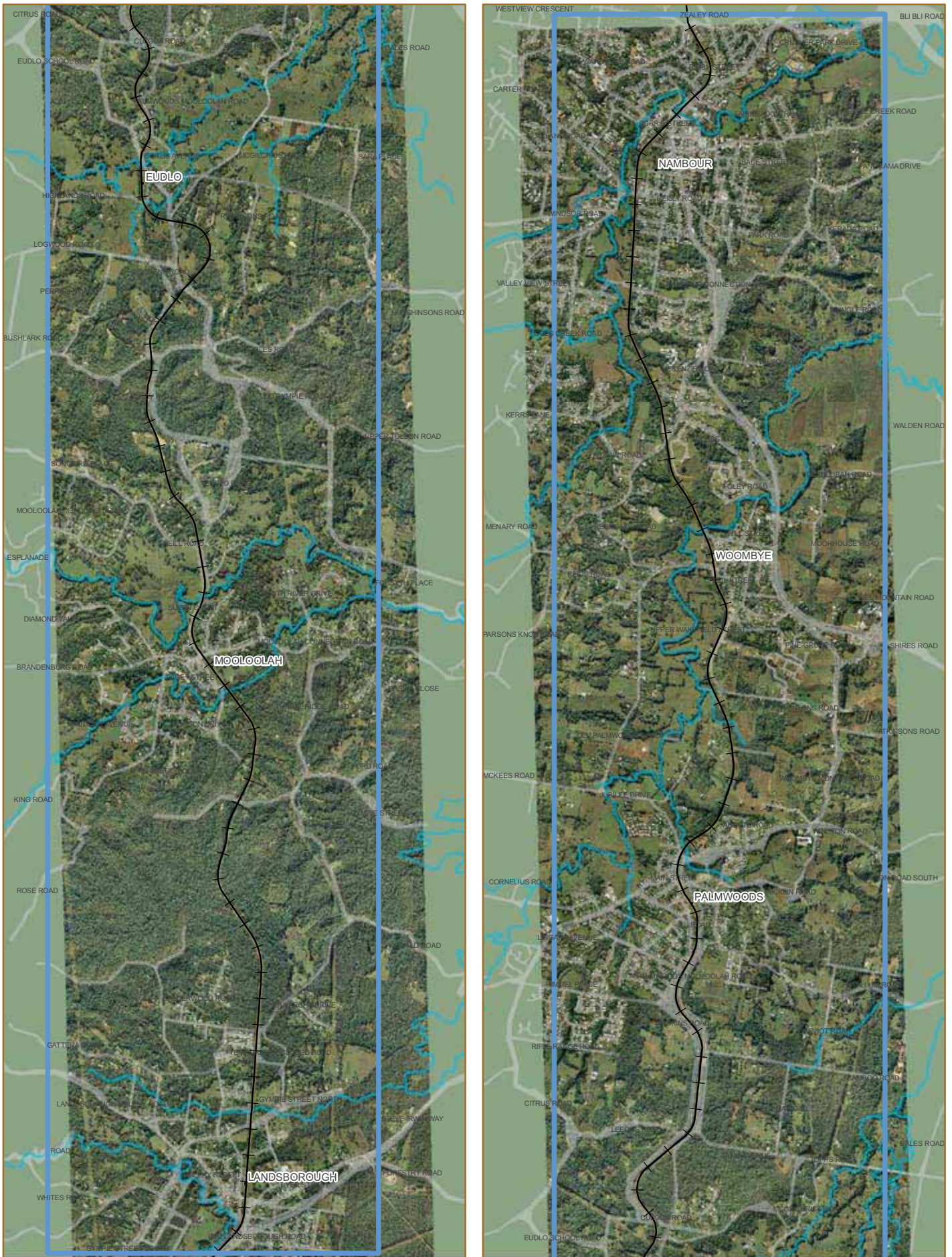
The original study area for this project was approximately 3 km wide, extending approximately 22 km from Landsborough Station to Nambour. The investigation area shown in Figure 2.2 was defined by Queensland Transport as it was considered to provide a realistic area within which an upgraded corridor that meets transport and accessibility objectives could be achieved. This investigation area also allowed consideration of the physical, environmental and social constraints that may influence the location and design of a suitable route for an upgraded rail corridor.

The investigation area is located within the Commonwealth Government areas of Longman, Fisher and Fairfax, the State Government electorates of Glass House and Nicklin and the local government areas Caloundra City and Maroochy Shire.

