

## 2012-2013 Assessment Brief

<b>Recommended rating:</b>	<b>Threshold</b>
<b>Status in 2012 report to COAG:</b>	<b>New submission</b>
Initiative Name:	Brisbane TransitWays – Northern and Eastern
Geography:	Brisbane, Queensland
Proponent:	Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads
Project description:	
<p>The Queensland Government is seeking \$116 million in Commonwealth funding to modify existing road space to provide new bus lanes in the northern and eastern corridors in Brisbane.</p> <p>The project replaces Queensland’s Eastern Busway project, which was first submitted to Infrastructure Australia in 2008 and was included on the Priority List at Threshold in 2010.</p> <p><b>Objective:</b></p> <p>The stated objective of the project is to connect Chermside and Carindale to the metropolitan public transport network. Connecting these growing communities is anticipated to significantly improve access to jobs, education and services.</p> <p><b>Problem:</b></p> <p>Chermside and Carindale are the only principal activity centres in Brisbane not currently connected to the rest of the city by high quality public transport connections (e.g. rail, busway or bus priority).</p> <p>The key problems stemming from the lack of connectivity are poor employment accessibility, low density development, high car dependency, increasing congestion, reduced bus travel time reliability and network inefficiency.</p> <p><b>Solution:</b></p> <p>The proposed solution is the modification of existing road space to provide new bus lanes. It addresses concerns that Infrastructure Australia raised with the original Eastern Busways proposal over the need for a dedicated bus tunnel. Bus lanes are proposed at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Northern TransitWay (\$66 million): three kilometre inbound and outbound bus lane along Gympie Road from Kedron to Chermside; and</li> <li>Eastern TransitWay (\$50 million): 1.5 kilometre inbound bus lane along Old Cleveland Road from Main Ave to Bennetts Rd, Coorparoo.</li> </ul>	
Proponent’s capital cost estimate (nominal):	\$116 million
Contribution sought by Proponent including requests for project development funding (nominal):	\$116 million
Project timing Start/Completion by Proponent:	TBC
BCR stated by proponent:	1.6 for Eastern TransitWay 1.8 for Northern TransitWay

## Strategic alignment summary

### Alignment with Infrastructure Australia's strategic priorities:

The project aligns well with Infrastructure Australia's priorities to 'develop our cities and regions', 'reduce greenhouse emissions', 'improve social equity' and aligns with priorities relating to economic development. The Office of the Infrastructure Coordinator has previously supported the Eastern Busway project, the goals of which are very similar to the current submission.

### Alignment with state strategies:

The Queensland Government has not published infrastructure strategies since taking office in March 2012. The infrastructure plans published by the previous government, such as Connecting SEQ 2031 and the South East Queensland Regional Plan, recognise the northern and eastern bus corridors as priorities, however the status of these plans under the current government is not clear.

## Problem assessment summary

The core problem identified in the submission is that Chermside and Carindale are the only principal activity centres in Brisbane not currently connected to the rest of the city by high quality public transport connections. The lack of connectivity is leading to poor employment accessibility, low density development, high car dependency, increasing congestion, reduced bus travel time reliability and network inefficiency.

The root causes of the problem are identified as inadequate investment in public transport and poor integration between land-use and transport planning.

## Solution assessment summary

The solution identified is the modification of existing road space to provide bus lanes along sections of the northern and eastern corridors, connecting high-growth areas with Brisbane CBD.

The submission includes high-level information on option generation and assessment. Whilst the identified solution is a reasonable response to the problem in the short term, reform measures and better use options should be considered in a longer term integrated transport plan.

## BCR appraisal conclusion

Preliminary BCRs have been provided indicating a BCR of 1.6 for the Eastern TransitWay (7 percent discount rate, \$2011) and 1.8 for the Northern TransitWay (6 percent discount rate, \$2012).

These BCRs are higher than the original Eastern Busway proposal, following modifications suggested by Infrastructure Australia. The capital cost of the Eastern Busways proposal was \$685 million compared to the Eastern TransitWay of \$75 million.

Note that the capital costs included in the benefit cost analysis are different to those presented in the submission. We also note that the submission indicated that the travel times would be the same for car users on Old Cleveland Road before and after the Eastern TransitWay at 31 minutes, yet these types of road users receive around half of the benefits in the benefit-cost analysis.

The cost benefit analysis provided so far is insufficient to be able to verify the robustness of these results. However, the results suggest that the project is likely to lead to net benefits, which is in line with results provided for the higher cost Eastern Busway proposal.

## Infrastructure Australia Priority List Recommendation

The Office of the Infrastructure Coordinator supports increasing the connectivity of high-growth areas of Chermside and Carindale with the Brisbane CBD through public transport.

It is recommended that the project be included in the Infrastructure Priority List at **Threshold** with the following conditions:

- The proponent provides a detailed business case including a robust economic analysis.

