



**POISON OR PANACEA? THE ROLE OF  
INFRASTRUCTURE PROVIDERS AND OPERATORS  
IN OFFSETS**

**1 May 2019**

## WHY INLAND RAIL?

- ▶ Generate \$16 Billion in additional economic benefits
- ▶ Create 16,000 direct and indirect jobs
- ▶ Make the nation safer and more efficient by removing +200,000 truck movements from the road each year by 2050
- ▶ Provide the backbone for a world-class supply chain
- ▶ Help meet Australia's freight challenge
  - ▶ transit freight more efficiently – from Melbourne to Brisbane in less than 24 hours (compared to 33 hours currently)
  - ▶ increase reliability to 98%, which could be expected to make the rail freight option road-competitive
- ▶ Help reduce congestion on the main arteries to Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne.

# INLAND RAIL

Transforming the way we move freight around the country



Creating a new reality for Australia



# OFFSET POLICY CONTEXT – STATE AND COMMONWEALTH

## Commonwealth

- Environmental Offsets Policy under the *Environment Protection Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*
- Includes recent additional consideration of advanced offsets following consultation in late 2015

## AIMS

- ▶ ensure the efficient, effective, timely, transparent, proportionate, scientifically robust and reasonable use of offsets under the EPBC Act
- ▶ provide proponents, the community and other stakeholders with greater certainty and guidance on how offsets are determined and when they may be considered under the EPBC Act
- ▶ deliver improved environmental outcomes by consistently applying the policy
- ▶ outline the appropriate nature and scale of offsets and how they are determined
- ▶ provide guidance on acceptable delivery mechanisms for offsets.

# OFFSET POLICY CONTEXT – STATE AND COMMONWEALTH

## Queensland

- Environmental Offsets Policy under the *Queensland Environmental Offsets Act 2014*
- Currently under review with consultation period closing earlier this month
- Consolidation of five separate offsets policies into one

## Principles

- ▶ Offsets will not replace or undermine existing environmental standards or regulatory requirements, or be used to allow development in areas otherwise prohibited through legislation or policy
- ▶ Impacts must first be avoided, then minimised, before considering the use of offsets for any remaining impact
- ▶ Offsets must achieve a conservation outcome that achieves an equivalent environmental outcome
- ▶ Offsets must provide environmental values as similar as possible to those being lost
- ▶ Offset provision must minimise the time-lag between the impact and delivery of the offset
- ▶ Offsets must provide additional protection to environmental values at risk, or additional management actions to improve environmental values
- ▶ Where legal security is required, offsets must be legally secured for the duration of the impact on the prescribed environmental matter

# INFRASTRUCTURE PROVIDER – WISH LIST

- **Offset policy certainty**
  - ▶ Timing of reviews and changes
  - ▶ Clarity and avoidance of ambiguity
  - ▶ Offset delivery timing and conditions of approval
  - ▶ Protection = protection.
- **Offset policy harmonisation**
  - ▶ Better coordination between all levels of government to increase efficiency and minimise unnecessary effort and duplication
- **Flexibility**
  - ▶ Consolidation of offsets for enhanced outcomes
  - ▶ Timing on offset package delivery relative to approvals and commencement of works.



# OFFSET OPPORTUNITIES...

- **Borrowing from the experiences of other policy fields**
  - ▶ Nudge theory developed by Sunstein and Thaler
  - ▶ Popularised by the behavioural insights team in 10 Downing and the White House
  - ▶ Controlled trials of policy before full implementation.
- **Embracing and using science**
  - ▶ Foster better linkage between academia, government and industry
- **Engagement and buy in**
  - ▶ A need to increase engagement on land use, conservation and biodiversity
  - ▶ Develop strategies that highlight the additional benefits of restoring and protecting terrestrial ecosystems (biological diversity, health land and water etc.)



**INLAND  
RAIL** 

**ARTC**

The Australian Government is delivering  
Inland Rail through the Australian Rail Track  
Corporation (ARTC), in partnership with the  
private sector.

**THANK YOU**