



GREEN LIGHT FOR AIRPORT LINK AND NORTHERN BUSWAY

Two of the biggest transport projects in Queensland history have been given the green light.

Premier Peter Beattie and Brisbane Lord Mayor, Campbell Newman, said business plans for Airport Link and the Northern Busway showed they were viable and would dramatically reduce travel times in Brisbane.

Mr Beattie said business cases prepared by independent consultants showed both projects were viable and affordable.

“These are massive projects that will cut traffic on northside roads by up to 45% and significantly reduce travel times to and from the airport,” Mr Beattie said.

“Three weeks ago, we announced the successful tenderer to build the Gateway Upgrade Project and this is further evidence we’re getting on with the job of delivering better roads for Queensland motorists.”

Mr Beattie said the State Government would fund construction of the Northern Busway with Airport Link being delivered as a Public Private Partnership (PPP).

The Airport Link Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the Northern Busway Concept Design and Impact Management Plan (CDIMP) will be released for public consultation on Wednesday (Oct 11).

Under existing plans, construction of the Northern Busway could begin in 2008 with the first stage in use by 2010. Construction of Airport Link could begin in 2008 and be open to traffic in 2012.

Cr Newman said the projects would help deal with traffic growth generated by South East Queensland’s booming population.

“By 2026, the region's population is expected to increase from 2.6 million to about 3.7 million, with Brisbane bearing the brunt of that growth,” Cr Newman said.

“We must provide effective and affordable infrastructure such as Airport Link and the North South Bypass Tunnel to help cope with this growth.

“This is another example of Brisbane City Council and the State Government working together to deliver better roads for Brisbane motorists.”

Cr Newman said the Airport Link EIS found most of the potential impacts of the project, which includes two three-lane tunnels between Bowen Hills and Kedron; two two-lane tunnels between Kedron and Toombul; and three ventilation outlets, could be effectively mitigated to acceptable levels with innovative design and proper management.

“I’m confident the benefits of putting traffic underground, instead of allowing more and more

cars to clog up surface roads, particularly in residential areas, outweigh the impacts. Failing to provide this vital piece of infrastructure would have much wider impacts on the community as a whole.”

Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Infrastructure Anna Bligh said delivering Airport Link as a state-led PPP with significant Brisbane City Council involvement was a good option for motorists and for taxpayers.

“Airport Link is a major construction project, which the State Government believes can best be delivered as a public private partnership,” Ms Bligh said.

“Subject to good market interest in Airport Link, and the successful completion of the EIS, the State Government and Council will invite tenders for the project in mid 2007 and I have asked The Coordinator-General to commence a market engagement process in the next few weeks.”

Minister for Transport and Main Roads Paul Lucas said delivering Airport Link and the Northern Busway together would save money and reduce disruptions.

“Just like any major infrastructure projects, Airport Link and the Northern Busway will have an impact during construction,” Mr Lucas said.

“But we’re working smartly by doing much of the planning and consultation for both projects at the same time and having the same company that constructs the Northern Busway build the Lutwyche to Kedron Park section of Airport Link.

“When completed, these two projects will cut traffic congestion on Lutwyche Road and nearby streets by a massive 45%.

“Airport Link will move vehicles off northside arterial roads and suburban streets with its significant time savings, while each full bus on the Northern Busway will take the equivalent of 40 cars off our streets.

“The Northern Busway will offer passengers a congestion-free run on fast, frequent and reliable services and connect to other busways and train services across Brisbane, so it will be quicker and easier to get where you need to go.

“We are ready to start building the Northern Busway as soon as it meets environmental requirements. It will be built in stages, with the highest priority parts in Herston, Lutwyche and Kedron delivered first.”

Mr Lucas said details of the Northern Busway proposal are contained in the draft CDIMP, which will be publicly displayed for six weeks.

“The draft CDIMP includes the preferred alignment for the route and busway station sites. It also addresses ways to minimise disruptions for residents and businesses during construction.”

Mr Lucas said the Airport Link EIS would go on public display for eight weeks from Wednesday to allow the community to review and comment on its findings.

8 October, 2006

Media: Premier’s 3224 4500/ Lord Mayor’s Office 0408 709 160/ Office of Min for Transport 0419 757 868

FACT SHEET – AIRPORT LINK

- Airport Link is a mainly underground toll road proposed between Brisbane's inner northern suburbs, the airport and the inner city.
- It would connect to the Inner City Bypass and North-South Bypass Tunnel at Bowen Hills; Gympie Road and Stafford Road at Kedron; and Sandgate Road and the East-West Arterial at Clayfield/Toombul.
- The tunnel would have a longitudinal ventilation system and three ventilation outlets, with one near each of the surface connections.
- Airport Link would allow motorists to travel between Bowen Hills and the airport roundabout in as little as six minutes.
- It would cut 10 minutes off a trip between Chermside and Fortitude Valley.
- In 2012, more than 95,000 motorists will use Airport Link each day to bypass 16 sets of traffic lights between Bowen Hills and Kedron and 14 sets of traffic lights between Bowen Hills and Toombul.
- By 2026, more than 120,000 motorists are expected to use Airport Link each day.
- Instead of travelling at 25km/h along Lutwyche Road in 2026, these motorists would be travelling at up to 80km/h underground, avoiding surface traffic.
- In 2012, combined with the Northern Busway proposal, Airport Link is expected to reduce traffic by around 45 per cent on Lutwyche Road (north of Stoneleigh Street) and 27 per cent on Sandgate Road, Albion.
- The Airport Link business case was developed in accordance with the Queensland Government's Value for Money Framework.
- The Airport Link EIS will be displayed for public comment until Friday 8 December 2006.
- Subject to good market interest in Airport Link, and the successful completion of the EIS, the State Government and Council will invite tenders for the project in mid 2007.

For further information:

Visit the project website at www.brisbaneairportlink.com.au, the technical website at www.airportlinkeis.com or phone 1800 99 00 38 (freecall).