Railway towns within the investigation area include Landsborough, Mooloolah, Eudlo, Palmwoods, Woombye and Nambour. Significant features, constraints and issues within the original study area are discussed in section 5 of this report.

2.3 The Existing North Coast Rail Line

The section of the North Coast Rail Line between Landsborough and Nambour is approximately 22 km long. Stations on this section include Landsborough, Mooloolah, Eudlo, Palmwoods, Woombye and Nambour. It currently comprises a single electrified track, with passing loops at stations. Since its construction in the late 1800s, the line has been subjected to minor progressive upgrades.



**Landsborough to Nambour
Rail Corridor Study**

**Figure 2.2
Original Study Area**

March 2008

0 250 500 750 1,000
Meters

- Legend**
- Original Study Area
 - Creeks
 - Existing Rail Line
 - Roads

While every care is taken to ensure the accuracy of this data, Queensland Transport makes no representations or warranties about its accuracy, reliability, completeness or suitability for any particular purpose and disclaims all responsibility and all liability (including without limitation, liability in negligence) for all expenses, losses, damages (including indirect or consequential damage) and costs which might be incurred as a result of the plan being inaccurate or incomplete in any way and for any reason. Base information supplied by Maroochy and Caloundra Councils and Department of Natural Resources and Water. The areas shown in this figure are subject to change and final refinements during further assessment and preliminary design.

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The existing corridor passes through two tunnels, one to the south of Mooloolah Station (at Rose Road) and one to the south of Eudlo Station.

At grade crossing points include three trafficable open level crossings at:

- Gympie Street North (north of Landsborough Station)
- Mooloolah Connection Road/Brays Road (Mooloolah)
- Palmwoods Station car park access (passing loop only).

An occupational crossing is also located south of Palmwoods, and a pedestrian crossing point at Palmwoods.

There are also four rail bridges over road, which are generally located in low-lying areas passing under the rail. This may be attributed to road crossings historically being co-located at points where rail bridge structures were necessary to avoid flood-prone areas. There are also several road over rail bridges, which are often single lane structures. These road elements are described in further detail in section 5 of this report.

The existing track infrastructure in this corridor is relatively new and generally in good condition. The infrastructure is used by over 200 rail services each week including freight, long distance passenger and commuter rail services. These trains have varying speed and weight characteristics and therefore the track requires regular maintenance to keep it running efficiently.

A more detailed description of the existing North Coast Line infrastructure and associated features is included in section 5.

2.4 Performance Limiting Factors

The following factors contribute to the existing limited performance of this section of the North Coast Line:

- The current rail alignment between Landsborough and Nambour is winding and undulating. This significantly impacts upon achievable operating speeds for this section of the track. According to data provided by Queensland Rail, some services travel at speeds of 50 km/hr for many sections of the existing Landsborough to Nambour rail corridor.
- This section of the North Coast Line is single track, with passing loops at stations. Some services experience delays waiting in passing loops to allow passage of express services or other services to pass in the opposing direction.
- There are numerous at grade crossing points, including open level crossings, an occupational crossing, and pedestrian crossing along the existing corridor. These crossings can cause delays for the operation of the railway as well as safety concerns.

- A winding, undulating horizontal and vertical alignment is generally considered to have higher maintenance and operational costs compared with a consistent speed alignment. This can be attributed to the increased need for trains to accelerate and decelerate to negotiate the track curvature or climb areas of steep vertical alignment. Additionally, there are costs associated with delays whilst trains wait in passing loops to allow express services or services travelling in the opposite direction to pass.
- The limited capacity of the current railway is shown by the varying travel times by the passenger CityTrain services. These are further discussed in section 5 of this report.
- The current maximum freight train length is restricted to the length of the passing loops. The shortest passing loop for this section between Landsborough and Nambour is approximately 680 m at Palmwoods. The duplication of the NCL in total from Caboolture to Nambour could assist in the future operation of longer trains, which is being investigated. However this would be a very long-term scenario, given the extent of the existing rail network that is single track, and would be subject to further upgrades on the North Coast Line and the broader rail network to support longer trains.
- Many of the stations on this section of the North Coast Rail Line are substandard in length, and are not currently *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)* compliant.

The speeds limitations noted above, combined with the capacity of the single track (and the subsequent need to wait or run at a slower speed to utilise passing loops at stations) results in travel times between Landsborough and Nambour for TravelTrains and TiltTrains being approximately 25-30 minutes and CityTrain travel times ranging from 24 to 45 minutes.

