Better Transport Queensland

2025 Policy Platform

Better Transport Queensland Inc.

enquiries@btq.org.au

18 October 2025 *(Revision 2)*

Preface

Who are we?

Better Transport Queensland (BTQ) is a not-for-profit group that advocates for improvements to public transport, active transport, and freight rail throughout Queensland. We want to see a brighter, more connected future through better transport solutions.

Our Goals

We believe Queensland's brighter future starts with high quality public, active, and freight transport systems. Our goal is to shift the narrative on Queensland's transport away from car-centric ideologies and towards research-driven investment in modern, effective, and easy-to-use transport options to address the following:

Congestion

Public and active transport are vital for reducing urban congestion. The current approach of widening roads and freeways is a temporary solution, as induced demand only perpetuates the cycle. The most effective way to address congestion is by providing high quality, mass transportation systems that connect people to where they live, work, and play.

Environmental Impact

Reducing heavy vehicle traffic on major roads is essential to protecting the environment and creating a sustainable future. Moving freight by heavy rail is significantly more efficient – and safer – than by trucks. Prioritising key freight rail corridors can make a transformative difference.

Social Benefits

Enhancing public and active transport ensures equal opportunities for all, regardless of personal vehicle ownership. Improved transport options empower individuals to access employment, education, and social activities, fostering inclusivity and stronger communities.

Economic Benefits

Expanding public transport avoids or delays the costs of road widening or other road projects, and is often more efficient than accommodating additional trip demand on expanded (low-capacity) roads.

Contents

1. Introduction

The Better Transport Queensland (BTQ) Policy Platform is a comprehensive guide to the policies and principles supported by BTQ as an association.

Each year, BTQ runs an Annual Policy Platform Day, where members can prioritise, debate and decide on which policy items will form the Policy Platform. It is expected that all of BTQ's official public communications and advocacy work will not be inconsistent with the Policy Platform. In this way, the Policy Platform keeps BTQ's advocacy clear, consistent, and non-partisan. It serves as a guide for the Management Committee to align its advocacy work with members' views.

It is members who decide what policy items form part of the Policy Platform. The BTQ Management Committee takes an administrative role and does not produce official BTQ policy. However, where no Policy Platform position exists on an issue, the BTQ Management Committee may decide to take an interim position after consulting with BTQ members.

The Policy Platform is reviewed by BTQ members annually. To ensure stable and coherent policy positions, the Policy Platform may only be amended by members before the usual annual review by Special Resolution(s) passed at a General Meeting.

2. Strategy & Advocacy Philosophy

BTQ's advocacy is underpinned by a framework of principles and values. We seek an approach built on an impartial, outcome-driven evaluation of transport policies and potential solutions. Ultimately, we advocate for a transport network where people can live comfortably without having to rely on first owning a car.

We champion a 'services first', mode-neutral philosophy. This means that we assess options based on their ability to meet community needs and improve the overall transport network. We seek to prioritise service quality, connectivity, and access to meet the long-term needs of communities and move Queensland towards best-practice service levels.

In the end, we want to see high-frequency rapid transport networks in Queensland's cities and towns that meet or exceed community expectations. These transport networks should compare well against domestic comparators on key service metrics (e.g. frequency, reliability, hours of operation, connectivity, and journey times).

2.1. Our Commitment to Mode Neutrality

1. High Priority Outcome-Driven & Merit-Based Evaluation

BTQ believes that transport proposals should be evaluated based on performance outcomes and rigorous merit-based evaluations, regardless of transport mode. Therefore, policies or solutions must be evaluated based on merit. This includes how fit-for-purpose they are, how they deliver on the long-term needs of communities, and how well they move transport in Queensland towards best practice.

2. High Priority Guiding Principles & Balanced Planning

BTQ believes that transport is the product and that modes are simply a means of delivering that product. Therefore, when assessing a policy or proposal, BTQ will start with an open mind and blank slate about what mode(s) might be suitable for further assessment.

BTQ will support the realisation of short or medium-term interim transport solutions while longer-term solution(s) are being pursued. However, we will not support an interim solution where it is likely to prevent or obstruct the achievement of a longer-term goal (e.g. by introducing substantial transition costs or complications during upgrade).

2.2. Vision & Validate to Replace 'Predict & Provide'

1. High Priority The Vision and Validate Approach

BTQ understands that transport mode share targets have been part of SEQ regional planning for the last 30 years. However, we also note that during this time, the mode share targets set have never been met. Given this reality, BTQ now believes that a

different approach is required. BTQ therefore advocates for the abolition of mode share targets in favour of adopting service quality supply targets instead.

The new public transport authority should create a vision for improving service quality (e.g. frequency, reliability, speed, service span), a plan to implement it (e.g. action items and timelines), and use metrics to demonstrate progress (e.g. by showing increases in absolute or relative patronage levels, the number of bus stops or train stations with all day 15-minute service frequency, or the expansion of 30-minute or 15-minute access isochrone areas).

