

Media statement

Surat Basin Rail secures environmental approval

11 December 2010

The Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture has received environmental approval from the Queensland Government to proceed with a proposed new rail line to link the Western Railway System, near Wandoan, with the Moura Railway System, near Banana.

Everald Compton, Chairman of Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture said securing the Coordinator General's approval was another significant milestone for the project and acknowledged the conditions contained in the report.

"Surat Basin Rail will boost economic development of regional Queensland and connect the multi-billion dollar industry-funded Wiggins Island Coal Export Terminal, to unlock the vast coal reserves of the Surat Basin and support the continued growth of Australia's largest export industry," Mr Compton said.

"The Joint Venture's proactive engagement approach and environmental impact statement (EIS), which comprised 14 technical studies, will ensure minimal social, environmental and economic impacts."

"Our team has developed, and will continue to foster, a strong connection with the local community and impacted landowners. We are committed to maintaining a positive project interface throughout construction and during the operation of the railway."

The project, known as the Southern Missing Link, received thirty-six EIS submissions and the supplementary EIS report, to address the matters raised during the public comment period, received 11 submissions from advisory agencies.

The Coordinator General's Report released on Saturday 11 December 2010 contains 115 conditions and recommendations for the construction and operation of the project including weed and pest management, coal dust management and local industry participation.

Public consultation on the Surat Basin Infrastructure Corridor state development area (SDA) from 31 May 2010 to 25 June 2010 commenced the first step in the land acquisition process.

Looking ahead, 2011 brings with it exciting developments for the project including the:

- anticipated SDA declaration by the Queensland Government
- appointment of project's Principal Engineer
- anticipated commencement of the Notice of Intention to Resume process by the Department of Infrastructure and Planning
- Capacity Commitment Deeds signed with potential Foundation Customers
- construction procurement documents approved by the Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture and the commencement of the industry engagement process
- negotiations for key commercial agreements with the Queensland Government.



The Surat Basin Rail Joint Venture is endeavouring to commence construction in 2012, which is likely to take approximately 27 to 33 months (depending on weather), and cost in excess of \$1 billion.

The Surat Basin Rail project is being funded by an Australian based Joint Venture comprising Australian Transport and Energy Corridor Limited, Xstrata Coal Queensland and QR National.

The Coordinator-General's Report is available from the Department of Infrastructure and Planning's website at: <http://www.dip.qld.gov.au/projects/transport/rail/surat-basin-rail.html>

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