Department of Transport and Main Roads

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Salisbury to Beaudesert Passenger Rail

Summary Report

September 2024

Australian Government | BUILDING AUSTRALIA

Queensland Government

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Introduction

The Australian and Queensland governments have partnered to plan for the long-term passenger and freight transport needs between Salisbury and Beaudesert.

The Salisbury to Beaudesert corridor traverses some of the fastest growing areas in South East Queensland (SEQ). Key growth areas such as the Greater Flagstone Priority Development Area will play a critical role in the future shape of the region and need to be supported by a high quality, safe and reliable public transport network.

The Salisbury to Beaudesert rail corridor forms part of the Queensland Government's long-term vision for the SEQ rail network. It is identified in key planning publications including *ShapingSEQ: South East Queensland Regional Plan 2023, SEQ Rail Connect* and *SEQ Regional Transport Plans 2021*.

Planning is now underway to confirm the need, timing and land requirements for a future rail line and services to support population, employment and economic growth in the south-west corridor of SEQ.

This report summarises investigations undertaken to date including key findings and next steps for the project.

Background

Planning for the Salisbury to Beaudesert Rail project builds on over a decade of investigations into providing passenger rail services between Salisbury and Beaudesert along the interstate rail corridor. This rail line opened in 1930 and has served as an important link in transporting freight and long-distance passenger rail services between Queensland and New South Wales for over 90 years.

In 2017, the Salisbury to Beaudesert rail connection was included on the Infrastructure Australia Infrastructure Priority List for corridor preservation.

In November 2019, the Australian and Queensland governments signed the Inland Rail Bilateral Agreement, enabling the delivery of Inland Rail in Queensland and the development of a number of rail studies to enhance the benefits it offers Queensland communities. The Australian and Queensland governments jointly committed $20 million under a 50:50 funding arrangement to progress Salisbury to Beaudesert project business case activities.

Study overview

The Salisbury to Beaudesert planning investigated a long-term mass transit solution to meet the future transport needs of the area's existing and emerging communities, and more broadly to deliver an accessible and connected region.

Key study considerations included:

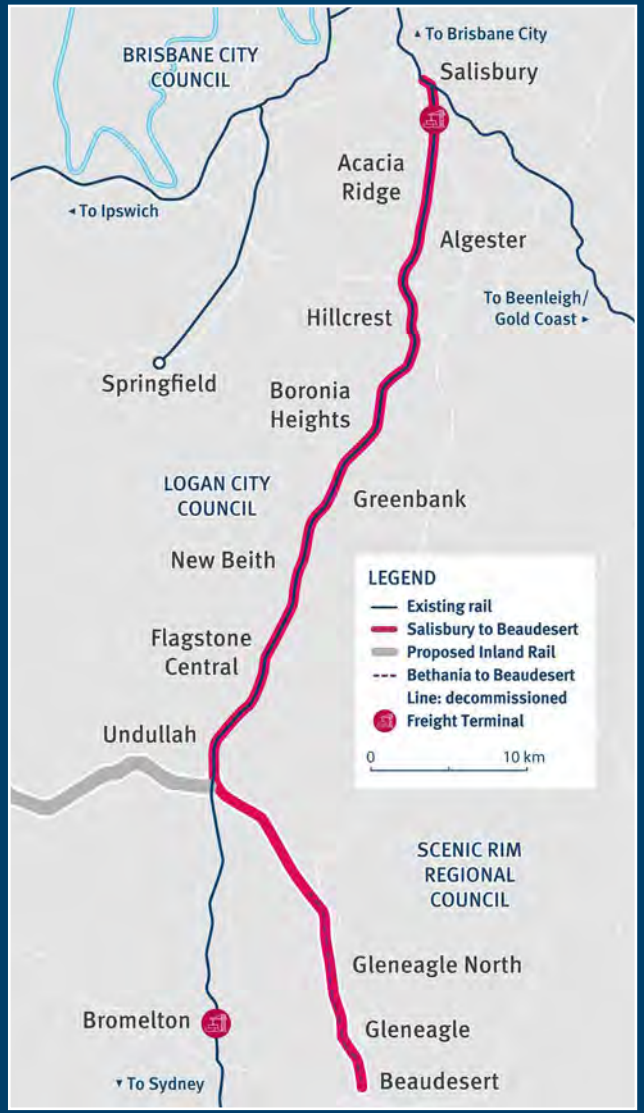
- introducing and upgrading rail tracks from Salisbury to Beaudesert to support future urban passenger services
- allowing for rail freight movements between Acacia Ridge and Kagaru
- providing well located, convenient and fully accessible stations with associated facilities including park 'n' ride where appropriate
- introducing shared pedestrian and cycle facilities along much of the corridor
- improving access to surrounding precincts and the wider public transport network to provide opportunities to easily and conveniently transfer between services
- incorporating rail maintenance access roads, train stabling facilities and associated infrastructure to support rail operations within the corridor
- minimising potential impacts on the environment and surrounding communities.

