



Anna Bligh MP
Member for South Brisbane



**Deputy Premier,
Treasurer and
Minister for Infrastructure**

Media statement

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Joint Statement

Airport Link and Northern Busway get the green light

Two of Queensland's biggest transport projects are set to go ahead with the Queensland Government approving their impact statements.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure, Anna Bligh said comprehensive assessments on the impact of the north Brisbane projects — the \$3 billion Airport Link underground toll road and the \$728 million Northern Busway (Royal Children's Hospital (RCH) to Kedron) — had cleared their way forward.

"This was a vital hurdle for these projects to cross — and I am delighted both did so as they will bring enormous, long-term benefits to Brisbane," Ms Bligh said.

"We can now focus on selecting a consortium to start construction next year."

Airport Link is a mainly underground toll road that will connect the North-South Bypass Tunnel, Inner City Bypass and local road network at Bowen Hills to the northern arterials of Gympie and Stafford Roads at Kedron and Sandgate Road and the East-West Arterial in the north-east.

It is scheduled to open in 2012 and will be Brisbane's second toll road tunnel, following on from the North-South Bypass Tunnel, currently under construction.

The Northern Busway, when completed, will connect the Inner Northern Busway at Herston to Bracken Ridge via Windsor, Lutwyche, Kedron, Chermside and Aspley. The Windsor to Kedron section of the busway will be jointly delivered with Airport Link to maximise benefits and minimise construction impacts.

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Airport Link and the Concept Design and Impact Management Plan (CDIMP) for the Northern Busway (RCH to Kedron) were developed over 18 months of planning, detailed investigations and extensive community consultation, and were displayed for public comment late last year.

An Airport Link EIS supplementary report was prepared in response to approximately 300 written submissions on the EIS, raising more than 2000 individual matters ranging from concerns over construction disruption to increased traffic on connecting roads.

Both the EIS and the supplementary report were assessed by the Coordinator-General who prepared an EIS evaluation report that recommended Airport Link proceed, subject to a number of strict conditions.

These included the development of environmental management plans that addressed community concerns relating to construction impacts such as noise and dust, as well as safety and traffic management plans to safeguard access around work sites, especially for students.

The successful tenderer will also be required to develop solutions to minimise the impact of ventilation outlets and construction impacts on Kedron State High and Wooloowin State schools.

“The government will not allow the safety of students and staff to be compromised.”

Ms Bligh said the consultation process allowed the public to be properly informed of — and have their say on — how construction and operation of both projects might affect them.

“As part of this process Education Minister Rod Welford and Member for Stafford Stirling Hinchliffe and I met with local school representatives last week and heard their concerns.

“Extensive input from the community was vital in shaping these projects,” she said.

Ms Bligh said the owners of properties directly affected by the Airport Link and Northern Busway projects would receive fair and proper compensation.

“A number of properties have already been bought from those people who needed to move on while the project was being assessed.

“Now that the projects have been approved to proceed, the project team will approach all affected surface property owners and offer to purchase their properties.

“This provides certainty to those people whose properties are directly required for the project.”

Aside from transport advantages, the projects have other community benefits including rehabilitation of Kedron Brook, beautifying and landscaping Sandgate and Gympie Roads, enhancing Kalinga Park, creating new pedestrian and cycle paths across Kedron Brook and building recreational facilities in Mann Park overlooking Enoggera Creek.

Brisbane Lord Mayor Campbell Newman welcomed the approval of the EIS and CDIMP.

“This was a crucial step in allowing these two projects to become a reality,” he said.

“I am confident both Airport Link and the Northern Busway will be of great benefit to Brisbane’s motorists and bus patrons,” said the Lord Mayor.

Mr Lucas said the Management Plan had drawn a lot of public interest.

“More than 160 written submissions were received on the draft CDIMP from organisations, individuals and government agencies,” Mr Lucas said.

“As a result, the final Plan sets out a range of requirements including the development of environmental management plans that address community concerns relating to impacts such as noise, dust, safety and heritage values.”

Approval of the EIS and CDIMP means the projects can progress to the delivery phase, with tenders expected to be called for Airport Link and the Windsor to Kedron section of the Northern Busway next month (June).

The RCH to Windsor section of the Northern Busway will be built separately.

Ms Bligh said that Airport Link and the Northern Busway are two of the largest infrastructure projects planned in the first phase of the *South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program*.

“This is an exciting time for infrastructure projects in South East Queensland..

“I am really looking forward to seeing both these projects come to fruition as they are a vital part of our comprehensive infrastructure plan to meet Brisbane’s current and future transport needs.”

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