2.5 Factors Influencing the Need for an Upgrade

Forecast population growth in the Sunshine Coast area is expected to increase the demand for travel, along with the general increase in tourism throughout the area. Furthermore, increases in demand for rail freight should also be considered in response to this growth.

The SEQ Regional Plan identifies the need to ensure planning decisions made today do not compromise options to meet longer-term regional needs thus emphasising the importance of protecting strategic corridors for future transport and other needs.

Other factors potentially influencing the decision to upgrade this section of the North Coast Line include:

- Compatibility with other future rail links and public transport corridors within the region (e.g. CAMCOS, Caboolture to Landsborough rail upgrade)
- Longer term (i.e. beyond 2026) land use and planning outcomes
- Improved safety of the rail corridor, stations (including *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) compliance) and interface with road network.

An upgraded rail corridor could also generate the following benefits:

- Improved rail services could reduce dependency on private motor vehicles (reduced greenhouse emissions, reduced need for additional road and highway capacity)
- Improvements to public transport infrastructure (i.e. speed, frequency, reliability) could lead to a change in the perception of the attractiveness of public transport and lead to an increase in demand
- Improvements to the rail network could improve the competitiveness of rail freight, which may result in a shift from moving goods via road freight. However, it is recognised that there are a multitude of other factors that influence freight mode choice
- If the rail service is perceived as fast, frequent and reliable, and provides a realistic alternative to the private car, the number of passengers may increase.

2.6 Consideration of an Existing Corridor Upgrade

An upgrade of the existing corridor was considered during the scoping study. However given the deficiencies of the existing corridor, it was determined that upgrading the existing corridor would not meet all of the objectives for the project, particularly those relating to operating speeds and service efficiencies, and the provision of a modern standard high speed alignment. A dual track would mean that trains no longer have to wait in passing loops at stations for other trains to pass. However achievable speeds would still likely be below 60 km/hr in places due to the horizontal and vertical alignment of the corridor. Therefore this is not considered to be a viable upgrade option.

In addition, the existing corridor would need to be widened to comply with the current four track rail cross section, which would involve land requirements from many adjoining properties. It may have been possible to consider a two track

upgrade within the existing corridor, however this does not provide the future flexibility for transport planners, and certainty for adjacent landowners that developing a four track corridor would. The policy for this project is to consider a four track corridor.

Upgrading the existing corridor, but with curve easings to improve design speeds was also considered. However this did not alleviate the vertical alignment deficiencies of the existing corridor. The land requirements for the curve easings and corridor widening requirements (to comply with the four track policy) would mean that the land requirements would be broadly comparable to those of an offline upgrade. Speeds on this corridor would also still be considerably constrained by its vertical alignment deficiencies.

Both alternatives for reuse of the existing corridor also have the following issues:

- Constructability penalties – construction of long sections of track adjacent and parallel to existing track has significant operational and cost implications. Track occupations or closures would be a long term construction implication, generating service impacts, and potentially extending the construction period, and necessitating more night work than construction of offline sections of corridor. Construction access would also need to be considered.
- Tunnelling complexities - the existing tunnel only has sufficient width for a single track, and does not meet current design standards. The safe working distance for construction of a second tunnel is five tunnel widths from the existing tunnel, meaning that the corridor would need to be widened in the vicinity of tunnel structures and the approach to the new tunnel portal.

Therefore, upgrading the existing corridor, with or without curve easings was not considered to be feasible as these options do not deliver the best return for the significant investment required and would still have significant property and environmental impacts.

2.7 Policy, Plans and Legislative Framework

For a study of this nature, it is important to discuss the potential legislative framework within which the future upgrading of the North Coast Line between Landsborough and Nambour will be undertaken. Legislation from both Commonwealth and Queensland Governments and specific policies from these levels of government and local government are broadly discussed below and in Appendix B in terms of relevance to the project and the specific objectives which this study is intended to achieve. Planning Schemes for Caloundra City and Maroochy Shire are both discussed in section 5.

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2.7.1 The South East Queensland Regional Plan and South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program 2007

The *South East Queensland Regional Plan 2005–2026* (SEQ Regional Plan) provides the framework for managing rapid growth, associated change, land use and development through a series of strategic directions and regional policies over the next 20 years. The SEQ Regional Plan identifies an integrated transport system throughout the south east as a 'desired regional outcome' with rail playing a key role in achieving this outcome.

