

**OFFICE OF THE
INTERIM ADMINISTRATOR
City of Logan**

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Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committees
Parliament House
PO Box 6100
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

INQUIRY INTO THE MANAGEMENT OF THE INLAND RAIL PROJECT BY THE AUSTRALIAN RAIL TRACK CORPORATION AND THE COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment to the inquiry into the management of the Inland Rail project by the Australian Rail Track Corporation and the Commonwealth Government.

Background

While Council acknowledges the economic and nation building rationale behind the wider Inland Rail project, Council has been strongly advocating to ensure community concerns are heard and addressed in relation to this project. Accountability from the Australian Rail Track Corporation (ARTC), the Federal Government and the State Government in managing possible environmental impacts (noise, vibration and dust) is critically important. Ensuring the appropriate mitigation of those impacts is also vital and is currently falling short of community expectations.

The following submission addresses the concerns of Council and those raised by residents over a number of years with regards to alignment, impacts on associated infrastructure, community engagement, coordination with other levels of government and related infrastructure projects.

The City of Logan takes in a large portion of Inland Rail's most northern project, Kagaru to Acacia Ridge and Bromelton. This section of the Inland Rail will require enhancements to an existing interstate track, which would allow double-stacking capability along the route. The project includes lowering the rail line under five bridges, constructing new crossing loops at Larapinta and Kagaru, and extending the existing loops at Greenbank and Bromelton.

Significant future impacts have been identified, despite it being an enhancement project. The proposed alignment runs through what will become one of the most densely-populated areas in Logan. Currently there is a daily peak of eight trains per day between Kagaru and Acacia Ridge. Once Inland Rail is operational, this frequency will substantially increase to an expected peak number of 45 trains per day by 2040. In addition, Inland Rail trains would be up to 1.8km long and about 40 per cent of each train would have capability to be double-stacked.

The following sections outline Council and the Logan community's specific concerns in the context of those matters being considered by the Senate inquiry.

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Route planning and selection processes

Like 70 per cent of the wider Inland Rail project, the Kagaru to Acacia Ridge and Bromelton project route involves enhancing existing freight rail corridor. While doing so has obvious efficiencies over building new rail in a greenfield corridor, the decision to enhance the rail line has caused significant concern for those in the Logan community who reside close to the corridor.

When landowners purchased their properties, they would not have anticipated the increase to size and frequency of train movements due to Inland Rail. There is a community perception that the marked increase in rail freight activity will diminish the quality of life of nearby residents. Uncertainty over exactly how Inland Rail will affect them and whether mitigation efforts will work is also fuelling community angst over the project.

Some of the major concerns centre on noise and air quality impacts, particularly coal dust. Residents have started community groups opposing the Kagaru to Acacia Ridge and Bromelton project in its current form and have been vocal in local media and through the Kagaru to Acacia Ridge and Bromelton Community Consultative Committee.

Future residents of Logan also stand to be affected by the project. The alignment runs through what will become one of the most densely populated areas in the region. The south west region of Logan is one of the state's fastest growing population corridors and will be home to two satellite cities by 2041 - Yarrabilba and Greater Flagstone. Flagstone, which is in close proximity to the Kagaru to Acacia Ridge and Bromelton corridor, will house an estimated 120,000 people upon completion.

Concurrently, the ARTC is awaiting a decision of the Queensland Government's Office of the Coordinator-General as to whether the Kagaru to Acacia Ridge and Bromelton section of Inland Rail should be considered a 'Coordinated Project'. This is the only section in Queensland that is not subject to the more rigorous process that is associated with a coordinated project. Council considers that this is the preferred approach in light of the complex and various impacts that need to be considered.

Connections with other freight infrastructure, including ports and intermodal hubs

As the northern most end of the Inland Rail project, the Kagaru to Acacia Ridge and Bromelton projects includes connections to two intermodal hubs: Acacia Ridge located in Brisbane and Bromelton, located in the Scenic Rim. Council supports the development of Bromelton as a key employment hub for both Scenic Rim and Logan residents accommodating medium and large scale industrial activities of regional, state and national significance.

Bromelton is dependent on a reliable, efficient road network to distribute into Greater Brisbane via Mt Lindesay Highway. At present this crucial transport link carries approximately 40,000 vehicles daily and this is expected to increase to 63,900 by 2031.

Safety on the Mt Lindesay Highway continues to be a major concern for the community. In the almost-nine year period from January 1, 2010, to September 30, 2018, there were 535 crashes, 15 fatalities and 366 people hospitalised on the highway from Browns Plains Road to the Queensland/New South Wales border.

