

STEPHEN ABSON

Principal



BRISBANE BASED

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

- HNC Civil Engineering, Sheffield Hallam University (UK)
- HND Engineering Technology, Rotherham Technical College (UK)

ACCREDITATIONS/ CERTIFICATION

- Dispute Review Board Foundation – advanced
- OGC Gateway Reviewer
- Fellow to the Australian Institute of Building (FAIB)
- MAICD
- Past President of the Queensland Major Contractors Association
- Past Chief Executive of the Infrastructure Association of Queensland

CAREER HISTORY

- 1988 – 1995 Birse Construction (Balfour Beatty UK)
- 1995 – 1997 John Holland Construction & Engineering
- 1997 – 2012 Abigroup Contractors Pty Ltd
- 2012 – 2015 Ostwald Group
- 2015 – current Flagstaff Consulting Group

CAREER OVERVIEW

Steve is a qualified civil engineer and experienced executive with over 35 years' experience in delivery of major transport infrastructure. Commencing his career in the United Kingdom with major civil contractors, Steve moved to Queensland in 1995 and led project teams responsible for delivery of some of the State's largest infrastructure projects in both public and private sectors. Over a decade from 2005 to 2015, Steve held executive roles with two Queensland major contractors as State Civil Manager, General Manager and then Chief Operating Officer, with responsibility for all aspects of operations.

Steve is respected by both owners and project participants for his experience and neutrality, knowledge of effective project governance, technical expertise and attention to relationships. He has served on 4 independent major project Dispute Boards and either led or participated in 15 major project assurance reviews over the past 3 years. Steve regularly advises Owners teams on strategy to package and deliver major projects and plays a pivotal role in mentoring and guiding project delivery teams. To ensure market readiness, he has also developed and shaped transaction documentation for numerous major projects including the Victorian North East Link Project, which is Australia's largest ever road project.

BENEFITS STEVE PROVIDES TO CLIENTS

Infrastructure Procurement Strategies – leading and advising on the implementation of optimum packaging and procurement options for project delivery.

Transaction Management – preparation of procurement documentation to meet both National Guidance/Standards and State Government approval requirements.

Commercial Knowledge – a comprehensive understanding of key commercial drivers for all parties in complex multi-lateral infrastructure transactions. Leading negotiations with private sector parties in relation to the commercial and legal aspects of the contract.

Dispute Resolution and Expert Appraisal – Dispute Board membership, dispute avoidance techniques, alternative dispute resolution, independent expert determinations, expert opinions and claims negotiation.

Project Management and Delivery – expertise in the development and implementation of construction methodologies and risk management that ensure overall project and commercial objectives are met.

Stakeholder Management – Effective stakeholder engagement and collaboration skills, including a sound knowledge of stakeholders' integral to the transaction delivery within the government context.

Technical Knowledge - Sound technical knowledge of heavy urban transport projects, bulk water supply and resources projects.

Sound Interpersonal Skills - Including a demonstrated ability to build effective relationships to achieve time-critical project / organisation objectives.

OVERVIEW OF RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

- 2021 – current Independent Chair of the Mt. Kynoch WTP Scheme for TRC and Fulton Hogan
- 2018 – 2020 Independent Chair of the Project Leadership Group for the first ARTC Inland Rail construction project between Parkes to Narromine (\$350m)
- 2017 – to date Dispute Resolution Board Member on major projects including Brisbane Airport New Parallel Runway Airfield Package (\$600m), Toowoomba Second Range Crossing (\$1.6Bn) and Bruce Highway Cooroy to Curra Package D (\$550m)
- 2016 – to date Gateway and Project Assurance Reviewer of 15 x Major and High-Value High-Risk Projects for Queensland Treasury, Office of Projects Victoria (DTF), Infrastructure New South Wales, Infrastructure South Australia, Cross River Rail Delivery Authority and Brisbane City Council. Projects include Westconnex, Melbourne Metro, Cross River Rail, Fairburn Dam and Eyre Peninsula Desalination Plant
- 2008 – 2015 Project Leadership Group, Alliance Leadership Team and JV Committee Representative for several major projects including Northern Pipeline Interconnector (\$650m), Ipswich Motorway Upgrade (\$1.64Bn), Townsville Port Access Road (\$300m), LNG Export Facility Gladstone Sea Wall (\$120m), Salisbury to Kuraby Rail Upgrade (\$350m) and Northern Busway Alliance (\$130m)
- 2009 – 2012 Executive General Manager and Advisory Board member of national major contractor Abigroup Contractors Pty Ltd, responsible for all Operations and Financial performance in Queensland and Northern Territory

