



Anti-Coal Protesters Lie on Train Tracks at Abbot Point Terminal. Credit - Frontline Action on Coal via Storyful

QLD News

Major funding commitments to inland rail and Adani mine boost confidence in infrastructure sector

JOY L. PASSMORE, The Courier-Mail

September 28, 2020 12:00pm

 [Subscribe on Facebook](#)

CONFIDENCE is returning to Queensland's infrastructure sector after years in the doldrums.

A series of major funding commitments, including Cross River Rail, inland rail and the Adani megamine, have produced a dramatic turnaround in mood.

A Major Projects Pipeline report, released by a consortium of industry groups six months ago, raised concerns over a lack of funding for vital road, rail, port and other jobs-creating initiatives.

It highlighted that many of the \$39 billion of projects for the coming five years were little more than a wishlist.



Construction starts on Brisbane's Cross River Rail project

But a mid-year update issued on Wednesday was more optimistic. It pointed to a 17 per cent increase in funded projects and a 19 per cent rise in those under construction.

“Things are really looking up,” Queensland Major Contractors Association president Iain Ward said.

“I’m encouraged by the mid-year results and look forward to seeing further improvements as new opportunities are identified and funded.

“I’m also excited by the progress some of our larger projects are making, such as inland rail, Cross River Rail and Adani, (which) are all great wins for the state.”



📷 Cross River Rail is a great win for the state

The biggest breakthrough is Adani's \$21 billion Carmichael mine, rail and port development, which had been flagged "unlikely to proceed" in the earlier report.

It has since received all environmental approvals and gained the go-ahead from the Indian energy giant's board in June. It is now categorised as "credibly proposed".

After years of decline following the mining construction boom, annual spending on major projects, those valued from \$50 million each, bottomed at \$4.6 billion in 2016-17. But it is expected to rise 140 per cent to \$10.8 billion by 2020-21.

Constructions Skills Queensland CEO Brett Schimming said: "While it has been a difficult transition from the sharp falls which followed the historic highs reached in 2012-13, increased funded and committed projects have reduced the risks to the industry and it would appear the worst has now passed for Queensland."

The report said that, while employment levels were rising, there was enough capacity left from the mining boom period to meet workforce demand going forward.

The report does, however, draw attention to potential risks to the outlook.

The risks include a slowdown in housing investment, slow growth in State Government revenues, volatile commodity prices, a reluctance to recycle assets or increase borrowing for infrastructure investment and global economic uncertainty.