For example, key bus routes and train lines in SEQ could be upgraded in frequency so that 80% of residents and workplaces are within 400m of a bus stop or 800m of a train station that offers at least 15-minute all-day frequent service.

We believe that setting specific service quality supply targets will be more effective and achievable than setting general mode share targets. Research has shown that improving service quality is the single largest contributing factor to increasing patronage. By focusing on the service quality of supply, an increase in mode share will naturally follow.

2.3. Ideal Network Plans (INPs)

1. Priority Transparent Planning

BTQ believes that bus networks across Queensland, and particularly in SEQ, are not fit for purpose. Designed for another era, they do not fully support the modern needs and desires of the community. To promote change and provide transparency on where bus network service gaps exist, BTQ will develop, publish, and maintain a public Ideal Network Plan (INP) on its website.

This map will visually communicate the location and scale of bus network service gaps and route duplication. It will also articulate BTQ's vision and the high public value of a simple, integrated and high-quality public transport network. It will also be a valuable resource for stakeholders (e.g. election candidates, government, passengers, the media, and the general public). To support this initiative, BTQ will also maintain current and historical network maps for comparison and archival purposes.

2.4. Government Relations

1. Priority Respectful and Assertive Approach to Policy Advocacy

BTQ believes that change happens when governments trust and respect informed advocacy groups and subject matter experts within the field. Therefore, we will maintain respectful but assertive relationships with public agencies, their staff, and elected officials.

BTQ's members expect the association to respectfully but firmly uphold the association's values and policy positions as decided by members in the Policy Platform.

2. Priority Meaningful, Informed and Civil Policy Debate

BTQ believes that facts and evidence are required to foster trust with the public and governments. Therefore, we will take a civil, constructive and professional approach to public policy debates. We will take the time and care to ensure that we understand the necessary facts, evidence and implications. This also means that BTQ and its members must focus on debating policies and their merits, and not personalities.

3. Investment Principles & Philosophy

BTQ believes that an effective transport network requires a governance model that transcends agency boundaries and local politics. A long-standing issue in Queensland is the scattering and overlap of public transport responsibilities across multiple agencies (e.g. Translink, Queensland Rail, and local governments). We believe that scattered governance is an obstruction to achieving our vision of a high-quality, effective, rapid transport network.

BTQ therefore calls for the creation of a single, separate Queensland Public Transport Authority. We ask that all transport planning powers and responsibilities be incorporated into this single state-level authority. By establishing clear boundaries and roles, transport investments can be driven by long-term efficiency and effectiveness considerations rather than politics.

3.1. A Services-First Approach

1. High Priority Prioritise Existing Infrastructure Over new Infrastructure

BTQ recognises that constructing new transport infrastructure involves very high costs and long delivery timeframes. Governments at all levels are therefore constrained in the size, cost and number of projects that they can realistically fund and deliver at any one time.

Recognising this, BTQ therefore asks that priority be given to projects that will deliver the highest overall net benefits for Queenslanders. Given the same corridor, public transport can often move more people during peak hours than a corresponding public road. This means that a public transport project should generally be prioritised over a corresponding lower-capacity road project in the same area. (Later in this Policy Platform document, this will be illustrated using the Gympie Road Tunnel as an example).

2. High Priority More Efficient use of Existing Infrastructure

BTQ believes that before committing resources to new transport infrastructure projects, the full potential of existing infrastructure must be unlocked first.

Existing transport infrastructure in Queensland is underutilised. Large increases in patronage can be achieved by using these assets more intensively. Investing in improved service frequency and extended hours on existing infrastructure can be delivered at a fraction of the cost of new infrastructure, while greatly improving patronage and overall journey times.

3. High Priority Use Service Trials or Interim Services to Test for Demand

BTQ notes a general reluctance to invest in new or improved high-frequency services, despite service improvements being significantly cheaper to deliver and representing a lower risk of complications (such as cost escalation or overrun) than new

infrastructure. We believe a key reason for this is the way governments may perceive investment risk differently between public transport and public road projects.

Improvements to public transport service, such as a bus or train frequency upgrades, are generally expected to *demonstrate proven demand* first (e.g. already full buses, impacted reliability). Usually, predictions or modelling of improved patronage with the upgrade are not released publicly (if they are done at all). In contrast, funding for public road projects are almost always approved based on *modelling or predictions of what future demand might potentially be*. This presents an apparent double standard.

To address this issue, BTQ advocates for the use of 12-month bus service improvement trials to test for the existence of latent passenger demand for new high-frequency services. Such trials are consistent with the BTQ's 'vision and validate' approach. Trials should be funded from a dedicated revolving budget set aside for this sole purpose. So, when one trial ends, the revolving budget can be applied to fund a different trial elsewhere. We do not propose that trials for new standard frequency, low-frequency or flexible-type services be included in the budget just described.

