



SUBMISSION BY THE RAIL, TRAM AND BUS UNION (QLD BRANCH)

On the Bus and Train Tunnel Project Reference Design

TO THE BUS AND TRAIN PROJECT TEAM

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS QUEENSLAND

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Emailed to

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Introduction

The Australian Rail, Tram and Bus Industry Union (RTBU) acknowledge the importance of the Bus and Train Tunnel Project (BaT Project) and the Reference Design.

The RTBU welcomes any new and appropriate investment in rail and bus infrastructure in SEQ as it is recognised that current public transport infrastructure is not able to cater for anticipated population growth in SEQ.

For this reason RTBU was a strong supporter of the Cross River Rail (CRR) project proceeding.

The RTBU is a federally registered union of employees with a membership of 35,000 of which approximately 5,000 are in South-East Queensland. The RTBU has members employed in the provision of:

- Passenger bus & rail
- Freight rail
- Rail services, Infrastructure and maintenance

RTBU members perform a range of functions including operations, maintenance and administration. As the representative union of employees in passenger and freight rail transport, the RTBU maintains a vital interest in promoting the social and economic importance of rail infrastructure to the public.

In particular, RTBU members and officials have consistently contributed to debate on matters such as urban planning, efficient passenger and freight transit, energy use, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and social justice.

This submission is part of an important and ongoing community discussion about the many dimensions of urban passenger rail and rail freight transport.

The RTBU firmly believes that the community and economic impacts of – effective and efficient transport networks; safe and viable transport services; and environmentally sustainable transport infrastructure – need to be comprehensively covered by the BaT project.

This submission will identify a number of apparent weaknesses in the BaT Project Reference Design.

In light of the RTBU's unique understanding of rail and bus industry operational and technical issues, we would welcome the opportunity to provide further input as the BaT project proceeds.

The RTBU would also be grateful for the opportunity to be involved with any formal advisory bodies that may provide ongoing advice on planning, implementation, operational and/or technical issues in the future concerning the BaT project.

For further information about any matter contained in this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me on (07) 3839 4988 or e-mail owen.doogan@rtbu.com.au.

Yours sincerely

Owen Doogan

**State Secretary Qld
Branch**

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General Comments regarding the Bus and Train (BaT) Project Reference Design

The RTBU welcomes appropriate investment in rail and bus infrastructure in SEQ as it is recognised that current public transport infrastructure is not able to cater for anticipated population growth in SEQ.

For this reason RTBU was a strong supporter of the Cross River Rail (CRR) project proceeding.

The CRR project was the result of a robust and detailed examination of all the factors over several years evolving from the earlier Inner City Rail Capacity Study (ICRCS) to determine the best rail transport outcome for future passenger rail demand in SEQ.

Accordingly CRR was ranked number one of projects ready to proceed by Infrastructure Australia.

It is noted that the BaT Project reference design provides little detail as to the operational strategy; it only provides a basic engineering concept alignment. As such the reference design is absent of important information on throughput capacity or frequency of services or longer-term performance characteristics and capability.

The RTBU's is disappointed that the CRR proposal is not going to proceed due to a desire to reduce the scope and the cost. Notwithstanding this, the RTBU welcomes investment in rail and bus infrastructure in SEQ but with reservations relating to the current proposal which is addressed in this paper.

It is our view that if the BaT Project is to proceed, it needs to make provisions consistent with the future rail capacity throughput that was to be provided by CRR.

It appears based on the limited information of the reference design the BaT Tunnel does not provide anywhere near the same degree of capacity and future proofing that CRR provided.

This is of concern to us and we would suggest this should be addressed.

The RTBU supports investment in public transport infrastructure to provide the capacity needed to cater for the expected strong growth of public transport movements associated with continuing population growth in SEQ. However, the limitations outlined in this submission should be addressed for the sake of the current taxpayers who are being asked to fund a project that is not delivering the rail outcomes that it should and future taxpayers who will be required to fix it.

Responsibility for Wise Use of Public Funds

Public transport projects of the scale of those recently proposed, whether a rail tunnel (as proposed under CRR), a bus tunnel as proposed under Suburbs 2 City, or a combined rail and bus tunnel as proposed as the BaT Tunnel Project (the Project) represent a massive/enormous commitment of public funds. Those entrusted with the wise spending of public funds must ensure that these projects don't just meet today's requirements. They must also ensure a substantial level of future proofing is provided including spare capacity and also expansion options to allow for future growth.

There must also be a strong emphasis on providing "value" over the asset life for the investment in public funds required. A short term focus on cost containment, while reducing the investment required now can require future generations to fund expansions of the project at many times current costs, this may require future disruptions on busier networks or may so constrain the fundamental project boundaries so that logical expansions can never be built.

