

Statement of Regulatory Intent

DBCT Management's 2019 Draft Access Undertaking

June 2019

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FOREWORD

This statement of regulatory intent informs stakeholders about how the Queensland Competition Authority (QCA) intends to manage the regulatory process to have a new undertaking ready to replace Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal (DBCT) Management's 2017 access undertaking before it expires. It aims to make the draft access undertaking (DAU) investigation more predictable and to support a timely outcome.

Timely outcomes

In the 20 plus years since the QCA started work on access regulation for transport infrastructure in Queensland, no replacement access undertaking has been approved before the previous access undertaking was due to expire.

This has led to a succession of extensions of old undertakings, followed by retrospective adjustments that were required to provide fairness to the regulated service providers and their customers. These extensions and adjustments have added to regulatory costs for all parties, created uncertainty, and left little time to plan for subsequent undertakings.

Access undertakings play a key role in Queensland's regime for access to significant infrastructure, including DBCT. DBCT Management's access undertaking sets out the terms and conditions under which it provides access to its terminal facilities—including the queuing mechanism, expansion processes and the terminal infrastructure charge (TIC).

While there have been several reasons for the pattern of late approval and extensions, a key reason has been that the DAUs have been submitted very late. In the past, this has left insufficient time for the QCA to investigate the DAUs and approve appropriate undertakings before the previous undertakings expired, while also following the assessment requirements set out in the *Queensland Competition Authority Act 1997* (QCA Act) and providing procedural fairness and natural justice to all parties.

The 2019 DAU statement of regulatory intent

The QCA has managed the process for DBCT Management's replacement undertaking to maximise the chances that a new set of rules will be ready to be approved by the time the 2017 access undertaking notionally expires on 1 July 2021.

This process started when the QCA issued an Initial Undertaking Notice (IUN) pursuant to section 133 of the QCA Act in October 2017, requiring a DAU to be submitted by 1 July 2019. We consider this date maximises the chances that DBCT Management, its customers, and the QCA, can have a replacement undertaking ready in time.

Managing an effective regulatory process requires transparency of decision-making, appropriate consultation, opportunities for stakeholder collaboration, and effective information provision. The QCA is confident this statement of regulatory intent sets up a framework that can satisfy these requirements.

The QCA looks forward to working with DBCT Management and its stakeholders, and welcomes the opportunity to have an appropriate 2021 access undertaking ready before the 2017 undertaking expires.

1 INTRODUCTION

On 12 October 2017, the QCA issued an IUN to DBCT Management in accordance with section 133 of the QCA Act. The notice required DBCT Management to submit a DAU for the period starting 1 July 2021.

The QCA requested that the 2019 DAU be provided by 1 July 2019. We consider this will promote the objective of having an appropriate replacement undertaking approved before the 2017 undertaking notionally terminates on 1 July 2021.

DBCT Management's 2019 DAU is to be submitted for our consideration under Part 5 of the QCA Act. Our investigation will commence once we have received DBCT Management's proposal.

The *Statement of Regulatory Intent* outlines our intended approach to managing information gathering processes, stakeholder consultation and assessment timeframes throughout our investigation.

The QCA is publishing this statement before DBCT Management submits its 2019 DAU in order to promote a structured, transparent and predictable process for assessing the proposal. We recognise the importance of stakeholder involvement in our investigation processes, and want to encourage robust stakeholder involvement and collaboration.

This document is about how the QCA intends to manage the mechanics of the regulatory process. It is not intended to be an exhaustive statement of the process by which the QCA will assess the 2019 DAU. The assessment will proceed in accordance with the requirements of the QCA Act.

2 LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

2.1 Procedural requirements

The QCA Act outlines various procedures we must apply while assessing DBCT Management's 2019 DAU:

- Section 146 provides for us to issue a notice of investigation to commence an investigation for deciding whether to approve, or refuse to approve, the DAU. A notice of investigation states the QCA's intention to conduct the investigation and invites interested parties to make written submissions on the proposed DAU.
- Section 138(3)(c) requires that we publish the DAU and invite persons to make submissions on it.
- Section 138(3)(d) requires that we consider any submissions received from stakeholders (within the consultation period) before deciding whether to approve the DAU.
- Section 173(1)(d) states that the QCA must comply with natural justice in undertaking a DAU investigation. Consistent with this, we will publish a draft decision to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to comment on relevant preliminary QCA positions.