4. High Priority Pre-Infrastructure High-Frequency bus Shuttle Services

BTQ supports the use of high-frequency bus shuttle services ahead of the extension of a planned railway, light rail or BRT line. As an interim measure, this can rapidly build passenger demand. We believe this is a low-cost practical response given that infrastructure projects may take a decade or more to become operational.

3.2. The Big Picture: A Long-Term Plan for Transport

1. Priority A Long-Term Plan

BTQ believes that public value is maximised when transport projects fit into a consistent and regularly updated long-term plan. For projects that rely on an exclusive corridor, such as heavy rail lines or busways, a protected corridor is critical for delivering these projects quickly, easily and at a low cost.

We therefore believe that the Queensland Government must create, maintain and follow a long-term transport plan for active transport, public transport, and freight transport. This will ensure that Queensland is ready to tackle tomorrow's transport challenges.

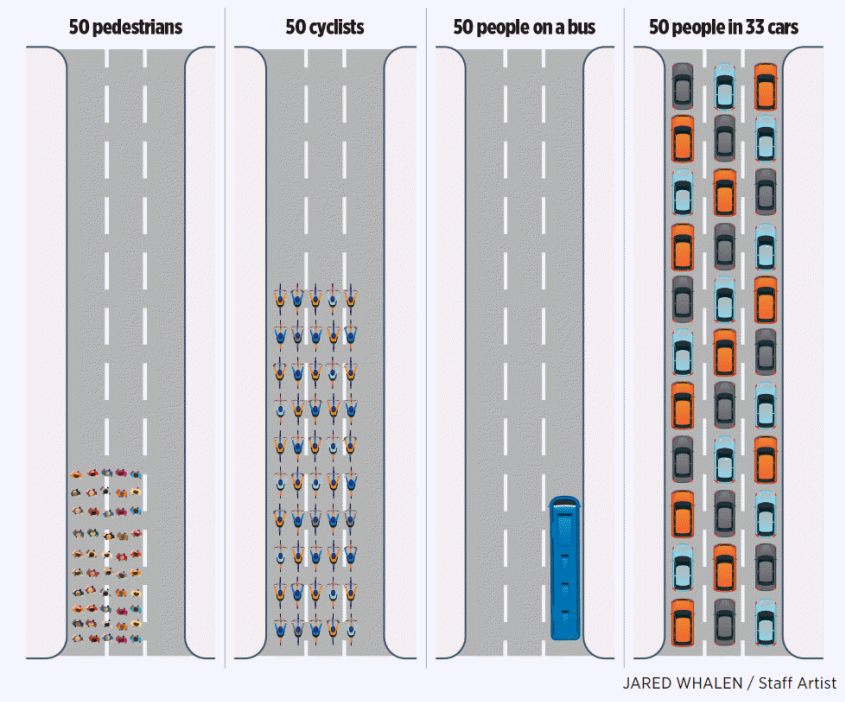
4. Public Transport

BTQ believes that public transport is vital for maintaining the livability of Queensland's cities and regions. Public transport enhances livability because it provides freedom and choice to residents who are unwilling to bear the high costs of car ownership, want an alternative to sitting in peak-hour congestion, or are unable to drive due to age, legal status, being a tourist or visitor, or health reasons.

BTQ also believes that public transport is essential for economic growth. City and urban roads have an inherently low capacity, and in built-up urban areas, there is limited space for road widening. When high-quality public transport is placed onto an existing road, the total volume of people a road can move also increases without paying for capital works to widen the road.

Public transport can also move higher volumes of workers or customers quickly during peak hours or major events than roads can. The inherent low capacity of roads and their unsuitability for moving high volumes of people is illustrated in the graphic below (Dave Mabe, n.d.):

Roads use more space to move the same amount of people



4.1. Frequency and Connectivity

1. High Priority 15-Minute Frequency

BTQ understands that supplying all-day high-frequency service, on whatever mode, is the most critical component of an effective public transport network. Without frequent service, the public transport network becomes difficult and less convenient for

passengers to use. Poor service frequency increases waiting times at stops and stations, and people start driving instead. Increased driving quickly consumes whatever low and already limited road capacity there is.

BTQ therefore strongly advocates for a network of reliable turn-up-and-go services arriving every 15 minutes or better, all day. The effectiveness and popularity of turn-up-and-go service has already been proven in Brisbane with high-frequency BUZ, CityGlider and Brisbane Metro BRT bus services (Alan Warren, 2007). Perth has also demonstrated that 15-minute frequent trains, running all day and on weekends, is also viable, even in a low-density Australian city (Peter Martinovich, 2009) .

