



ENGINEERS
AUSTRALIA

Cross River Rail

Request for Project Change
27 March 2017

About Engineers Australia

The Institution of Engineers Australia (Engineers Australia) is the not-for-profit professional association for engineers. Established in 1919, Engineers Australia is constituted by Royal Charter to advance the science and practice of engineering for the benefit of the community.

Engineers Australia is the trusted voice of the profession. We are the global home for engineering professionals renowned as leaders in shaping a sustainable world.

Introduction

Engineers Australia would like to thank the Queensland Government for the opportunity to make comment on the Request for Project Change (February 2017) to the previously proposed reference design for the Cross River Rail project.

Engineers Australia congratulates the Queensland Government for continuing to progress the design refinement for this vital project. Engineers Australia supports the valuable additional work represented within this Request for Project Change, particularly in relation to the construction planning aspects that greatly assist with definition of revised project scope and community impacts.

It is clear from this Request for Project Change that additional design effort has been focussed on the integration of this project into its pre-existing environment. However, Engineers Australia would like to take this opportunity to raise some further considerations and observations that we trust will strengthen the overall project outcomes and may assist in the important task of gaining community 'ownership' for the implementation of this vital project.

At this stage of the development process, these further considerations and observations by Engineers Australia primarily relate to Volume 1 of the Request for Project Change documentation, since Volume 1 addresses the proposed changes, the reasons for these changes, and the effects of these changes.

Planning Integration

In the current absence of an effective Strategic Integrated Transport Plan for South East Queensland, Engineers Australia appreciates that it is difficult now to provide the appropriate strategic context for such a major project.

This is particularly relevant for this project, since it not only has strategic transport outcomes, but also has significant land use planning outcomes and indeed impacts on the community's ability to achieve the overall desired outcomes outlined in the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan currently in the process of being finalised for public release in mid-2017. However, Engineers Australia considers that this essential integration should be further emphasised within this Request for Project Change.

Tangible ways of achieving this additional planning emphasis within the current project change documentation are suggested as:

1. Section 1.3 (Relationships with Other Projects) and Section 5.2 (Transport Network) should also refer to the strategic network projects identified within the Draft South East Queensland Regional Plan (October 2016), over both that plan's 50-year strategic horizon and more specifically within the 25-year focus horizon for that draft plan, particularly with relation to the role of Cross River Rail as a strategic network expansion enabler.
2. The discussions and plans of each of the proposed station locations (Fig 5.4 -Boggo Road; Fig 5.6 – Woolloongabba; Fig 5.7 – Albert Street; Fig 5.8 – Roma Street; Fig 6.13 – Exhibition) should also specifically identify neighbouring bus interchanges to emphasise the existence of those nodes together with the ability for seamless mode transfers between bus and rail services. Currently they are not shown as key local characteristics of relevance to the Cross River Rail project.
3. Where key land use planning has been identified that is relevant to the functionality of Cross River Rail, it should be shown and highlighted as important to community outcomes. For example, the planned land use redevelopment near the Exhibition Station; the proposed land use development near Boggo Road and Woolloongabba stations; and the redevelopment master plans for the Roma Street precinct should all be highlighted (the inclusion of a dedicated walkway between Boggo Road and PA Hospital is noted). This integration and connectivity is an important outcome for this project.
4. It is noted that the scope proposed for this project has been reduced from the reference project scope, particularly identified by the shifted tunnel portal locations thereby reducing overall tunnel length from 10km to 5.9km. The project change report identifies an anticipated 5 year construction period (2018-2023) with a target demand rail plan for 2026 (ie +3 years post-commissioning) in Fig 5.2. There is little discussion about the implications for the 2036 target demand (ie +13 years post-commissioning) identified in Section 4.2 and Table 4.1, or the implications beyond that date that will arise from outcomes of the South East Queensland Regional Planning (both within its 25 year and 50 year horizons). It is suggested that the currently proposed project scope should be presented as a first stage of a larger scheme that is proposed to be incrementally implemented over time. Only in this way can the community and industry have confidence that the proposed current investment is sound in the longer term; appropriate future-proofing has been incorporated; strategic network expansion is being planned to meet future planning needs; and that appropriate integration (both land use and transport) requirements have been considered.
5. Whilst the content of the Request for Project Change report deals primarily with passenger rail requirements, these requirements cannot be addressed in isolation. As noted in Section 4.4 of the Project Change report passenger and freight rail services share a significant proportion of the South East Queensland rail network.