Study area

The project corridor is 54 kilometres long, extending from Salisbury station in the south of Brisbane, through to Flagstone and the township of Beaudesert in the Scenic Rim.

The corridor passes through varied land uses, ranging from established urban areas, semi-rural residential areas as well as areas of agricultural land. The corridor also traverses the Greater Flagstone Priority Development Area, which is driving strong population growth in the area and will play an important role in meeting the future housing needs of SEQ.

The corridor generally follows the existing operational interstate rail line to Flagstone. It then continues through to Gleneagle and Beaudesert via a predominantly greenfield alignment.



Supporting growth and changing needs

Parts of the study area are set to transform from primarily rural and rural-residential settlements to large urban communities as more people start to call it home.

Most growth areas are located far from existing urban centres and established urban transport networks.

With the population of the study area expected to almost double by 2046, effective and timely planning is required to ensure future infrastructure and services are delivered where and when they are needed.

A reliable, convenient, and high frequency public transport connection would enhance and support urban expansion areas and deliver well planned and serviced communities.

Challenges and opportunities

- Rapidly increasing population at relatively long distances from existing urban areas and services
- Travel demand is forecast to exceed network capacity resulting in congestion, safety and network resilience challenges
- Supporting regional economic growth and take-up of planned growth areas
- Utilising the existing interstate rail line for future passenger rail services

Desired outcomes

- Attractive and reliable public transport for existing and new communities to enable more travel choice and reduced reliance on private vehicles
- Improved public transport connectivity to Greater Brisbane and the CBD
- An integrated, safe and resilient transport network that meets community expectations
- Value for money by planning freight and passenger rail needs concurrently, and making use of existing corridors

Shaping factors within the study area

The population is forecast to almost double to around **565,000** by 2046, adding a city the equivalent size of Hobart today to the study area

People are **commuting further** as new growth areas develop

Congestion is increasing, with travel delays growing at around **10 times** the rate of population growth

Journey to work trips forecast to **double by 2046** from 122,000 to 248,000 each day

Journey to work travel demand to the Brisbane CBD forecast to **increase by 110%** by 2046

Successful major growth areas rely on **competitive public transport**

Salisbury to Beaudesert Passenger Rail Summary Report, Department of Transport and Main Roads, 2024

Study process

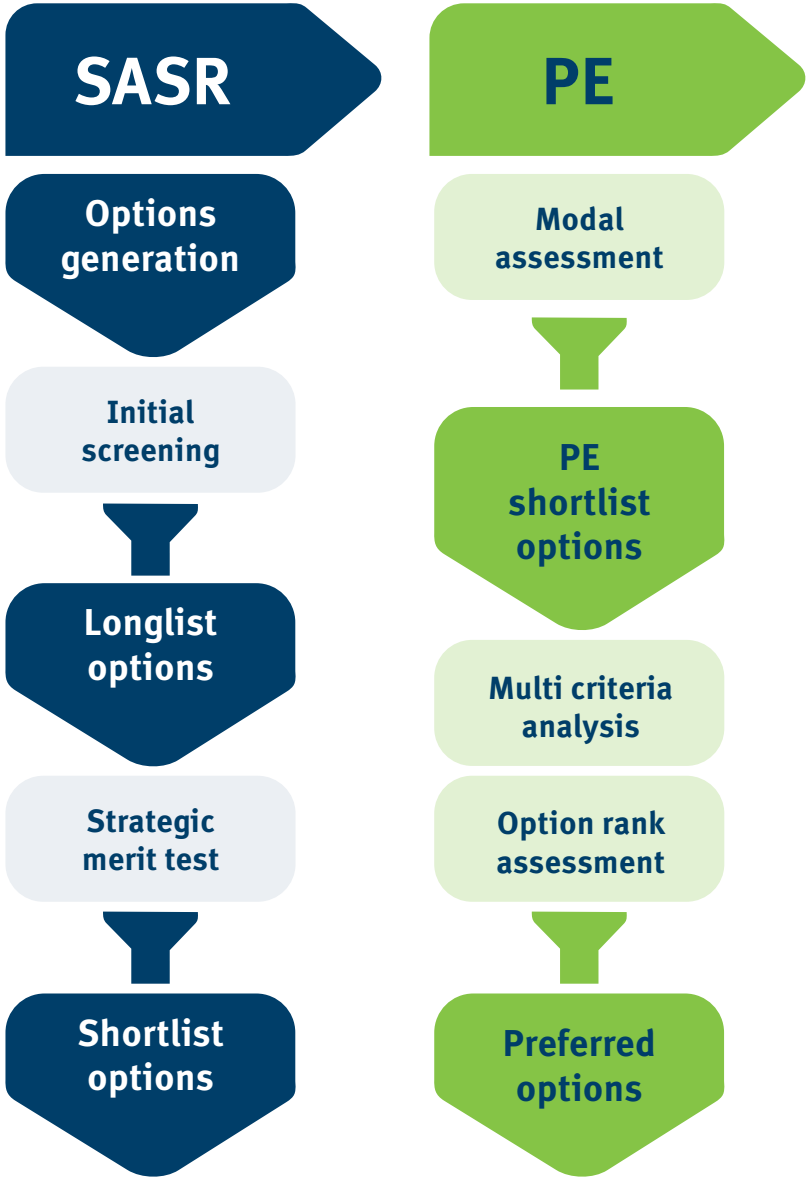
The study used a comprehensive process to identify, analyse and evaluate a broad range of options intended to meet the desired outcomes for the corridor and communities it would serve. Initial stages of the study focused on identifying strategic needs, challenges, opportunities and desired outcomes for the study area. A broad range of options for achieving the desired outcomes were then developed.