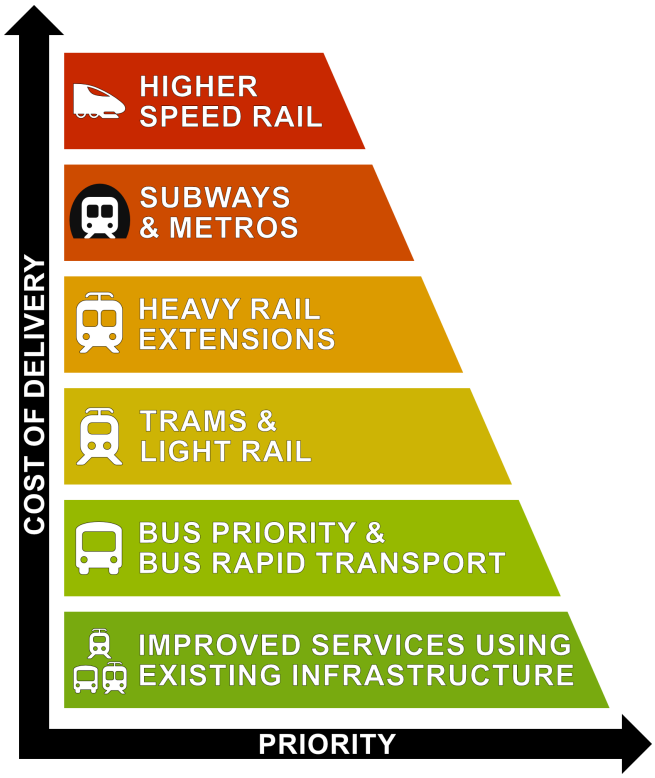
As part of a more frequent transport network, a seamless interchange experience must be provided for passengers to change easily between different transport modes.

4.2. Introducing the Public Transport Priority Pyramid

1. Priority The Public Transport Priority Pyramid

BTQ believes that funding and improvements should generally be prioritised according to the Public Transport Priority Pyramid. This framework prioritises service improvements over infrastructure improvements, and prioritises projects with low infrastructure requirements over projects with high infrastructure requirements.

The Public Transport Priority Pyramid



(**Note:** BTQ reserves copyright over this Public Transport Pyramid concept image and asks that any reuse is properly attributed to BTQ)

Unlike roads, which are built, public transport is operated through the provision of services. The Public Transport Priority Pyramid suggests improving existing services first as this is faster, cheaper and easier to deliver than new infrastructure works. It also highlights the underutilisation and under-servicing of otherwise high-quality public transport infrastructure in Queensland.

2. **Priority High-Frequency Buses as a Catalyst for Change**

   BTQ supports the introduction and expansion of the Brisbane Metro BRT and other high-frequency BRT services. These services catalyse bus network reforms that would otherwise be difficult to achieve across Greater Brisbane and other SEQ regions.

   However, in certain corridors, BRT can only be considered as an interim solution to a more suitable longer-term alternative mode (e.g. Light or Heavy Rail). Where this is the case, BTQ will continue to advocate for the delivery of the longer-term mode.

4.3. Public Transport Network Reform

1. **High Priority Comprehensive Review of SEQ Public Transport Network Effectiveness**

   BTQ advocates for a comprehensive review of the entire SEQ public transport network (all modes). This review should evaluate the relationship between service supply and patronage, network effectiveness and assess overall frequent network coverage (baseline). The review should also identify, map and prioritise service gaps or under-serviced areas so that these gaps can be closed in a future service uplift program.

4.4. Governance: Co-ordination versus a Single Executive Authority

In Queensland, the responsibility for delivering public transport infrastructure or services is spread across multiple agencies (at both a state and local government level). Each agency pursues its own vision and priorities, and must communicate or negotiate with other agencies. A multi-agency governance model, therefore, naturally facilitates conflict, miscommunication, and misalignment of priorities.

Different political parties with conflicting policies or priorities may also hold office at different levels of government (e.g. Brisbane City Council and the Queensland Government). This further compounds the disadvantages of the multi-agency model. This can contribute to significant project delay, obstruction, funding disagreements, and increase the cost of delivering improvements to public transport services or infrastructure.

BTQ believes that the solution here is not more or better co-ordination between multiple existing agencies. This approach has already been attempted twice, with the formation and abolition of the Metropolitan Transit Authority (1970s-1980s) and Translink Transit Authority (2008-2012). It is an unsuccessful approach.

Rather than repeat history, BTQ recommends that the Queensland Government adopt a singular executive agency model, such as Western Australia's Public Transport Authority (PTA). Here, multiple pre-existing transport agencies have been incorporated into a single authority. With a reduced scope for inter-agency conflicts or misalignment, this model is expected to ensure efficient and effective public transport network governance across Queensland.

4.4.1. Ending Politics and Silos in Public Transport Governance

1. High Priority Establishing a Queensland Public Transport Authority

BTQ recommends the creation of a new Queensland Public Transport Authority with sole responsibility for public transport governance and network planning. We recommend that the new authority adopt the WA Public Transport Authority model.

Unlike previous public transport authorities in Queensland, this authority will **not** seek to co-ordinate existing public transport agencies. Instead, multiple existing public transport agencies will be incorporated into a single authority (e.g. incorporating Queensland Rail, Transport for Brisbane, and Translink).

