



The Queensland Murray-Darling Committee Inc.'s submission on the Surat Basin (Infrastructure Development and Management) Bill 2012

3 October 2012

Submission to:

The Research Director
State Development, Infrastructure & Industry Committee
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This submission is presented by the Chief Executive Officer, Geoff Penton, on behalf of the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee Inc. (QMDC). QMDC is a regional natural resource management (NRM) group that supports communities in the Queensland Murray-Darling Basin (QMDB) to sustainably manage their natural resources.

1.0 Background

QMDC has made submissions and deputations to both the Australian and Queensland Governments seeking improvement to legislation, policies, and planning in order to prevent adverse impacts to the extent, value and function of the region's natural resources.

QMDC seeks the protection of natural resource assets and the development of a railway network that is not only informed by local and regional NRM knowledge and best available science but also meets the future needs of rural Queensland. .



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2.0 General comments

QMDC wishes to raise the following issues for consideration by the Committee:

2.1 The Bill needs to take into account national and state biodiversity policy and strategies e.g. Draft National Wildlife Corridors Plan and the objectives of the EPBC Act and the impact the SBR project will have on statewide bioregional corridors

2.2 The Bill needs to consider the impact the SBR project will have on the Southern Brigalow Belt. This region's NRM Plan identifies the baseline of natural resource assets in the QMDB. The target intentions for vegetation and biodiversity are summarised below:

Vegetation and Biodiversity Target Intentions

Priority landscape scale ecosystems are maintained or improved.

Natural assets including native vegetation are managed or conserved to maintain ecological processes and ecosystem linkages, and increased in extent and abundance at priority catchment scales.

Increase in area of sustainably managed native vegetation for landscape and biodiversity outcomes through traditional and innovative economic uses.

Areas of identified high nature conservation significance are maintained in current condition and improved against the Common Nature Conservation Classification System.

Decline in populations of 'at risk' flora and fauna species are halted.

The biodiversity condition and ecological health of native vegetation in priority catchments are maintained or improved.

2.3 The SBR project needs to be developed to enable both the agricultural sector and Queensland communities to access and utilize the railway network to freight produce/commodities. This will reduce the demand for trucks and lessen the ever increasing impact trucks are having on existing highways. It will also reduce overall energy consumption and cost. QMDC asserts that the project should not rely on large scale mining for its sole purpose.

2.4 Increasing the availability of passenger rail transport will have the same benefits described above.

2.5 The potential for multi-use easements/ corridors must also be considered in order to reduce the impact on vegetation and agricultural land.

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For further information, contact QMDC on (07) 4637 6200 or visit www.qmdc.org.au

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