Steve maintains strong connections to industry and the contracting sector. Between 2015-2019, Steve represented the entire infrastructure sector in Queensland as the part time CEO of Infrastructure Association of Queensland (IAQ), leading a strong government engagement program and liaising with independent infrastructure organisations Infrastructure Australia and Building Queensland on policy and reform.

Steve is a past president of the Queensland Major Contractors Association (QMCA) and is a Fellow to the Australian Institute of Building (AIB). He has held numerous Director and Board roles and is a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors (MAICD) and Dispute Resolution Board Foundation (DRBF).

EXPERTISE AREAS

- Procurement Strategy
- Transaction Management and Advisory
- Commercial Frameworks
- Project Delivery Leadership
- Dispute Board Member – dispute resolution and avoidance
- Expert determinations
- Independent Gateway Review Expert, Major Infrastructure – Queensland Treasury, Office of Projects Victoria (DTF), Infrastructure New South Wales, Infrastructure South Australia and Brisbane City Council
- Independent Certification
- Construction planning, scheduling, methodology and constructability
- Cost estimation and Risk (Business Cases and Delivery)
- Value Engineering
- Project and Contracts Administration, claims assessment and resolution

Steve provides management and advisory services in both planning and delivery phases of major projects in both economic and social infrastructure asset classes, including road & rail, bulk water storage, treatment and distribution, ports, airports, mining, oil & gas and hospitals.

SELECTED KEY EXPERIENCE

Bruce Highway Cooroy to Curra, Package D

Qld Gov – BMD/Beilby JV
Value \$450M
Dispute Resolution Board Member

Westgate Tunnel Project

State of Victoria
Value \$5,000M
Independent Expert Report to assist alternative dispute resolution

Toowoomba Second Range Crossing

Qld Gov – Nexus
Value \$1,600M
Dispute Avoidance Board Member

Brisbane International Cruise Terminal

Qld Gov. – Port of Brisbane
Value \$150M
Independent Certifier

Inland Rail – Parkes to Narromine Project

Australian Rail Track Corporation
Value \$400M
Independent Chair of Project Leadership Group

Brisbane Airport New Parallel Runway

Brisbane Airport Corporation
Value \$400M
Dispute Avoidance Board Member

CSG-LNG Water Treatment and Brine Concentration

HWL Ebsworth Lawyers
Value \$900M
Independent Expert Opinion – LORAC vs Arcadis

Eyre Peninsula Desalination Plant

Infrastructure South Australia
Value \$157M
Independent Assurance Review Gate 2

Main Road South and Victor Harbour Road

Infrastructure South Australia
Value \$550M
Procurement Health Check

Melbourne Metro Project

Victorian Department of Treasury & Finance (DTF -OPV)
Value \$11,000M
Project Assurance Review - In Delivery

Urban Utilities SCADA Program

Urban Utilities (Queensland)
Value \$90M
Health Check in delivery

Regional Rail Revival

Victorian Department of Treasury & Finance (DTF -OPV)
Value \$1,700M
Project Assurance Review - In Delivery

Cross River Rail Package Contracts including ETCS

Queensland Treasury (QT)
Value \$5,400M (CRR)
Value \$640M (ETCS)
Independent Assurance Review Gate 3

WestConnex Stage 3A, M4-M5 Link (Team Leader)

Infrastructure New South Wales (INSW) and RMS
Value \$3,500M
Health Check – In Delivery

Prince of Wales Hospital Redevelopment – Acute Services Building

Infrastructure New South Wales (INSW) and Health Infrastructure (HI)
Value \$720M
Gate 3