By incorporating multiple agencies into a single authority, inter-agency conflicts over values, priorities, responsibilities, timing, and funding will be greatly reduced. We expect that this governance model will also help resolve many issues, such as buses duplicating or competing against rail services, the lack of interchange facilities for buses and trains, and the lack of funding for frequent bus services that extend beyond local government boundaries.

BTQ strongly recommends that the proposed new Queensland Public Transport Authority be established with statutory protections to ensure operational effectiveness and accountability.

4.4.2. Consolidation of Network Planning

1. Priority A Single Executive Authority for Public Transport

BTQ recommends that all public transport network planning functions and service provider contracting becomes the sole and exclusive domain of a state government-level Queensland Public Transport Authority. This is consistent with public transport governance arrangements in all other Australian states and territories.

This means that public transport network planning staff currently within Brisbane City Council's Transport for Brisbane division shall be transferred to the new Queensland Public Transport Authority. Historical precedent exists in Queensland for the transfer of local government functions to state government, with electricity and water utilities being two such examples.

2. Priority Local Government Funding of Public Transport Operations

BTQ welcomes - and does not object to - local government financial contributions for service improvements, service supplements (such as free holiday period buses), or trials of new services within their respective local government area.

However, the acceptance of such funding must be conditional on the absolute requirement that no such funding will require ceding control over public transport network planning to a local government.

This approach will ensure that local government financial contributions are focused on enhancing the quality of public transport supply, rather than compromising the integrity of transport network planning that the Queensland Public Transport Authority will be empowered to create.

4.5. Rail Services

Queensland Rail's infrastructure and train services are the main public transport mode for connecting residents across different local government areas and regions.

BTQ considers Perth to be a comparable lower-density city with a similar population and rail network to Greater Brisbane. In Perth, off-peak 15-minute frequent train services are provided to more train stations than in Greater Brisbane (both in absolute and percentage terms). For example, on Sundays, Perth supplies virtually all of its 70+ train stations with 15-minute or better off-peak train frequency. Greater Brisbane does not achieve close to this, even on a weekday. This has contributed to train network patronage in Perth being consistently higher than for Greater Brisbane.

BTQ therefore advocates for the introduction of more off-peak high-frequency train services across the rail network and all-day express trains. This will transform the Queensland Rail network from a peak-hour focused train service into an all-day turn-up-and-go service, similar to Perth. Improved all-day train frequency also makes it viable for bus services to terminate at train stations rather than duplicate train services. This will create a simpler, more legible network.

BTQ also advocates for complementary upgrades to station accessibility and projects that improve integration of bus routes with the rail network.

Extending infrastructure that requires an exclusive corridor (such as heavy rail or busways) is very costly. BTQ therefore suggests targeted 'mini project' initiatives such as selective track amplifications, level crossing removals, and projects aimed at improving operational efficiency and safety. BTQ supports extension of the Queensland Rail network to Gold Coast Airport and a comprehensive future options review of the Doomben Line.

Complementing these passenger-focused initiatives, upgrades to freight rail lines should be made to shift long-haul freight off roads and onto rail, delivering economic and environmental benefits for the state.

4.5.1. Urban Rail Service Enhancements

1. **High Priority A 15 Minute Minimum Basic Train Frequency all day**

   BTQ recommends that Queensland Rail introduce 15-minute or better all-day train services on the Shorncliffe, Kippa-Ring, and Springfield lines (between 6 am and 9 pm). BTQ believes these service improvements can be achieved without new infrastructure.

2. **High Priority Introduce All Day Ipswich Express Train Services**

   BTQ recommends that all-day express train services be introduced to the Ipswich line. This can be achieved by increasing the frequency of Springfield line trains to run at 15-minute frequency all day. All-day express train services on the Ipswich line will reduce passenger journey times and increase patronage.

3. **High Priority Accelerate Station Accessibility Upgrades**

   BTQ urges Queensland Rail and the Queensland Government to accelerate accessibility upgrades by installing full-length, full-height platforms at all train stations. Fully accessible stations are essential for ensuring that all members of our community have mobility. These upgrades improve safety by reducing vertical and horizontal gaps between trains and the platform. The current approach of partial platform raising (rather than full platform raising) only serves to delay achieving full Disability and Discrimination Act (DDA) compliance.

4. **High Priority Enhanced Bus-Rail Interchange**

   BTQ calls for bus-to-rail interchange to be made seamless by optimising bus stop locations, enhancing signage, and aligning high-frequency bus schedules with rail timetables.

5. **Priority Indooroopilly & Toowong Station Bus-to-Rail Interchange Improvements**

   BTQ wishes to highlight the need for better bus-to-rail interchange at Indooroopilly and Toowong stations. Better interchange facilities means fewer bus routes driving into the Brisbane CBD on some of Brisbane's most congested roads. Better facilities could include closer bus stops to train platforms and increased space for bus layover.

