

Coordinator-General's Change Report

on the

Environmental Impact Statement

for the

Gateway Upgrade Project

**UNDER PART (4) OF THE QUEENSLAND
*STATE DEVELOPMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
ORGANISATION ACT 1971***

April 2007

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This is the Coordinator-General's Change Report for the Gateway Upgrade Project prepared in accordance with section 35I of the *State Development and Public Works Organisation Act 1971* (SDPWO Act). Its purpose is to evaluate the environmental effects of the proposed changes to the project which was the subject of an evaluation in the Coordinator-General's Report of July 2005 (signed 5 August 2005).

1.1 Background

Queensland Motorways Limited (the Proponent) proposes to construct the Gateway Upgrade Project (GUP) from Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road in the south of Brisbane to Nudgee Road in the north.

The GUP comprises:

- A two lane widening to six lanes of the existing Gateway Motorway between Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road and Wynnum Road;
- A four lane widening to eight lanes of the existing Motorway between Wynnum Road and Lytton Road;
- A new six lane bridge crossing the Brisbane River downstream of the existing Gateway Bridge;
- Introduction of electronic toll plazas, and associated infrastructure north of the existing bridge;
- A new four lane Motorway through the old Brisbane Airport site across Airport drive to reconnect with the existing Motorway south of Nudgee Road; and
- A new interchange for additional access to Brisbane airport.

On 22 December 2003 the GUP was declared to be a significant project for which an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required in accordance with Part 4 of the SDPWO Act.

The EIS was advertised for public comment for a period of six weeks from 22 August 2004 and public and Advisory Agency submissions were received.

In response to the issues raised in submissions about the EIS the Proponent prepared a Supplementary EIS in March 2005. Key EIS findings and an Executive Summary can be viewed via the Main Roads web site at www.mainroads.qld.gov.au along with details of how to obtain a free copy.

On 5 August 2005, an evaluation of the EIS under section 35 of the SDPWO Act was completed and it was determined that the project should proceed, subject to a number of conditions. It was concluded that the impacts described in the EIS and Supplementary EIS were able to be mitigated and managed effectively through implementation of the conditions set out in the Coordinator-General's Report. The Report may be viewed at www.coordinatorgeneral.qld.gov.au

1.2 Request for Project Change

Part 4, Division 3A of the SDPWO Act provides that the Coordinator-General can evaluate changes made to a project by a proponent of a significant project following completion of the Coordinator-General's report evaluating the EIS.

Section 35C of the SDPWO Act enables the Coordinator-General to evaluate the environmental effects of the proposed change, its effects on the project and any other related matters.

By letter dated 19 December 2006, Connell Wagner, acting on behalf of the project Proponent, provided a written notice in accordance with section 35D of the SDPWO Act. A "Changes to Gateway Upgrade Project Environmental Impact Statement Report" dated December 2006 detailing proposed changes to the project and their effects was subsequently revised and resubmitted in January 2007. A further revision was provided in March 2007 that included a summary of consultation activities.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED CHANGES

The project retains the key elements of the project which was subject to an EIS in 2004/5 and the proposed changes are relatively minor in the overall scope of the Project. Proposed changes to the GUP reference Project are:

- Northern extension of Gateway Motorway alterations; and
- Kingsford Smith Drive on/off ramps

2.1 Northern extension of Gateway Motorway alterations

It is proposed that the new southbound carriageway be extended north for approximately 600 metres to join the southbound entry ramp from Nudgee Road, effectively providing an additional lane for southbound traffic from Nudgee Road. This change results in an overall improvement for traffic merging onto the Motorway from Nudgee Road. The proposed change is within the existing Gateway Motorway road reserve boundaries but outside the project corridor site boundaries assessed as part of the GUP 2004/5 EIS.

