

Friday, 29 March 2019

Expressions of Interest open for Inland Rail Public Private Partnership

The Public Private Partnership (PPP) for Inland Rail took a major step forward today with the announcement that Expressions of Interest (EOI) were now open to design, build, finance and maintain the section from Gowrie outside Toowoomba to Kagaru near Beaudesert.

This section is the most technically complex of the entire Inland Rail programme and includes a 6.5km tunnel through the Toowoomba Range, which will be the largest diameter diesel freight tunnel in the Southern Hemisphere.

Inland Rail Chief Executive Officer Richard Wankmuller is expecting a strong field to formally lodge notification of their interest in the PPP.

“We are at an exciting stage marking the commencement of the formal procurement process for this major component of the Inland Rail project. This is an important step which facilitates shortlisting of parties for the issuing of the PPP Request for Proposal, scheduled for later this year,” Mr Wankmuller said.

“There is a clear benefit in going to the market now through an EOI so all interested parties may become aware at a relatively early stage of key requirements from both the Australian and Queensland governments.

“The geology and topography of this section, which is located mostly within protected corridors, pose many challenges and we are currently undertaking further site investigations to give us a better understanding of the conditions and inform the final design.

“The more involved potential partners are while we are undertaking investigations and working to progress the three project Environmental Impact Statements, the better those parties will be able to adjust their thinking on potential design solutions and innovative construction methods.

“The PPP process will harness the private sector’s experience and innovation to deliver the world-class engineering solution required to conquer the Great Dividing Range. This is the type of challenge that excites multi-national contractors, investors and financiers. I am expecting international consortia will bid to have their name associated with this iconic project.”

Mr Wankmuller said today’s launch of the PPP EOI again sent a message to the market that work on the Inland Rail project is progressing.

“The Australian Rail Track Corporation is focused on the timely delivery of Inland Rail on behalf of the Australian Government, in partnership with the private sector and hand in hand with the community,” he said.

“Inland Rail will create a more resilient rail network, with multiple pathways to create a safe, sustainable, integrated solution that will help address Australia’s current freight inefficiencies. Inland Rail will help capture commercial opportunities in both metropolitan and regional areas through more efficient and commercially responsive supply chains and enhance Australia’s ability to compete on the world market.”

The Request for Proposal is expected to be released later this year once the Australian and Queensland governments have finalised a bilateral agreement for the delivery of Inland Rail.

“Queensland will be the biggest beneficiary of Inland Rail in terms of construction expenditure and jobs with around \$7.2 billion expected to flow into the state economy from Inland Rail,” he said.

“Private companies are making informed, strategic decisions about where to invest in the future based on the alignment of Inland Rail. Intermodal freight businesses like InterLink SQ are gearing up to make the most of Inland Rail when it becomes operational.

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“Queensland is starting to see benefits flow, but the really big benefits will be when construction commences. Inland Rail wants to help communities grow and we are having conversations right up and down the line about how companies of all sizes can get involved.

“The EOI is a major step forward for a once-in-a-lifetime infrastructure project tackling the complexities of this challenging terrain. Modern technology will accomplish engineering marvels in this section of the Inland Rail and it’s time to begin the search for our partner to make this happen.”

For more information please visit the website <https://inlandrail.artc.com.au/PPP>

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