These requirements will form the basis of our 2019 DAU assessment process (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 QCA procedural requirements for the 2019 DAU assessment process



The QCA may also incorporate additional steps into the assessment process where we consider they will provide for a more transparent and effective 2019 DAU assessment. For instance, in addition to consulting on DBCT Management's 2019 DAU and our draft decision, we may seek further stakeholder submissions on specific matters.

In addition, the QCA may elect to host a public stakeholder forum (or fora) on DBCT Management's 2019 DAU at appropriate times during the assessment of the DAU. This would provide an opportunity for stakeholders to engage with Members of the QCA Board and each other on matters relevant to the QCA's investigation, to inform development of written submissions.

The QCA will provide stakeholders with further details of such stakeholder fora as necessary.

2.2 Approach to assessing the 2019 DAU

Section 138 of the QCA Act outlines the factors affecting the approval of a DAU. In particular, we may approve DBCT Management's 2019 DAU only if we consider it appropriate to do so having regard to each of the matters set out in section 138(2) of the QCA Act (Box 1).

Box 1: Section 138(2) of the QCA Act

The authority may approve a draft access undertaking only if it considers it appropriate to do so having regard to each of the following —

- (a) the object of this part;*
- (b) the legitimate business interests of the owner or operator of the service;*
- (c) if the owner and operator of the service are different entities—the legitimate business interests of the operator of the service are protected;*
- (d) the public interest, including the public interest in having competition in markets (whether or not in Australia);*
- (e) the interests of persons who may seek access to the service, including whether adequate provision has been made for compensation if the rights of users of the service are adversely affected;*
- (f) the effect of excluding existing assets for pricing purposes;*
- (g) the pricing principles mentioned in section 168A;*
- (h) any other issues the authority considers relevant.*

The 'object of this part' as referred to in section 138(2)(a) is set out in section 69E:

The object of this part is to promote the economically efficient operation of, use of and investment in, significant infrastructure by which services are provided, with the effect of promoting effective competition in upstream and downstream markets.

The pricing principles set out under section 168A are:

The pricing principles in relation to the price of access to a service are that the price should —

- (a) generate expected revenue for the service that is at least enough to meet the efficient costs of providing access to the service and include a return on investment commensurate with the regulatory and commercial risks involved; and*
- (b) allow for multi-part pricing and price discrimination when it aids efficiency; and*
- (c) not allow a related access provider to set terms and conditions that discriminate in favour of the downstream operations of the access provider or a related body corporate of the access provider, except to the extent the cost of providing access to other operators is higher; and*
- (d) provide incentives to reduce costs or otherwise improve productivity.*

The QCA will assess the 2019 DAU having regard to these matters and stakeholder submissions.

2.3 Declaration review

The existing declaration of the handling of coal at DBCT by the terminal operator (in section 250(1)(c) of the QCA Act) expires on 8 September 2020. Pursuant to section 87A of the QCA Act, the QCA is now reviewing whether, with effect from the expiry date, the relevant service (or parts of the service) should be declared. The QCA published a draft recommendation in December 2018.

While there will be an overlap in timeframes between the investigation of DBCT Management's 2019 DAU and the declaration review, the reviews are separate processes and subject to separate requirements (section 76 and section 138 of the QCA Act respectively). Stakeholders should therefore be aware of the following:

- Each review process has been (and will continue to be) undertaken separately, on its merits and in accordance with the relevant assessment criteria.
- Any draft or final QCA position in respect of one matter does not pre-suppose a conclusion in the other matter.
- Submissions have been (and should continue to be) made on each process separately.
- The QCA may, nevertheless, inform itself on any matter relevant to the investigation of DBCT Management's 2019 DAU in any way it considers appropriate, pursuant to section 173(1)(c) of the QCA Act.

3 APPROACH TO CONSULTATION

Public involvement is an important element of the regulatory process. Effective consultation with interested parties is integral to a balanced and transparent regulatory process; it also supports accountability and confidence in the QCA's decision-making.

We are outlining our intended approach to stakeholder consultation to communicate to stakeholders how, and at what stages of the investigation, they can contribute to the 2019 DAU assessment process.

3.1 Consulting on the 2019 DAU

The QCA's assessment of the 2019 DAU will benefit if the stakeholders who participate in consultation are well-informed. The QCA has a role in disseminating information to stakeholders at various stages during the 2019 DAU assessment process, to provide for more effective stakeholder consultation.