Options were progressively narrowed down and investigated in greater detail. This included consideration of travel demand and technical elements such as rail operational requirements, environmental constraints and land use integration, as well as cost and project staging opportunities.

The process undertaken for the study is consistent with the Queensland Government's Project Assessment Framework (PAF) and the Infrastructure Australia Assessment Framework.

The study incorporated the first two stages of the PAF, namely the Strategic Assessment of Service Requirements (SASR) and the Preliminary Evaluation (PE).

Key steps in evaluating options

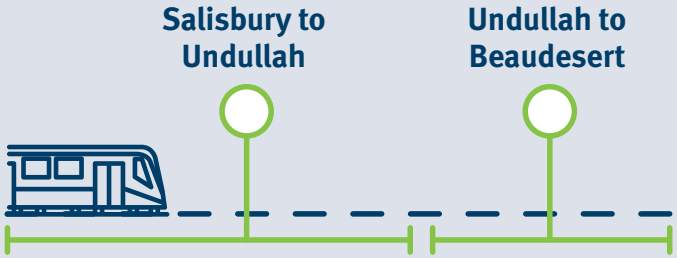


Key findings

The planning and analysis identified heavy rail as the optimal transport mode to address forecast passenger demand for the Salisbury to Beaudesert corridor.

As part of an integrated transport network, heavy rail will provide a high capacity, attractive public transport journey with competitive travel times and keep people and goods moving efficiently.

All preferred rail options that were investigated allow for both passenger and freight rail operations and included similar provisions for rail station facilities, park 'n' ride and active transport. These aspects will be explored further during detailed assessments at a time closer to construction.



54km corridor
comprising a 37km northern section between Salisbury and Undullah and a 17km section from Undullah to Beaudesert

Independent Review of Inland Rail

In April 2023, the Australian Government's response to the Independent Review of Inland Rail confirmed Ebenezer as the preferred terminus for the Inland Rail 'full service offering' (double-stacked freight trains).

This means double-stacked freight trains will not use the Salisbury to Beaudesert rail corridor and there will be fewer freight trains than forecast under the previous Inland Rail configuration.

Up to **11 new stations**
along the full length of the corridor

Key findings

- Heavy rail is the preferred mode in the corridor and could be staged over time.
- Passenger demand analysis suggests construction is not required in advance of the mid-2030s.
- Identifying the corridor alignment is important to guide integrated transport and land use planning.
- Protecting the corridor from encroaching development is an immediate priority.
- Further technical assessment is required to confirm land requirements.

Park/kiss 'n ride,
bus interchange facilities and
cycling end of trip facilities at each station

Next steps

The Australian and Queensland governments have finalised the current phases of the study and are now considering steps to progress further planning to protect the corridor.

Corridor protection activities would focus on:

- refining project designs to confirm land requirements and transport network interface needs
- further stakeholder engagement to inform the technical studies required to identify a preferred corridor
- community consultation on the identified corridor in advance of formal protection.

Updates on the project's progression can be viewed on TMR's project website: **www.tmr.qld.gov.au/projects/salisbury-to-beaudesert-passenger-rail**

Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement was an integral part of the study and will continue to inform corridor protection activities.

Key stakeholders engaged as part of the Salisbury to Beaudesert Passenger Rail study included Brisbane City Council, Logan City Council, Scenic Rim Regional Council, Queensland Rail and the Australian Rail Track Corporation.

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