Key policy objectives from the SEQ Regional Plan that are considered to be relevant to this study and support its objectives include:

- Support Major Activity Centres such as Nambour with appropriate transport infrastructure, government and community services
- Develop a high quality and accessible public transport network linked to regional and sub-regional centres and services
- Develop and manage strategic road and rail linkages to regional Queensland
- Identify, protect and manage key existing and future transport sites and corridors
- Manage and protect the strategic freight network.

Through the *South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program 2007* (SEQIPP 07), the Government is ensuring:

- The SEQ Regional Plan priorities are reflected in the Queensland Government budget process
- The SEQ Regional Plan priorities are included in the infrastructure and services planning of key state agencies
- The annual investment cycle is adequately informed by data on economic, demographic and development industry performance
- There is effective coordination, planning and service provision by relevant state agencies and Government owned corporations
- There is effective coordination of planning and infrastructure investment with local governments and Sub-Regional Organisations of Councils (Sub-ROCs) across the region.

2.7.2 TransLink Network Plan for South East Queensland (2007)

The *TransLink Network Plan* for South East Queensland (2007) guides how public transport will be improved across South East Queensland. It identifies public transport service and infrastructure improvements over the next 10 years and details a three year action plan.

Strategic priorities of the plan include improving speed, frequency and reliability of public transport, and delivering public transport infrastructure that will attract and cater for growth in the South East Queensland region. These are discussed below in Table 2.7.2.

Table 2.7.2: TransLink Network Plan Strategic Priorities

Category	Strategic Priority	Relevance to study/ study area/region
Making Services Connect	Integration of the network	Central planning of all major routes and services Provision of more feeder services
	Coordination of timetables	Greater coordination of services from key transfer locations including Landsborough and Nambour and other coastal centres
Making services fast, frequent and reliable	Deliver fast and frequent services	Proposed upgrade to improve speed and capacity (and therefore potential to increase service frequency)
	Make services run on time	A duplicated will help to reduce the potential for delays and longer running times for services
	Invest in the rail network	Proposed upgrade a significant investment in the rail network (with TransLink business partners)
	Create a network of priority bus corridors	-

Category	Strategic Priority	Relevance to study/ study area/region
Filling the gaps	Meet minimum standards for service frequency and operating hours	Proposed upgrade to assist in delivering minimum standards for service provision
	Extend the network into developing areas	Although areas around existing stations are not 'developing areas' the potential service improvements that would result from the upgrade may attract more public transport users from the townships along the corridor
	Deliver innovative service options	Future consideration of how feeder services may interact with the rail network
	Ensure services are well patronised	Proposed upgrade should attract additional patronage due to improved travel times and service frequencies- i.e. become an attractive alternative to car transport
Making it easy, comfortable and safe	Make it easy to use and understand	Proposed upgrade to improve station accessibility (and DDA compliance)
	Make it easy to access	Proposed upgrade to consider station accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists, private vehicles and other public transport modes.
	Construct quality stations and stops	Proposed upgrade provides opportunity to improve station accessibility (and DDA compliance)
	Construct quality buses, trains and ferries	Not applicable.
	Enhance safety and security	Proposed upgrade provides opportunity to improve station facilities (and DDA compliance)

The TransLink *Network Plan* recognises the importance of the North Coast Line as a strategic public transport corridor for the region, and identifies a number of infrastructure and service upgrades as part of a three year and a ten year program. Many of the upgrades identified in the three year program have already been completed.

Infrastructure improvements programmed to occur by 2014 include:

- Upgrade of the rail line from Caboolture to Landsborough
- progressive replacement of the current off-peak Railbus service with rail services, mainly between Caboolture and Landsborough.

2.7.3 Rail Network Strategy for Queensland

The Rail Network Strategy for Queensland policy document identifies the following objectives to develop a rail network that is:

- Safe (for operators, users and the public)
- That is ecologically sustainable (provides net benefits to the environment)
- Financially responsible (prudent, informed and responsible investment decisions).

2.7.4 Commonwealth Legislation

Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

The *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* is the key national environmental and heritage legislation, administered by the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts. It streamlines national environmental assessment and approvals process, protects Australian biodiversity and integrates management of important natural and cultural places. This act provides a number of statutory and legislative controls, including the National Heritage List and the Commonwealth Heritage List, and applies to places of National heritage value and to those owned and managed by the Commonwealth.