2.2 Kingsford Smith Drive On/Off Ramps

It is proposed to construct ramps from the southern side of Kingsford Smith Drive to the Gateway Motorway Deviation. This would provide an on-ramp for southbound traffic and off-ramp for northbound traffic. The need to limit access to the Motorway at this location was removed following the Proponent's decision to proceed with electronic tolling. The reference project contained provision for maintenance and emergency vehicle access only from Lavarack Avenue northbound to the Gateway Motorway Deviation in this area.

These south facing ramps will provide alternative access for traffic currently exiting the Motorway at Fison Avenue and for traffic entering the Motorway at Links Avenue. It is expected that there will be a beneficial redistribution of traffic towards the Gateway Motorway Deviation from the existing Gateway Motorway and the Fison/Links Avenue ramps.

The ramps will be constructed within the project corridor site boundaries assessed as part of the GUP EIS and will not require additional land resumptions or impingement on adjacent buildings.

3.0 PUBLIC NOTICE/CONSULTATION

In September 2006, The State Government advised the community of the Kingsford Smith Drive (KSD) value bid option at the announcement of the successful tenderer. This announcement and the proposed ramps option received coverage in local media.

In addition, Issue 5 (October 2006) of the GUP newsletter provided information regarding the KSD ramps proposal. The newsletter was distributed to residents and businesses in the vicinity of the project corridor. Regular meetings have also been held with Brisbane City Council and discussions are ongoing with property owners directly adjacent to the proposed KSD ramps. There have been no objections to the proposed change.

A number of meetings have occurred with the Nudgee Golf Club, Brisbane City Council and the Brisbane Airport Corporation regarding the northern extension of the Gateway Motorway alterations. All stakeholders have indicated that they have no issues with the proposed change.

Additional consultation on the proposed changes will be undertaken by the contractor as part of the detailed design process but, in general, feedback from stakeholders on the proposed changes is that they are viewed as minor.

In view of the relatively minor changes to the reference project and the fact that there is likely to be minimal or no change to the potential environmental impacts addressed in the EIS, I have decided that further general public notification of the proposed changes by the Proponent is not necessary.

The proposed changes were forwarded to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for review and comment against the relevant EPA conditions and recommendations contained in my Coordinator-General's Report of July 2005.

EPA has reviewed the changes and advised that it has no requirement for additional conditions, or amendment to the existing conditions contained in my July 2005 Report. EPA has however, provided a number of suggestions for the Proponent to assist in minimising potential impacts on fauna in relation to the northern extension of the existing Gateway Motorway alterations. These are outlined in section 4.1 of this report.

4.0 EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Section 35H of the SDPWO Act identifies the matters which the Coordinator-General must consider in evaluating the environmental effects of the change, its effect on the project and any other related matters. It is not intended that the effects of the entire project be re-evaluated, rather only the effects of the change relative to the project that was the subject of evaluation in the Coordinator-General's Report of July 2005.

In accordance with section 35H of the SDPWO Act, in evaluating the environmental effects of the proposed changes and their effects on the project, I have considered:

- The nature of the proposed changes and their effect on the project;
- The project as evaluated in the Coordinator-General's report under section 35;
- The environmental effects of the proposed changes and their effect on the project; and
- Comments from EPA about the proposed changes and their effect on the project.

I have also considered whether any of the Coordinator-General's conditions and recommendations set out in appendices 1-3 of the Coordinator-General's report should be amended in accordance with section 35I(2) in order to effectively manage the impacts of the proposed changes.

In making my evaluation I have had regard to the following material:

- Gateway Upgrade Project, Changes to Gateway Upgrade Project Environmental Impact Statement Report – January 2007; and
- Comments on the proposed changes provided by the Environmental Protection Agency in advice dated 20 February 2007.

4.1 Northern extension of Gateway Motorway alterations

The proposed change involves an expansion from two lanes to three lanes over a 600 metre section of the Gateway Motorway between the southbound Nudgee Road on-ramp and the new three lane carriageway of the Motorway.

The subject site abuts the Nudgee Golf Course and is within the existing Gateway Motorway road reserve but outside the project corridor site boundaries assessed as part of the GUP EIS.

