



Gold Coast

Rapid Transit

Chapter **eleven** – Cultural heritage

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Protecting cultural heritage

Every place has a history, aesthetic value or a social meaning to some member of a community.

The Gold Coast Rapid Transit project will travel through early suburbs which hold significance in the history of the development and growth of the Gold Coast. Whilst many areas display examples of urban character that are unique to the Gold Coast, there are also heritage sites and places that exist within the vicinity of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit route.

The location of heritage sites has been an important factor during the planning and refinement of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit route.

The cultural environment report in the draft Concept Design and Impact Management Plan identifies European and Indigenous cultural heritage sites, establishes where there could be a potential impact and suggests a range of mitigation strategies.

The study suggests that heritage sites and places should be protected from impact both during and after construction of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project. Unlike other structures that can be repaired should damage occur, heritage sites and places should be maintained in their original and undamaged condition especially as, in many cases, the original material and workmanship are the elements of heritage structures that contribute to their significance.

How were significant sites identified?

The Queensland Heritage Act 1992 sets out specific tests for considering places of State heritage value, while the Gold Coast City Council's Planning Scheme determines sites or areas of local significance.



European cultural heritage

In particular, there are three areas along the Gold Coast Rapid Transit route where a number of individually significant places are grouped and linked by common themes. These are the heritage precincts of Southport town centre, Southport foreshore parklands and Southport Cemetery.

Southport Town

The draft Concept Design and Impact Management Plan report identifies that the area with the greatest potential for positive impact is Southport Town Centre. The potential for revitalisation of the CBD due to the introduction of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit system could have a major positive contextual, visual, amenity and use impact.

However this area is also considered to have the potential for the greatest negative impact if the Gold Coast Rapid Transit infrastructure encroaches on the streetscape and impacts on the legibility of the town centre.

The draft Concept Design and Impact Management Plan report recommends that the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project:

- minimises impact on footpaths where possible
- utilises design elements such as level paving and different pavement finishes to clearly differentiate pavements, areas where people congregate and shopfront awnings from the road and Gold Coast Rapid Transit corridor
- use design elements to avoid creating a physical and visual barrier in streets
- promote amenity by providing level pedestrian access and crossings
- retain or reinstate plants, trees and any other significant streetscape elements
- include design aspects that interpret and reference the history of Southport.

Southport Foreshore Parklands and Southport Cemetery

For both these areas the report recommends that a Conservation Management Plan is prepared for these areas before construction begins. A Conservation Management Plan would assess and manage cultural heritage values at each site.



Indigenous cultural heritage

Part of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit route passes through areas that have already been disturbed in the past by the construction of roads and other works. However some parts of the route do potentially have significance for Indigenous heritage.

There are 3 Indigenous groups that may have an interest in lands affected by the Gold Coast Rapid Transit route. They are the:

- Kombumerri group
- Nerangual group
- Yugambah Museum.

As part of the development of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan the project team have engaged with these groups to undertake studies and inspections of parts of the section two and three route to determine any specific sites of interest.

Cultural heritage management plan

The *Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Act 2003* imposes a duty of care that ensures all reasonable and practical measures are taken to ensure that any activity does not harm Aboriginal cultural heritage. This includes a statutory process for developing a Cultural Heritage Management Plan. The purpose of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan is to ensure that Aboriginal cultural heritage is properly identified and managed.

As an environmental impact statement is not required for the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project there is no legal obligation to develop an approved Cultural Heritage Management Plan under the Act. The project could proceed with a voluntary process, engaging and seeking approval from each Indigenous group separately. However the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project has chosen to proceed with an approved Cultural Heritage Management Plan under the Act in order to ensure that any Aboriginal cultural heritage can be properly identified and managed.

In October 2008, the project team wrote to all the owners of properties adjacent to the corridor to begin the process of identifying any specific sites of interest.

Native title

The Native Title Act 1993 (Cmwlth) and Native Title Act 1993 (Qld) deal with any issues arising when anything is to be done to an area where native title may still continue to exist.

An analysis of the past, current and potential future tenure of land and water in areas in the vicinity of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit route is currently being undertaken. Native title will be assumed to continue unless there is evidence that native title has been extinguished by a previous arrangement – such as a grant of title or an area that has been designated as ‘public works’. In the event that any Gold Coast Rapid Transit works should take place on native title land the relevant Aboriginal parties would be contacted and involved in the procedure of resolving the issue in accordance with the Act. The Gold Coast Rapid Transit project will work with relevant parties to ensure the minimum impact on existing Native Title where possible.

For more information refer to the following chapter in the draft Concept Design and Impact Management Plan:

- Volume 2, Chapter 14: Cultural Environment.

See page 24 for details of how to access the full draft Concept Design and Impact Management Plan report.