An analysis of the most recent Queensland traffic census data shows the Mt Lindesay Highway has a comparable rate of heavy vehicle usage (ranging from about 9-16% of total daily traffic across

various sections) to that of the Bruce Highway (10-17%) and the Pacific Motorway (7-14%) in South East Queensland. Both the Pacific Motorway and Bruce Highway however are recognised as key freight routes by the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development and have superior capacity (up to eight lanes at different points), better pavement condition and enhanced safety measures. Council is concerned that Inland Rail (via the Bromelton intermodal hub) will boost the Mt Lindesay's heavy vehicle usage figures even higher without the commensurate investment into the highway's infrastructure.

Without a complete plan for priority upgrades, increased congestion and increased travel times, along with reduced safety and productivity by constrained freight routes, funnelling of traffic onto local roads and constrained delivery of public bus services will continue on the Mt Lindesay Highway.

Council would like to see commitment from both the Queensland and Australian Governments for an end-to-end solution for the Mt Lindesay Highway to improve safety and unlock benefits for the national freight industry should the Inland Rail alignment utilise Bromelton as a key intermodal terminal.

Engagement on route alignment, procurement and employment

The route was selected without consultation, and early engagement consisted of ARTC informing residents of the already finalised project alignment without the opportunity to influence route selection or offer alternatives. This approach has led to heightened community angst and frustration that is still ongoing. Further information sessions were infrequent and in locations that did not align with the location of the project or areas of the city that are most impacted.

While the establishment of the Kagaru to Acacia Ridge and Bromelton Community Consultative Committee in November 2018 was a positive step in improving engagement with residents, the format has led to frustrations as the general public is not given a reasonable opportunity to engage and ask questions of the ARTC in these forums.

Council believes there is still more ARTC needs to do to demonstrate a genuine commitment to community engagement and consultation.

Council has also made a number of suggestions of potential ways the ARTC could better engage with the Logan community modelled on a project carried out by the Department of Environment and Science (Queensland Government) in partnership with Clean Air Wynnum and Bayside Creeks Catchment Group (Greater Brisbane). This community-led project seeks to address public concerns of air quality particularly around coal dust, and improve community knowledge and understanding of air monitoring processes and regulation.

'Communities play an important role in identifying and addressing environmental issues, and can often make significant contributions through citizen science activities. Citizen science involves public participation and collaboration in scientific research with the aim to increase scientific knowledge. This project enables significant data collection and information gathering by community members (citizens) in partnership with the department's air quality experts and empowers the community to address an environmental concern.'

(Wynnum citizen science air monitoring project, Interim Report, April 2019).

Council is working closely with the ARTC to assist in better facilitating engagement with the community where possible. An example of this is that the Kagaru to Acacia Ridge and Bromelton project team is now utilising a Council library space for drop-in, face-to-face community engagement for the month of October and November 2019.

Collaboration between governments

The Kagaru to Acacia Ridge and Bromelton project uses the alignment of the existing Sydney to Brisbane interstate freight line that is also located within the same corridor proposed for the Salisbury to Beaudesert Passenger Rail. Salisbury to Beaudesert is a future passenger rail link for South East Queensland intended to service residents within the City of Logan, Brisbane and Scenic Rim local government areas.

Long-term regional planning by the Queensland Government has identified a need for passenger rail to service Logan's south-west corridor, particularly the State Priority Development Areas (PDAs) of Yarrabilba and Greater Flagstone with an expected population of 170,000 people. Logan City Council has long been advocating for this critical infrastructure to be delivered to meet the growing demand.

The Queensland Government completed its corridor presentation study in 2017 however there has been little progress since this time. Infrastructure Australia has also identified the project as a priority initiative with the timeframe for corridor preservation categorised as near term (0 to 5 years).

As both the Kagaru to Acacia Ridge and Bromelton and Salisbury to Beaudesert passenger rail projects require significant upgrades within the same corridor, Council considers that there would be great economic and community benefit to deliver both projects simultaneously such as minimising construction-related disruption, boosting work efficiencies and delivering a tangible benefit to the community through access to affordable and efficient public transport options.

Further, if Kagaru to Acacia Ridge and Bromelton is considered in isolation from Salisbury to Beaudesert, Council believes there is a risk that the cumulative impacts of both projects on the rail corridor might not be properly taken into account. Council will continue to advocate to both the Queensland and Commonwealth governments for the next critical steps for the Salisbury to Beaudesert passenger rail project to be undertaken – securing the corridor, completing the business case, and funding for construction – ideally to be delivered simultaneously with Inland Rail.

In summary

Council will continue to advocate on behalf of the Logan community for an Inland Rail solution that will minimise noise, emissions and dust impacts on residents. Council also strongly holds the position that the related Salisbury to Beaudesert passenger rail project needs to be delivered concurrently with Inland Rail.

Thank you again for the opportunity to make this submission.

Yours sincerely,

Tamara O'Shea
Interim Administrator, City of Logan