This is particularly important for tunnel projects where expansion of the tunnel dimensions is not possible, expansions of facilities such as underground stations is impracticable and expansion of the project boundaries at a later time will be difficult, costly and disruptive.

Provision for Growth on the Corridor south of Dutton Park

It is noted that the Project reference design provides only a basic engineering concept alignment with little detail as to operational strategy. The reference design does not provide important information on throughput capacity or frequency of services or longer-term performance characteristics and capability.

From the limited information contained in the reference design, our knowledge of the CRR project and the analysis of demand growth and rail network configurations and constraints that underpinned the solution to demand growth as well as capacity that CRR represented, it appears that the Project does not provide anywhere near the same level of capacity and future proofing that CRR provided. It also appears that relying only on the limited surface rail tracks of the existing network, particularly south of Dutton Park will limit any potential increased inner-city rail capacity to be provided by the Project.

Unless the Project makes an allowance for a 10-20 year plus capacity solution, this investment in enhancement of rail network capacity may reasonably be perceived as not be a good use of taxpayer's funds.

The community reaction to the impacts of additional surface tracks between Dutton Park and Yeerongpilly and a desire to avoid this constrained section resulted in the CRR tunnel being extended to Yeerongpilly.

This change minimised the potentially substantial property and community impacts on the suburbs of Fairfield, Annerley, Yeronga and Yeerongpilly.

The dual tracks of the rail component of the Project, as indicated in the reference design diagrams will join the existing network where there are currently only 3 tracks.

This results in a convergence of 5 tracks into the 3 tracks resulting in competition for available capacity on the existing network tracks south of the existing Dutton Park Station, a section of network which is already severely constrained nearing its capacity.

This may result in a new rail network capacity constraint that will need to be addressed in the future if the Project is to achieve its theoretical capacity. This may take the form of extension of the tunnel to Yeronga or further south of Yeerongpilly.

This may logically lead to future resummptions of significant additional corridor width between Dutton Park and Yeerongpilly or even as far as Salisbury.

There appears to be a lack of foresight to “future proof” this project which may reasonably be perceived as a inferior use of valuable public funding as it will push significant funding and disruption costs into the future. The consequence is likely to be a need to expand the Project footprint to allow this project to fully reach its potential capacity, if this can be achieved at all.

Provision for Growth on the Corridor north of Brisbane

The reference design also shows no connection to the north to expand capacity in this area. CRR models showed this additional capacity was needed at Day 1, and also allowed for a connection to the future Trouts Road transport corridor but this is not indicated in the reference design. Lacking these connections reduces the effectiveness of the BaT Project to service growth from the north of Brisbane.

Provision for Growth in Services and Stations

The limited information indicates there is only provision for 170 metre long stations with single side platforms. This is a short sighted decision. If the Project is to attract the level of passengers to justify the investment it should make allowance for higher level station throughput in the future otherwise the saturation capacity with loading and unloading passengers will ultimately constrain capacity. We would suggest there needs to be provision for additional platforms and longer platforms as well as high speed and capacity lifts.

At the very least, the Project should be constructed in a way so as not to preclude/exclude the ability have 9 car trains and island platform with 4 rail tracks.

CRR’s planning indicated that the move to 9-car trains was required before 2031 to adequately deal with the increasing capacity on the network, which cannot be accommodated with 7-car trains. 9-car trains also offer the most cost-effective

method of mass transit, with one train capable of transporting up to 1500 passengers.

The disruption and expense associated with expanding the underground stations in the future would be prohibitive. It is in our view undesirable for a limitation being embedded into this project and the opportunity for a relatively inexpensive capacity expansion in the future by allowing the operation of additional carriages and the carriage of significantly greater numbers of passengers on each service will be lost.

Reduced Connectivity

It appears, based on the limited information in the reference design that with the removal of Dutton park station, there will not be any simple connection to the Cleveland line for passengers on services utilising the Project. There also appears to be a loss of connectivity and functional connection to the PA hospital precincts and loss of effective and seamless connection to UQ via Boggo Road bus station.

Impact on Services during Construction and in Operation

The area of the network between Salisbury and Dutton Park is a shared passenger and freight section on the metropolitan network and any construction activity has potential adverse implications for both passenger and freight services on this corridor. Currently the dual gauge line from Salisbury to Dutton Park is shared between Gold Coast express services in the peak hours and in the non-peak is used by freight trains. The lack of track enhancement in this area will no doubt present significant capacity challenges for this single dual gauge track going forward.

Noting this capacity challenge the RTBU would like to understand how the construction and staging of surface works will impact on existing freight train services that use the existing surface network where the Project ties-in with the existing network.

The RTBU would also like to understand how operation of the Project post construction will impact on rail freight reliability and capacity going forward.

The rail freight industry is facing significant challenges maintaining modal share; and construction impacts and post construction limitations on operations may have a significant detrimental impact on rail freight operators using this section of the network and their customers.