Under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*, a project will require approval by the Commonwealth if the project involves or has been declared a controlled action which will have, or is likely to have, a significant impact on:

- A matter of national environmental significance, including:
 - World Heritage properties
 - National heritage places

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- RAMSAR wetlands of international significance
- Threatened species and ecological communities
- Migratory species
- Commonwealth marine area
- Nuclear actions (including uranium mining)
- The environment of Commonwealth land (even if taken outside Commonwealth land)
- The environment anywhere in the world (if the action is undertaken by the Commonwealth).

Several matters of National Environmental Significance (NES) under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC) have been identified as present in the study focus area.

The project will be referred to the Commonwealth Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts for a decision to be made as to whether the activity (the project) is a controlled action under the EPBC Act, and the level of environmental assessment required. The NES matters are considered most likely to relate to species or communities protected by this Act.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984

The *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984* provides Aboriginal people with the right to request the federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs to intervene through an injunction in cases where they consider that their cultural heritage is at risk. The Act does not determine significance, or limit the type and place for which protection is being sought.

The Australian Heritage Council Act 2003

The *Australian Heritage Council Act 2003* provides for the establishment of the Australian Heritage Council (AHC), which is the principal advisory group to the Australian Government on heritage issues. The AHC Act also provides for registration of places considered of national significance on the Register of the National Estate (RNE) or the Australian Heritage Places Inventory (AHPI).

The Native Title Act

The *Native Title Act* recognises native title rights and sets down some basic principles in relation to native title in Australia;

- Provides for the validation of past Acts which may be invalid because of the existence of native title

- Provides for a future regime in which native title rights are protected and conditions imposed on acts affecting native title land and waters
- Provides a process by which native title rights can be established and compensation determined, and by which determinations can be made as to whether future grants can be made or acts done over native title land and waters
- Provides for a range of other matters, including the establishment of a National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Land Fund.

The Australian legal system does not recognise native title rights in some areas where things have been done that extinguish native title. Areas where native title has been extinguished include:

- Privately owned land (including family homes and privately owned freehold farms)
- Land covered by residential, commercial and certain other leases
- Some Crown reserves vested in bodies such as a local government or statutory authority
- Areas where governments have built roads, schools and undertaken other public works.

2.7.5 State Legislation

The primary State legislation relevant to the study and project are discussed below. Other State legislation and its potential relevance to the study and project summarised in Appendix B.

State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971

The project has been declared a 'significant project for which an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required' pursuant to Section 26(1)(a) of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971* (SDPWO Act). This is discussed in section 1 of this report.

Nature Conservation Act 1992

The *Nature Conservation Act 1992* provides for the conservation of nature in two (2) key ways – the declaration and management of 'protected areas' and the protection of native wildlife and its habitat.

The study area contains several National Parks, a Conservation Reserve and a Nature Refuge. These are protected tenures under the *Nature Conservation Act 1992*.

It is also noted to contain several flora and fauna species listed under the *Nature Conservation (Wildlife) Regulation 2006*.

Vegetation Management Act 1999

The *Vegetation Management Act 1999* regulates the clearing of mapped, remnant vegetation and essential habitat on freehold land. The *Vegetation Management Act 1999* was introduced to halt broadscale clearing in Queensland. The objectives of the Act are to:

- Preserve remnant regional ecosystems that are endangered or of concern
- Preserve vegetation in areas of high nature conservation value
- Preserve areas vulnerable to land degradation;
- Ensure clearing does not cause land degradation;
- Maintain or increase biodiversity; and
- Maintain ecological processes and encourage ecologically sustainable land use.

The study area includes a range of regional ecosystems, some of which are identified as 'endangered' or 'of concern'. Accordingly, any clearing of native vegetation that is identified as assessable works in Schedule 8 of the *Integrated Planning Act 1997* and which is required to facilitate construction of the rail line, will require approval in accordance with the provisions of the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* and the *Integrated Planning Act 1997*. The project is recognised to be for 'a relevant purpose' under Section 22A of the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* because it has been declared a 'significant project' under the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1972*. As such it will be assessed under part 5 of the *Regional Vegetation Management Code: South East Queensland Bioregion* (a provision of the *Vegetation Management Act 1999*). This code sets out the framework for performance requirements and acceptable solutions where clearing of native vegetation is required.

Queensland Cultural Heritage Act 1992

Historical cultural heritage matters are covered in the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* and subsequent amendments, (which includes the *Queensland Heritage and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2003*). This legislation provides for a listing of places within a Heritage Register. Protection is offered to places that have been entered on the Queensland Heritage Register according to a set of criteria. However the *Queensland Heritage Act 1992* does not apply to Indigenous cultural heritage which is dealt with under the *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003*. This Act requires that

"a person who carries out an activity must take all reasonable and practicable measures to ensure the activity does not harm Aboriginal cultural heritage"

The definition of Aboriginal cultural heritage under the Act is quite broad and includes objects, archaeological or historical evidence of Indigenous occupation of an area, and areas that have particular significance as evidenced by Indigenous tradition and/or history.