Where necessary, the QCA will release consultation papers to provide context and summarise key aspects of specific issues. However, we intend to restrict the use of consultation papers to strategic matters or where a particular need for one is identified.

This will make our role of disseminating information to stakeholders more effective, as targeted consultation will address particular matters in a more direct way (see section 3.3).

As noted in section 2.1, the QCA may also host public fora on DBCT Management's 2019 DAU at appropriate times during the assessment of the DAU.

3.2 Opportunities for collaborative stakeholder submissions

The QCA encourages open communication between stakeholders, including early signalling of perceived issues, and will provide opportunities for collaboration to resolve these issues, as it will improve the regulatory process.

Stakeholders will therefore have two opportunities to make original submissions on DBCT Management's 2019 DAU:

- during an initial consultation period for submissions on DBCT Management's proposal (initial stakeholder submissions)
- during a subsequent consultation period immediately following the initial consultation period (collaborative and consensus submissions).

The QCA encourages stakeholders to collaborate during the second consultation period, to provide joint submissions. It is hoped that stakeholders will take this opportunity to discuss and, where possible, reach a consensus on certain issues.

We intend to have regard to consensus positions that stakeholders submit to the QCA, as part of our assessment of the 2019 DAU.

These processes are similar to the processes the QCA has followed in its assessment of the most recent DAUs submitted by both Aurizon Network and Queensland Rail.

3.3 Timeframes for consultation

Adequate time for consultation enables stakeholders to prepare quality submissions and avoids unplanned extensions to submission deadlines. The QCA is mindful of providing certainty to stakeholders on expected consultation periods. This will provide greater predictability for the overall timeliness of the 2019 DAU assessment process. The intended consultation timeframes are:

- 10 to 12 weeks for a DAU consultation period
- four to six weeks for collaborative stakeholder submissions on the DAU
- 10 to 12 weeks for a draft decision consultation period
- at least three weeks to respond to targeted consultation papers.

While these indicative timeframes provide guidance, the QCA will have regard to the scope of issues being presented. Stakeholders will be made aware of consultation timeframes on our website and in relevant stakeholder notices.

3.4 Obligations for stakeholders

Sections 230 to 233 of the QCA Act outline a number of obligations and responsibilities when stakeholders provide information to the QCA. It is an offence to:

- provide information to the QCA that is false or misleading to the person's knowledge (s. 230)
- provide a document to the QCA that is false, misleading or incomplete to the person's knowledge and without notifying the QCA that it is false, misleading or incomplete (s. 231)
- obstruct QCA staff members from exercising the QCA's functions under the QCA Act (s. 232)
- intimidate another person that is providing evidence as part of an investigation (s. 233).

Stakeholders should be mindful of these obligations, particularly when submitting information or participating in the 2019 DAU investigation.

3.5 Disclosure of information

Stakeholder involvement is a key element of our decision-making process. In the interests of transparency, and to promote informed discussion, the QCA intends to publish the information received from stakeholders on our website. However, in accordance with the QCA Act, we will not disclose information that is considered to be confidential (see section 7).

Disclosing information will assist stakeholders to identify key issues; and maintaining an open transparent process will support accountability and confidence in our decision-making. Disclosing information is also consistent with the principles of natural justice. Natural justice requires that people or organisations who may be affected by our decision are informed of relevant matters considered as part of the decision-making process, and provided an opportunity to respond to these matters.

4 ASSESSMENT TIMEFRAMES

We are providing an outline of the expected timeframes for assessing DBCT Management's 2019 DAU, to provide regulatory certainty for stakeholders about the timing of our processes.

In accordance with section 147A of the QCA Act, the QCA must use its best endeavours to make a decision on whether to approve, or refuse to approve, a DAU within six months from the last day of the time for making submissions stated in the investigation notice. The table below shows indicative times for key milestones.