The somewhat brief discussion in Section 4.4, based on a reduction in forecast freight demand, seems at odds with other marketplace data (such as that being used to justify the national inland rail project investment) and concludes that the existing track demand conflicts between Dutton Park and Salisbury should remain for the foreseeable future. This results in continuing the existing constraints on Port of Brisbane operations in peak commuter periods; reliance on possible solutions by ARTC (potentially rendering the Dutton Park flyover as redundant infrastructure); and strategic constraints on passenger train conflicts between all station and express service patterns over this section. These conflicts will be exacerbated should the future passenger rail corridor to Greenbank, Flagstone and Beaudesert be realised as foreshadowed within the draft South East Queensland Regional Plan. It would appear that this significant strategic issue is insufficiently addressed within the Request for Project Change report.

6. The discussion in Section 5.2.2 regarding Roma Street station changes, is based on the premise that the Long-Distance Coach terminal will be relocated "to a location to be determined by the proponent" (Queensland Government). This facility is a key part of the regional and state-wide transport network and is historically located at Roma Street to facilitate relatively seamless inter-modal transfers with all other public transport modes servicing South East Queensland. It is suggested that the determination of where this facility will be relocated to is an important aspect of the community consultation process and should have been addressed as an integral part of the overall project planning process.

Demand Forecasting

The discussion on demand forecasting in Section 4.2 of the Request for Project Change report appropriately identifies that the demand forecasts are a key driver of the project justification and are influenced by a complex array of variables associated with the overall development of our broader community, not the least of which is land use trends and changes.

The average daily user demands stated in Section 4.2 of the Request for Project Change report equate to a level by 2026 of 208% of the 2015 levels (equating to an average annual growth rate of 6.9%pa over that 11-year period), and a level by 2036 of 289% of the 2015 levels (equating to an average annual growth rate between 2026 and 2036 of 3.3%pa). Whilst the report focuses on the 2026 demand levels (despite this being only +3years post-commissioning as discussed above), there is little discussion regarding the requirements to address the forecast 2036 demand levels, even if it is through a staged implementation process.

Table 5.9 provides forecast demand levels in the form of passenger movements at the respective station locations forecast for the year of opening (approximately 2023, based on a 5year construction period). Whilst the primary purpose of this data is to identify the impacts of the proposed project changes, ie demand forecasts use the reference project forecasts as a datum, there is little discussion regarding the impacts of changed land use near the proposed stations. As an example, passenger throughput numbers are now

forecast to decrease significantly at Roma Street station, presumably since the long distance coach terminal is now to be located elsewhere and the western tower of the existing air space development is to be demolished. However, with new air space development (potentially over the changed station location and possibly over the existing surface platforms at Roma Street Station) the passenger throughput demand at this location could vary significantly from those within the Request for Project Change report.

Whilst it is appreciated that any such developments would introduce a range of additional planning parameters that cannot be accurately defined at this time, such outcomes should be discussed and planned for so that the broader outcomes from this project can be more widely understood and appreciated within our community.

Conclusion

Engineers Australia supports long term strategies that include land use management, infrastructure pipelines and sustainable communities.

Engineers Australia believes that governments should prepare, fund and publish long term plans for cities and regions; integrated infrastructure, land use and transport network plans that support those regional plans; and that communities should be comprehensively engaged to ensure the of high level of ownership to those strategic plans.

Engineers Australia welcomes the release of the Request for Project Change report for Cross River Rail, a project that we regard as vital to the development of Greater Brisbane and the South East Queensland region generally.

Engineers Australia looks forward to any opportunity to discuss these comments and observations on the Request for Project Change report in more detail with you.

Contact:

Stacey Rawlings
Division Manager – Qld
Ph: 07 3226 3041
E: srawlings@engineersaustralia.org.au



ENGINEERS
AUSTRALIA