

ADELAIDE RIVER RAILWAY HERITAGE PRECINCT

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1. The alignment through Adelaide River was finalised in 1984. Part of the route follows the old North Australian Railway (NAR) and makes use of the existing embankments across extensive floodplains south of the Railway Station.
2. In 1996, an Environmental Management Plan was prepared which updated an earlier (Environmental Impact Study (EIS) prepared in 1984. It was subject to a public review and submission process. As part of the risk allocation for the project, the NT warranted clear title to the corridor and provided sacred sites and heritage certificates applicable to the corridor.
3. The Railway Station, platforms and other railway infrastructure remnants of the NAR are not directly impacted on by the construction of the new railway.
4. During the Community consultation period from 1996 to November 2000, the alignment of the new railway was discussed with community representatives through the auspices of the Coomalie Council and the Northern Land Council, no concerns were raised in relation to the route of the railway.
5. The Minister for Heritage issued a permit for the construction of the new railway in October 2000, after the matter was considered by the Heritage Council.
6. The professional advice of the Heritage Branch of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment is that the Railway Station will not be affected by the passage of trains on the new railway.
7. The remnant sections of NAR track which remain in the heritage precinct were continuously upgraded throughout the operating life of the railway with the last known upgrade occurring around 1967 - steel sleepers in the section bear the 1967 date stamp. Construction of the railway is contractually required to comply with a Design Brief which specifies amongst other things the design speed, gradient, minimum radius of curves and the flood immunity of bridges and culverts to ensure the railway will be fit for its intended purpose throughout the operational period of the 50 year concession period and beyond, when it is returned to Government ownership.
8. In November 2001, the Friends of the Adelaide River Railway Heritage Precinct emerged for the first time raising concerns with ADrail in relation to the impact of the railway embankment height on the visual amenity of the Station Building. Following consideration of all the design issues, AustralAsia Railway Corporation (AARC) agreed to a relaxation of the Design Brief in respect of the Adelaide River Bridge design level. Consequently, the height of the embankment was able to be lowered and the visual amenity maintained.
9. The Friends Groups subsequently informed ADrail and AARC of their aspirations to develop a tourist railway between Adelaide River and Snake Creek via the abandoned Railway Bridge and embankment and requested a 22 metre shift to the design alignment. ADrail were instructed by APT to investigate options to avoid the remnant sections of track in the vicinity of the Railway Station. Within the constraints of the other heritage features, the location of the level crossing at Dorat Road to facilitate traffic storage for road train turning movements off the Stuart Highway, the corridor title constraints and the topography of the flood plains south of the station, an option for a

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6 metre shift emerged as the only viable option. This option preserved 2 tracks immediately in front of the Railway Station and transferred the new line onto the alignment of a third siding track.

10. APT were concerned about the impacts any shift would have on the operations of the railway but considered this as a compromise so as not to preclude the possibility of a future heritage tourist train from being able to operate to/from the Station, should the project proceed.
11. When the estimated cost of this option, involving the reconstruction of approximately 1km of embankment, was determined at \$450,000, ADrail were not able to absorb it within their fixed price contract and neither APT nor the NT Government were able to assist. A revised alignment was designed to achieve the 6 metre shift at the station over the shortest possible transition distance without having to reconstruct embankments across the black soil plains to the south. This resulted in a design, which at an estimated extra cost of \$200,000, ADrail was prepared to bear. APT offered this solution to the Friends Group at a meeting conducted at the AARC offices on 23 May 2002 as the only option it was prepared to consider.
12. APT committed to amend the alignment so that the offset was developed via a transitional spiral curve, which achieved the 6m offset at a point immediately opposite the station building.
13. The Friends Group reluctantly accepted this compromise and subsequently undertook to remove fishplates securing the track sections so that the sections of track affected by this arrangement could be removed by ADrail and stored for future use by the Friends Group.
14. The extent of the impact on existing tracks in order to develop the spiral may not have been fully understood by the Friends Group. The length of the spiral required to transition to the 6m offset is approximately 350m and by necessity returns to the pegged centreline before the commencement of the embankment across the black soil plains to the south.
15. The Friends Group have now accused ADrail of not complying with the spirit of the offer that was put by APT and have sought to preserve a greater length of track.
16. The Friends Group also sought to have the alignment north of the Adelaide River and outside of the heritage precinct altered to enable the abandoned NAR embankment to be re-used in their future plans for a heritage tourist railway to Snake Creek.
17. The geometry of the new railway north of the Adelaide River is controlled by title, traffic and sacred sites constraints. APT indicated this alignment could not be compromised and the Friends suggestion for the new railway and any future heritage railway to co-exist within the same corridor would need to comply with the safe working requirements and the insurance requirements of the new railway.
18. The availability of a corridor between Adelaide River Station and Snake Creek through land owned by other parties is a major impediment to the aspirations of the Friends Group, as is the emerging issue of Public Liability insurance coverage for the risks such an operation poses.
19. The Heritage Branch of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment continues to monitor the activities of ADrail in the heritage precinct for compliance with the permit conditions.
20. The construction of a railway through the Railway Heritage precinct is considered by the Heritage Branch of the Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Environment to be totally consistent with the conservation principles embodied in the Burra Charter, which is the national and internationally recognised standard for heritage conservation.

Prepared by AustralAsia Railway Corporation in conjunction with:

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- ADrail
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