A full description and impacts of the change are described in detail in the "Changes to Gateway Upgrade Project" Report.

The effects of the change are:

- An overall improvement in safety for traffic entering the Gateway Motorway at this location;
- A slight increase in overall project noise, vibration and emissions to air during construction however, ambient air quality in this vicinity will improve slightly in the long term due to improved traffic flows;
- A temporary loss of visual and landscape amenity for Nudgee Golf Course users through the removal of remnant and planted vegetation; and
- Potential impacts on fauna.

EPA has provided the following suggestions to minimise potential impacts on fauna:

- The exact number and location of mature *Eucalyptus tereticornis* trees affected by the proposed design change needs to be clearly defined. The local habitat value of mature native trees in this area is high due to nearby habitat and wetlands. Raptors and bats (possibly Grey Headed Flying Fox) are likely to utilise these trees, particularly when they are in flower. Where possible, avoid impacts on mature trees and, if impacts are unavoidable, re-vegetation of *E. tereticornis* trees at a 10:1 ratio to replace their habitat value is recommended;
- Changes to hydrological conditions and impacts on stands of *Melaleuca quinquenervia* are minimised to limit impacts on frogs and their habitat; and
- Compliance with Schedule I of the Coordinator General's conditions, including the requirement for a spotter catcher on site during construction.

Suitability of Existing Conditions

I am satisfied that the impacts of this change can be managed effectively through the application of existing conditions.

4.2 Kingsford Smith Drive On/Off Ramps

The proposed change involves construction of ramps from the southern side of Kingsford Smith Drive to the Gateway Motorway Deviation providing an on-ramp for southbound traffic and off-ramp for northbound traffic.

The reference project included provision for ramps connecting Lavarack Avenue to the Gateway Motorway Deviation for maintenance and emergency vehicles only. The absence of ramps for general traffic in this location in the reference project was to cater for the proposed Northside tolling arrangement and the need to limit entry/exits to the Motorway. With the decision to proceed with electronic tolling for the project in the next few years, the need to limit access to the Gateway Motorway Deviation at this location was removed.

A full description and impacts of the change are described in detail in the "Changes to Gateway Upgrade Project" Report.

The effects of the change are:

- A beneficial redistribution of traffic towards the Gateway Motorway Deviation from the existing Gateway Motorway and the Fison/Links Avenue ramps;
- Minimal additional operational impacts to the ambient air environment predicted by the EIS. Businesses adjacent to the proposed ramps may be subjected to slight increases in vehicle emissions due to braking and accelerating of vehicles using the ramps;
- Minimal additional operational impacts to the noise and vibration environment predicted by the EIS. Businesses adjacent to the ramps may be subjected to a slight increase in operational noise due to the braking and acceleration of vehicles using the ramps; and
- Minimal additional construction and operational impacts on the visual amenity predicted in the EIS. Provision of the ramps will require additional changes to the street network to provide connectivity between Kingsford Smith Drive and the Gateway Motorway Deviation.

The EPA advice in relation to this change was that it “has no comment regarding this amendment to the project as described in the EIS”.

Suitability of Existing Conditions

I am satisfied that the impacts of this change can be managed effectively through the application of existing conditions.

5.0 CONCLUSION

I have evaluated the environmental effects of the proposed changes and their effects on the project according to Part 4 of the SDPWO Act. I have considered the matters outlined in section 35H of the SDPWO Act and as outlined in section 4.0 Evaluation of Environmental Effects.

I consider that the nature of impacts that may result from the proposed changes to the project are limited to the range of impacts as assessed in the Coordinator-General's Report of July 2005 and as such state that, with respect to the changes, there are no further conditions or requirements for the project.

In accordance with section 35J of the SDPWO Act, a copy of this report will be provided to the Proponent and will be made publicly available on the Coordinator-General's website.

Ken Smith
Coordinator-General