



Deputy Premier,
Minister for Infrastructure
and Planning

July 30, 2008

Airport Link cleared for take-off

The State Government's \$3.4 billion Airport Link project has today cleared its final planning hurdle paving the way for construction to start in September.

Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure and Planning Paul Lucas said the release of the Queensland Coordinator-General's Change Report addressed visual, noise and air quality impacts, and traffic and spoil arrangements during construction.

Mr Lucas said the project had also today reached financial close with the public contribution remaining substantially under State's affordability benchmark at \$267 million.

"Airport Link will be an impressive new addition to Brisbane's road network and will provide a vital new link between two of south east Queensland's most important economic centres — the airport and the city," Mr Lucas said.

"It will bypass 18 sets of lights between Bowen Hills and the Airport, cutting the trip to as little as 9 minutes.

"BrisConnections has responded well to the State Government's call for innovation in this project, which has led to design enhancements and markedly reduced the potential impacts on the community.

"The Change Report confirms the ventilation outlets will be located in Clayfield, Kedron and Windsor, with the ventilation station at Clayfield completely buried and the Windsor ventilation station partially buried.

"The two underground road tunnels will be 5.25 km long and a change in construction methodology means there will be more less intrusive underground tunnelling rather than 'cut and cover' tunnelling works.

"Design innovations will alleviate potential noise and visual impacts and will minimise disruption to local residents, and the two nearby schools, during the construction period.

"And a new conveyor system will remove the majority of spoil from the Clayfield site which means there will be 80,000 fewer truck movements during construction."

Fifty-two submissions were received in relation to the Coordinator-General's Change Report. This feedback was used to inform the final conditions of approval.

On 19 May, the State Government announced that BrisConnections had been chosen to finance, design, construct, own, operate and maintain Airport Link.

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BrisConnections will also design and build the next section of the Northern Busway (Windsor to Kedron), and the Airport Roundabout Upgrade that links the East-West Arterial to Airport Drive, before handing the infrastructure back to the State to operate and maintain.

The total worth of the three projects is \$4.8 billion. The State's contribution across the three projects is \$1.7 billion.

Financial close was also reached today between the State Government and BrisConnections, effectively signalling the green light for construction to commence.

"Having reached financial close and obtained final planning approval, BrisConnections can now start early site works.

"Construction proper is expected to get underway in September for both Airport Link and Northern Busway (Windsor to Kedron).

"Construction on the Airport Roundabout Upgrade will begin in 2009."

In May when the preferred tenderer was announced, the State Government's contribution was still subject to interest rate movements and was estimated at \$47 million, with the final amount to be determined at financial close.

The State's contribution has now been finalised and is locked in at \$267 million, which is payable when construction is completed in 2012. This increase is solely due to interest rate movements.

"Although the cost has risen by more than anyone would like, the project still represents exceptional value-for-money to the Queensland taxpayer – as we will get a project that would cost \$3.4 billion to design and construct for a contribution of \$267 million," Mr Lucas said.

"This is still well below the State's affordability benchmark of \$850 million that was flagged in May 2008."

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