The Act states that it is an offence for a person to harm, remove or possess cultural heritage if the person "knows or ought reasonably to know that the object is Aboriginal cultural heritage" (s. 26).

An approved Cultural Heritage Management Plan (CHMP) is the most accepted process for managing potential impacts on cultural heritage. Such a plan is eventually required² when an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) is initiated for a project, but also may be developed voluntarily. Another appropriate way in which compliance with the cultural heritage duty of care can be achieved is through the development of an agreement between at least one Aboriginal Party and the party intending to undertake a project. If agreement is not reached between parties, then mediation, and finally involvement of the Land and Resources Tribunal may follow.

2.7.6 Environmental Offsets

Environmental offsets are a mechanism that can be used in environmental management to compensate for the impacts of developments on ecologically significant features. Offsets are usually identified through an environmental impact and approvals process. They are a relatively recent requirement that has been written into several federal, state and local governmental policies. The federal government released a 'Draft Environmental Offsets Policy for the *Environment Protection & Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*' for public consultation in August 2007. Likewise the Queensland Environment Protection Agency (EPA) also released a draft offsets policy for review at this time. The results of the consultation have not yet been released and the policies remain in draft format. They may be relevant to the project when approvals for operational works are sought, but at this stage the implications of these policies are not known. Certainly, the offsetting initiative has been in operation prior to the release of the draft offsets policies and is regularly used to ameliorate impacts of clearing and habitat destruction.

In Queensland, the *Vegetation Management Act 1999* is associated with the only formal existing offsets policy and it is administered by DNRW. The offsets policy allows some areas of remnant vegetation to be cleared for relevant purposes, providing an ecologically equivalent area can be obtained and protected indefinitely elsewhere. The offsets policy can assist to address elements of the assessment code related to endangered RE's, of concern RE's, threshold RE's, wetlands, waterways and areas of essential habitat.

² Not necessarily to be completed at the time the EIS is finalised

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The area required as an offset can be up to 4 times the area of the vegetation cleared, but is mostly 1:5 to 3 times the area. Generally, more area will have to be provided if the vegetation associated with the proposed offset is in a poor condition. This relates to the goal of ecological equivalence. For example, remnant vegetation is complex and diverse in structure and therefore provides many habitat niches. To provide the same level of habitat with regrowth vegetation requires a much larger area.

An offset must be able to satisfy the following criteria:

- It must not be protected currently (i.e. mapped as remnant vegetation, within conservation reserve or protected as a condition of another development approval)
- Same regional ecosystem or at least have the same conservation status as the area proposed for clearing
- Minimum of 2 ha or capable of being mapped by DNRW as remnant vegetation
- Demonstrate ecological equivalence
- Capable of achieving remnant status within 20 years (maximum)
- A cash payment is not acceptable as an offset.

It is also required that the proponent legally secure the offset, so that the vegetation is protected in perpetuity, and provide DNRW with a copy of a management plan that details how the offset will be managed to achieve remnant status. This may be done through purchase of the land and dedication to a state or local authority, covenant or an agreement with a land owner.

The arrangements for offsets would be finalised following successful completion of the EIS process and in the context of vegetation clearing applications under the VMA 1999. The Queensland Government is currently in the process of setting up a Green Invest program that would assist applicants in the identification and management of offsets under a market-like situation. The main functions of Green Invest will be:

- Strategic offset identification – identifying and targeting priority areas of environmental value that are most likely to satisfy requirements of regulator’s policies
- Develop and maintain an offset register – a register will be developed to record details of offset suppliers
- Contract management – involvement in monitoring the delivery of the management plan.

The Green Invest program is part of the Queensland Government, Environmental Offsets Policy that was released for comment in August 2007. At this point in time, the policy has not been finalised and the delivery date of the Green Invest program is unknown.

It is anticipated that the offset requirements for the project will be calculated as part of the EIS, once the final design details are known. At this point Queensland Transport will have a choice to identify areas of potential offsets in order to secure land now for these purposes in the future or to delay the identification of offsets until permits for clearing are submitted. Whilst delaying the identification of offsets may result in the involvement of Green Invest, it may also lead to a higher economical cost arising from increasing land values.