

The fifth meeting of the Southern Darling Downs Community Consultative Committee (the committee) was held at Inglewood Civic Centre on 21 March 2019.

The meeting was chaired by Mr Graham Clapham and attended by nine of the 15 committee members. The meeting was also attended by Dr John Macintosh, from Water Solutions, who has been appointed by the committee to provide a review of the development of the Condamine floodplain crossing solution and other hydrology work. In addition, 10 community members observed the meeting.

ARTC advised it had appointed New Access to provide mental health support to community members experiencing anxiety or depression. People wishing to access the service can contact 1300 971 309.

The committee reviewed the Committee Charter. Motions were passed to extend meetings by 10 minutes to allow observers the opportunity to ask questions and that if members representing an organisation are unable to attend a committee meeting, they are able to appoint a proxy as notified to the Chair prior to the meeting.

ARTC presented a design update on geotechnical investigations, hydrology, road/rail interfaces and crossing loops. ARTC advised the proposed treatments for road/rail interfaces were still under development. A committee member questioned the distance between public roads for ARTC to consider consolidating them. ARTC advised that it varied depending on traffic use and journey times, but in the range of up to five kilometres. ARTC advised that any proposed changes to public roads were subject to the approval of the relevant road authorities.

The Chair asked how future growth of farm machinery was being catered for in the design of road over rail and rail over road crossings. ARTC advised clearance widths and heights were guided by council and Department of Transport and Main Roads' specifications. A committee member recommended that ARTC should confirm with councils that width and height regulations had recently been updated to reflect the increase in the size of present farm machinery. Another committee member asked whether unformed road reserves were being considered for consolidation. ARTC confirmed unformed road reserves were being treated as normal roads.

ARTC advised there is potential for five crossing loops in the NSW/QLD Border to Gowrie (B2G) section of Inland Rail. The loops will be two kilometres long to allow for 1.8-kilometre trains with future proofing for 3.6-kilometre trains. The loop locations are in development and anticipated to be released in the coming months.

ARTC gave an update on the progress of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), noting it was expected to be submitted to the Coordinator-General in September 2019 and, following review, would be open for public submission (to the Coordinator-General's office) for a minimum of four weeks.

Dr John Macintosh presented a summary of his review of the Condamine floodplain technical studies. Dr Macintosh acknowledged that the technical information is fit for purpose, and it is his job to engage with the community, so they are empowered to make their own decisions about the impacts. Dr Macintosh tabled an interim report for the committee's review. This is available at inlandrail.artc.com.au/sdd-ccc. Dr Macintosh noted he would soon be holding a meeting in Brookstead to engage with landowners on the floodplain.

A committee member raised concern that the 1-in-100 flood event modelled has occurred in the floodplain every 4.5 years for the last 90 years. ARTC responded that the 1-in-100 flood event is a statistical number and does not mean it could not occur more frequently. It is a technical term used in all design development and is industry standard practice. Dr Macintosh advised the flood model had been developed to look at relative impact and the relative change with and without the rail line, and it was not about the frequency. A committee member asked that an independent expert on soils be engaged to assess erosion. ARTC advised this request would be considered.

A committee member asked whether Dr Macintosh had personally checked the flood levels. Dr Macintosh advised he had not, but that the important part of the process was the interpretation of the flood modelling to provide a consistent platform to compare to reality.

A community member raised concerns about police and security personnel being present at recent community events. ARTC responded that it is a no-harm organisation and has a duty of care to staff and contractors. It advised that the security procedures applied for the B2G project were consistent with those applied across the Inland Rail programme.

ARTC discussed the work undertaken to date to inform the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) component of the EIS. ARTC asked committee members if they agreed that the results were reflective of what they are hearing in the community. A committee member questioned the survey score given to community wellbeing and the survey sample size. ARTC responded that the information displayed was a summary of key themes identified in the survey and not the answers to any specific question.

A community member asked about local business opportunities on the project. ARTC stated its commitment to maximising local and indigenous participation, and then provided an overview of how local content is being considered in project planning.

Committee members agreed the next meeting would be held in June 2019.

The Chair welcomed questions from observers. One observer asked whether the B2G section had been costed and whether it was publicly available. ARTC advised the Federal Government developed the route and cost estimate, which is updated regularly as the design progressed. The updated cost estimate is not publicly available. Another observer asked whether ARTC is disseminating information on the land acquisition process. ARTC advised it has a land acquisition fact sheet.

Mr Graham Clapham

Chair

Inland Rail Southern Darling Downs Community Consultative Committee

1 April 2019