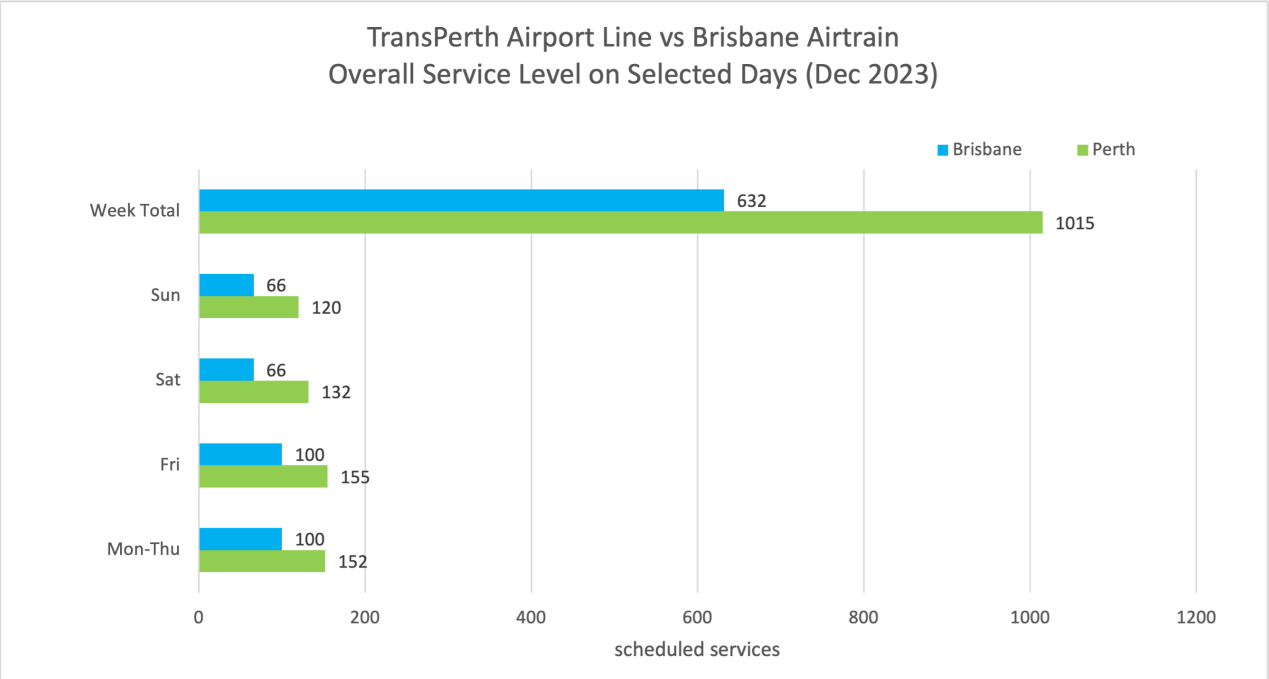
   BTQ notes that improved interchange between buses and trains at Indooroopilly Station has been suggested for over 40 years (PA Management Consultants, 1984). A 1984 report into the now decommissioned SEQ Metropolitan Transit Authority notes that, at the time, Brisbane City Council had resisted the suggestion. This example highlights how a single-governance model with clear responsibilities is required.

6. Priority Incorporate Brisbane Airtrain Into Translink Ticketing and Fares

BTQ is aware that Perth's Airport train charges a normal public transport fare and runs substantially more train services daily than Brisbane Airtrain. The value proposition is therefore clear: Queenslanders pay more and get less. This situation exists because Brisbane's Airtrain is not subsidised as public transport, whereas Perth's is.

BTQ recommends that Brisbane Airtrain be incorporated into the Translink fares and ticketing system, similar to Perth. This means targeted subsidies for Brisbane Airtrain, which will allow more train services and lower fares. Adopting this recommendation does **not** require the buyout of Airtrain's business. It is similar to how Translink already pays for existing private bus operators to provide public transport services across Queensland.

Perth provides 60% more train service to and from the Airport than Brisbane does



4.5.2. Network Capacity & Safety Improvements

1. High Priority Duplication of the Shorncliffe and Cleveland Lines

BTQ recommends duplication of single-track sections on the Shorncliffe and Cleveland lines. These single-track bottlenecks are a barrier to providing all-day increased train frequency to the Shorncliffe area and the Redland Bay region.

2. **Priority** **Accelerate Level Crossing Removals**

   BTQ recommends a program of works for incrementally removing level crossings. Level crossings are a safety hazard for people in cars and pedestrians. Incidents at level crossings can cause network-wide disruption, in addition to personal injury and property damage. Level crossing removal means more reliable trains and higher train speeds across the train network.

3. **Priority** **Oxley 4th Platform & Track Electrification**

   BTQ recommends electrification of the 4th track and construction of the 4th platform at Oxley train station. BTQ considers this a lower-cost project which completes the missing segment to provide a 15km quad-track corridor from Roma Street all the way out to the Springfield line junction after Darra station. This provides increased operational flexibility for Queensland Rail and the ability to run the Ipswich and Springfield lines independently improving in better train reliability for passengers.