Table 1 Indicative timeframes for the 2019 DAU

<i>Milestone</i>	<i>Timing</i>
Initial undertaking notice issued	12 October 2017
DBCT Management submits DAU	1 July 2019
Stakeholder submissions due	23 September 2019
Collaborative submissions due	1 November 2019
QCA draft decision	Q2 2020
Submissions due on draft decision	Q3 2020
Collaborative submissions due	Q3 2020
QCA final decision	Q1 2021

Updating indicative timeframes

Timeframes required to assess a DAU are dependent on the issues encountered throughout the investigation, and may need to be adjusted to account for periods of time that are excluded from the assessment timeframe in accordance with the QCA Act (s. 147A), namely:

- stakeholders responding to notices given under section 185 of the QCA Act—requiring information or documents to be provided
- consultation periods
- other matters that DBCT Management agrees should be excluded.

The QCA will update the expected timeframes as required by issuing a relevant stakeholder notice.

In accordance with section 147A(4), the assessment timeframes will be published on our website once we have commenced the investigation. This is intended to guide stakeholders through the expected regulatory process and associated timeframes.

5 LATE INFORMATION

To promote the timely consideration and assessment of DBCT Management's 2019 DAU, all stakeholders are encouraged to provide information and submissions by the relevant due date.

While there may be legitimate reasons for late information, such as new information becoming available, stakeholder compliance with deadlines is important for timely decision-making.

Indeed, natural justice requires matters be processed in a timely way and does not permit an unending process of information provision, particularly when ample time has already been allowed.

5.1 Disregarding late information

The QCA may make a decision without taking into account late information—submissions or other information provided by stakeholders after the submission deadline provided—if doing so is reasonable (s. 168B of the QCA Act).

In determining whether it is reasonable to disregard late information, the QCA Act (s. 168B(4)) requires the QCA to take into account the following factors:

- whether the late information was available, or ought reasonably to have been available, to the person during the consultation timeframe provided
- the length, complexity and relevance of the late information
- how much time has elapsed since the timeframe provided for consultation ended
- how advanced the QCA's decision-making process is when the late information is received.

We intend to consider whether to take late information into account on a case-by-case basis, where it is reasonable to do so in accordance with the QCA Act. Where stakeholders provide late information, they should also consider providing a detailed explanation as to why it would be reasonable to have regard to the late information.

5.2 Considering late information

Where the QCA will have regard to information provided after the stated deadline, we intend to publish a stakeholder notice to disclose that such information has been provided. This is intended to provide for greater transparency.

The QCA will consider, on a case-by-case basis, whether additional consultation is required to provide stakeholders with an opportunity to consider the late information. Where the late information has implications for consultation periods, and the overall timeframes of the assessment process, we will outline any necessary changes to timeframes in a stakeholder notice and on our website.

6 REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

Additional information from DBCT Management and other stakeholders may be required during the investigation for the QCA to adequately assess the 2019 DAU. We intend to implement a structured process for acquiring information that will limit the potential for lengthy delays to the assessment process. The process may involve:

- issuing an informal request for information to be provided within a reasonable timeframe, and/or
- issuing a notice under section 185 of the QCA Act to request information.

This approach is consistent with the process the QCA used to request information from stakeholders in previous investigations.

6.1 Information requests

Where the QCA identifies the need to obtain information from a particular stakeholder, we may make an informal request for the required information. However, we may consider it necessary to move directly to issuing a section 185 information notice.

The QCA intends to inform stakeholders, in writing, what information is being requested and the reason it is required. This written request will also detail the preferred format for reply.

All information requests will set out appropriate timeframes for providing information.

If the relevant stakeholder does not comply with the informal request (or does not provide adequate reasoning for not doing so), we will be minded to issue a section 185 notice to request the information.

6.2 Section 185 information notices

In accordance with section 185 of the QCA Act, the QCA may issue a written notice requiring a person to give a statement to the QCA setting out stated information or give a stated document by a certain date. Failure to comply with a section 185 notice (without a reasonable excuse) could attract a penalty as provided for by the QCA Act.

Periods of time waiting for persons to respond to section 185 notices are excluded from the QCA's six-month decision-making statutory timeframe. We will determine, on a case-by-case basis, whether consultation on such information is appropriate and, if so, provide adequate time for stakeholders to comment.

Where the issuance of a section 185 notice is required to obtain information, and it results in delays to the indicative timeframes for the 2019 DAU assessment process, we will outline any changes to our assessment timeframes in a stakeholder notice.

7 CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

The QCA encourages that submissions be made publicly available wherever this is appropriate. However a person making a submission may claim confidentiality in respect of the submission (or any part of the submission).

Information that is not confidential will be published on our website and made publicly available.

