



Joint statement

## **GOVERNMENT SEEKS PRIVATE PARTNER FOR AIRPORT LINK TOLL ROAD**

The State Government is looking for a private sector partner to jointly deliver two of the biggest transport projects ever planned in Queensland.

The government today advertised nationally for Expressions of Interest to deliver the proposed Airport Link underground toll road and the Windsor to Kedron section of the proposed Northern Busway in partnership with the private sector.

Premier Peter Beattie said the Airport Link toll road would cater for 95,000 motorists a day when it opened in 2012 and slash seven minutes off a trip from Chermside to Fortitude Valley and allow motorists to travel between Bowen Hills and the airport roundabout in as little as six minutes.

“The Northern Busway will give priority to buses by separating bus lanes from general traffic to offer congestion-free travel and alleviate future gridlock,” Mr Beattie said.

“These are projects of great significance to Brisbane.

“Airport Link and the Northern Busway are two of the largest infrastructure works planned in the first phase of the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program,” Mr Beattie said.

“The business cases released for Airport Link and the Northern Busway last October showed both are technically possible and affordable.

“The business cases have also recommended Airport Link and the Northern Busway (Windsor to Kedron) be jointly procured - yet retain their separate functions and identities,” Mr Beattie said.

Treasurer Anna Bligh said that given their size, she was confident these projects would generate a significant level of market interest.

Ms Bligh said final approval of the projects would depend on the outcome of the review of the projects’ environmental assessments which were presently being finalised.

“To ensure no unnecessary delays the State Government is pushing ahead with establishing market interest in the multi-billion dollar projects by inviting formal Expressions of Interest,” Ms Bligh said.

“According to the Business Case, the maximum toll for a family sedan will be less than \$5 in 2012 dollar terms with toll levels for other vehicles to be determined during the tender process.”

The invitations for the Expressions of Interest were advertised in this morning's press.

"By calling for Expressions of Interest now we will have a jump start on procuring the projects and that means we'll be enjoying their benefits much sooner."

Ms Bligh said the State Government had established a separate company, City North Infrastructure Pty Ltd to manage the procurement process on its behalf.

"Airport Link will be a Public-Private Partnership with the private sector responsible for financing, designing, constructing, commissioning, operating and maintaining the project during the concession period," Ms Bligh said.

"Other responsibilities will include customer service during the concession term and project handover at the end of the concession.

"This method of delivery is expected to provide the best value for money for the State.

"The private sector will also be responsible for designing, constructing and commissioning the Northern Busway (Windsor to Kedron), while the State will be responsible for financing, operating and maintaining the busway," Ms Bligh said.

Transport Minister Paul Lucas said Airport Link was a mainly underground toll road proposed to connect the North-South Bypass Tunnel, Inner City Bypass and local road network at Bowen Hills to the northern arterials of Gympie Road and Stafford Road at Kedron and Sandgate Road and the East-West Arterial in the north-east.

"The Northern Busway is a dedicated busway proposed to connect the Inner Northern Busway at Herston to Bracken Ridge via Windsor, Lutwyche, Kedron, Chermside and Aspley," Mr Lucas said.

"Between Windsor and Kedron the Northern Busway will include busway stations, sections of driven tunnel, cut-and-cover tunnel and associated surface works.

"There has been close cooperation and consultation with Lord Mayor Campbell Newman and the Brisbane City Council. I thank them for their cooperation and collaboration in progressing these initiatives," Mr Lucas said.

"A detailed briefing on the projects will be held for prospective bidders on Tuesday 6 March, just over one month before Expression of Interest submissions close on Wednesday 11 April.

"Subject to good market interest in the projects and the successful completion of the Airport Link Environmental Impact Statement and the Northern Busway Concept, Design and Impact Management Plan, the State Government is expected to invite tenders for the project in mid-2007.

"The projects are expected to be completed by 2012.

"The two projects are important elements of a comprehensive infrastructure plan to meet the future transport needs of South-East Queensland," Mr Lucas said.