4.5.3. Rail Network Expansion and Strategy

1. **High Priority** **Extend the Gold Coast Rail Link to Gold Coast Airport**

   BTQ strongly supports the completion of the Gold Coast rail line to Gold Coast Airport. Projections suggest substantial growth in Gold Coast Airport visitor numbers. Although the extension of the Gold Coast Light Rail would also service Gold Coast Airport, heavy rail extension is essential for longer-distance passengers outside of the Light Rail catchment. For example, growing suburbs in the northern Gold Coast and Gold Coast suburbs further inland.

2. **High Priority** **Commitment to Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 4**

   BTQ urges the Queensland Government to commit to building Stage 4 of the Gold Coast Light Rail. Although Light Rail has higher construction costs, a whole-of-life financial analysis comparing alternatives shows that Light Rail provides the best cost-benefit ratio.

   For the Gold Coast, Light Rail has lower operational costs over its life, lasts longer than buses, and is a better match for the mid-range peak hour capacities ultimately required of the system. The Gold Coast is expected to see significant population and visitor growth in the coming decades, and Light Rail is thus the best match to keep pace with this growth.

3. **Priority** **Preservation of the Heavy Rail Corridor Into Maroochydore**

   BTQ acknowledges the Queensland Government's commitment to extending rapid transport to the Sunshine Coast suburb of Birtinya ('The Wave' Stages 1 & 2). However, BTQ questions the suitability of BRT as the mode for providing the transport connection between the proposed Birtinya train station and the Maroochydore CBD. As BRT would

operate in the corridor reserved for rail to Maroochydore, BTQ is concerned that the BRT infrastructure would create a physical and financial obstacle to extending rail into Maroochydore.

BTQ highlights Brisbane's busways as an example of how busway infrastructure can obstruct upgrades to a different, higher-capacity mode. For example, the conversion of Brisbane's busways to a higher-capacity rail-based metro has not been pursued, despite passenger numbers being supportive. This is due to the very high costs and significant disruptions that converting from BRT to rail would create.

BTQ, therefore, holds the view that the corridor should be exclusively preserved for rail. A BRT service from Birtinya to Maroochydore should take a corridor other than the corridor reserved for rail.

4. Priority Giving the Right Priority to High Speed Rail Proposals

BTQ acknowledges that High Speed Rail (HSR) holds a prominent position in national discussions about public transport. However, BTQ believes that the proper focus for State and Local Government should be on near-term service-based improvements on Queensland's existing public transport infrastructure. Consistent with the Public Transport Priority Pyramid, resources and funding should be directed at improving the quality of public transport supply on existing infrastructure first.

5. Priority A Comprehensive Transport Options Study Into the Doomben Line

BTQ supports and recommends a full and comprehensive options study into the future of the Doomben railway line. This line has featured in a Queensland Government media release as potentially becoming a Brisbane Metro BRT corridor.

Consistent with BTQ's commitment to mode-neutrality and evidence-based decision making, a study should thoroughly investigate several possible future scenarios. This includes rail duplication (with or without rail extension into Hamilton Portside), LRT conversion, BRT conversion, a do-minimum scenario, and a do-nothing scenario.

It is absolutely essential that any study be fully transparent with the public as the line features heritage buildings and supports freight use. We recommend that such a study release a draft report for public consultation before issuing a final report and a final mode choice recommendation.

6. Priority Heavy Rail Extension of the Springfield Line to Ipswich (via Ripley)

BTQ recommends that the Queensland Government resume planning for the extension of the Springfield line into the Ipswich CBD. Rapid urban growth within the Ripley area has placed further traffic demand onto the road network. Extension of the Springfield line into Ipswich will provide a more effective and longer-lasting way to meet transport demand in this growing area over the long term than a proposed road tunnel will.

4.6. Bus Services

Bus services are a vital component of a public transport network. Buses are low-cost, flexible, and easily accessible. Buses serve areas away from the rail network and have the potential to collect and connect passengers to rail.

BTQ recognises that bus services face several challenges. These include incomplete busway links, a lack of dedicated lanes, inconsistent service frequency, staffing issues and poor network legibility. All of these limit the capacity and desirability of bus services as part of the wider public transport network.

BTQ therefore recommends several initiatives designed to deliver bus services that are more reliable, more effective, and more competitive against car travel.

4.6.1. Busways

1. **High Priority Complete the Missing Link between Truro Street and Federation Street (Brisbane)**

   BTQ strongly recommends that the Department of Transport and Main Roads prioritise completion of the Northern Busway between Truro Street and Federation Street (Brisbane).

   Without this link, buses are exposed to traffic congestion and delay, which worsens reliability and constrains the capacity of the Northern Busway during peak hours. Completion of the missing link between Truro Street and Federation street will also facilitate the introduction of Brisbane Metro BRT services to Brisbane's northside and Chermside Shopping Centre.