In accordance with the QCA Act, information will be considered confidential where the QCA considers that disclosing the information would be likely to damage the person's commercial activities and would not be in the public interest.

If the QCA considers information is confidential for the purposes of the QCA Act, we are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure the information is not, without the person's consent, disclosed to another person. However, stakeholders should be aware that we may still disclose confidential information without consent in particular circumstances set out in the QCA Act.¹

7.1 Making a confidentiality claim

In making a confidentiality claim, a claimant should:

- clearly indicate the information that it considers should not be disclosed to another person
- state its view that disclosure of the information is likely to damage its commercial activities
- provide supporting justification for its view, and detail why it considers disclosing the information would not be in the public interest.

Our structured process for confidentiality claims involves stakeholders:

- identifying the category of confidential information associated with the claim
- using the provided template to submit a confidentiality claim.

Submissions (or sections of submissions) that are claimed to be confidential should be clearly identified using this process. Where it is unclear why a submission has been marked 'confidential', the status of the submission will be discussed with the person making the submission.

The QCA considers this structured approach will assist stakeholders to identify confidential information for the purposes of the QCA Act, and to submit well-substantiated confidentiality claims for the 2019 DAU investigation process. This approach will also contribute to the timely assessment of such claims by the QCA.

7.2 Confidentiality claim template

Stakeholders should provide sufficient reasoning about why the disclosure of information is likely to damage their commercial activities.

To provide guidance on the type of information that would assist our assessment of a claim for confidentiality, the QCA has developed a confidentiality claim template for stakeholders.

The confidentiality claim template prompts a claimant to:

¹ For example, refer to section 187(3) of the QCA Act.

- identify the information it considers to be confidential
- specify the category of confidentiality for each claim
- outline the reasons the information is considered to be confidential.

The QCA would appreciate stakeholders using this template when making confidentiality claims. The proposed confidentiality claim template (in Appendix A) will be available on our website during the course of the investigation.

7.3 Categories of confidential information

The QCA has identified specific categories of confidential information—to provide stakeholders with guidance on how they should identify confidential information made available to the QCA.

When making a confidentiality claim, stakeholders should identify which category of confidential information describes the claim.

These categories of confidential information are presented to provide guidance only. Classification of a claim into a specific category will not guarantee non-disclosure of information. Nor are these guidelines intended to limit the scope of confidentiality claims made. The QCA will assess each confidentiality claim on a case-by-case basis, consistent with the requirements of the QCA Act.

Categories of confidential information include:

- (a) *Commercially sensitive costs*—cost information that would affect the stakeholder's ability to negotiate competitive bids or prices in the future
- (b) *Market or strategic knowledge*—information that communicates the behaviour or performance of a firm, which may hinder its ability to negotiate in future transactions
- (c) *Intellectual property*—valuable information that would unfairly benefit competitors if made public
- (d) *Personal information*—information that reveals personal information and details about an individual
- (e) *Other*—confidential information that is not within any of the above categories.

By using these categories as guidance, claimants can contribute to a timely regulatory process.

7.4 Disclosure of non-confidential information

A transparent approach to stakeholder consultation supports accountability and confidence in the QCA's decision-making process. On this basis, information that is not confidential will be published on our website.

If the QCA refuses a request for confidentiality, we will notify the relevant stakeholder in writing before publishing the information. Where an assessment of claims for confidentiality results in delays to publishing such information, we will release a stakeholder notice to inform stakeholders.

APPENDIX A: CONFIDENTIALITY CLAIM TEMPLATE—DBCT MANAGEMENT'S 2019 DAU

Name of claimant: _____

Document associated with the claim: _____

Page(s) and paragraph(s)	Category of confidentiality	Basis for claim	Information as to why disclosure is not in the public interest
<p><i>Outline the relevant pages and paragraphs associated with your claim.</i></p>	<p><i>Outline which category of confidentiality is associated with your claim:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>(a) Market-sensitive cost inputs</i> <i>(b) Market or strategic knowledge</i> <i>(c) Intellectual property</i> <i>(d) Personal information</i> <i>(e) Other.</i> 	<p><i>Provide an explanation as to why the information falls within the selected confidentiality category and why the information is likely to damage your (or another party's) commercial activities if disclosed.</i></p>	<p><i>Provide any supporting information as to why it is not in the public interest to disclose the relevant information.</i></p>