4.6.2. Bus Lanes & Transit Lanes

1. **High Priority Bus or Transit Lanes on all 4 Lane Roads**

   BTQ believes that every four-lane road within inner city and suburban areas should be considered for dedicated bus lanes. By separating buses from general mixed traffic, the quality and reliability of bus services can be significantly improved at a low cost.

   Within inner-city areas, some streets should be converted into bus-only routes (transit malls). Doing so within CBDs, where congestion is most acute, will reduce delays.

   It is worth remembering that the total capacity of a road (people throughput) can be increased by including bus lanes. And that delayed bus services represent an increased labour cost to Translink and Brisbane City Council, which fund bus services.

2. **High Priority Provide Bus Priority at Intersections**

   BTQ suggests that buses should be given priority at intersections. Upgrading intersections with bus detection sensors will help ensure that buses move efficiently

through junctions, reducing delays and improving reliability for high volume of passengers they carry.

3. **High Priority Prioritise Buses by Establishing Frequency Guidelines for Infrastructure Upgrades**

   BTQ recommends that clear frequency benchmarks be developed to aid in determining when various bus priority measures should be provided. This will ensure that minimum acceptable service levels are met.

   For example:
   - Less than < 5 min headways (approximately 13 buses/hour or more); Bus lanes should be provided.
   - Less than < 10 min headways (approximately 7 buses/hour or more); Transit lanes should be provided.
   - Less than or equal to 15 min headways (approximately 4 buses/hour or more); Transit lanes in key areas should be provided.

   These benchmarks should also be extended to include bus jumps, especially on single-lane roads where additional lanes may be provided at traffic signals.

4.6.3. Service Frequency & Timetables

1. **High Priority More High Frequency Bus Routes and BUZ services**

   BTQ strongly advocates for the creation of new BUZ routes within the Brisbane local government area, and for more high-frequency bus routes in other local government areas. Lower frequency routes that show relatively high patronage services should be prioritised.

   Within the Brisbane City Council local government area, we propose the creation of approximately 20 new high-frequency BUZ routes. This can be achieved through a combination of bus route amalgamation, frequency upgrades on existing services, and the introduction of completely new BUZ routes.

   BTQ recognises that this may require new funding. However, compared to costly infrastructure upgrades, high-frequency bus service improvements represent the fastest, cheapest and most achievable way to improve public transport for everyone in the lead up to the Brisbane 2032 Olympics.

2. **Priority Amalgamate Separate Saturday and Sunday Timetables**

   BTQ believes that different Saturday, Sunday and Public Holiday timetables should be replaced with a single consistent timetable for weekends. BTQ recommends that the timetable that provides the better service - generally the Saturday timetable - should apply for Saturday, Sunday and Public Holidays.

   This reflects the modern reality that work, travel, shopping and access to services happen on Sundays, and that people now need mobility 7 days per week.

4.6.4. Public Transport Network Design

1. High Priority Provide Cross-City Bus Connections

BTQ supports Brisbane City Council's initiative to transition Brisbane to a 'Trunk and Feeder' model as part of Brisbane's New Bus Network (BNBN). We encourage both Brisbane City Council and Translink to expand this model across for other SEQ regions.

BTQ, however, wishes to highlight the lack of cross-city bus services within Brisbane and other SEQ local government areas. We believe that major cross-city roads should be considered for cross-city 15-minute bus services or better. This will link up suburbs to the major bus and train lines. Melbourne, for example, has provided high-frequency 'SmartBus' services that do this (Public Transport Victoria, n.d.).

Melbourne's SmartBus services - Highly Patronised Cross-City Bus Routes

2. Priority Improved Bus Services for Prince Charles Hospital

BTQ calls for the Queensland Government to provide high-frequency bus services to Prince Charles Hospital at Chermside (e.g. a frequent shuttle bus service between the hospital and Chermside Shopping Centre)

Despite being one of the largest employment centres on Brisbane's Northside, Prince Charles Hospital (Chermside) lacks a high-frequency bus route. Additionally, some of the available bus stops are located too far for the unwell or elderly, and are not easily accessible. If Brisbane Metro BRT services are extended to Brisbane's Northside, we request that Prince Charles Hospital be considered as a stop.

3. Priority Expand the Brisbane Metro BRT Service

BTQ supports and advocates for the expansion of Brisbane Metro BRT services to Indooroopilly and Chermside. Metro-style services should also be considered for other SEQ local government areas such as the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast to enhance network capacity, legibility and integration with trams and trains.

4. Priority Establish a Hierarchy of Bus Route Services

BTQ urges Translink to review the bus network to ensure that every route serves a clear and distinct role. For example, 'City-bound', 'Cross-town', or 'Local Feeder' service. This may involve splitting longer routes, such as bus routes 325 and 335, that currently attempt to serve multiple roles. A cleaner network design will facilitate future adjustments to bus frequency, operating hours, and capacity.

5. Priority Rural Coach Services and Map

BTQ has researched how other states provide long-distance public transport coach services. Disappointingly, Queensland appears to be an outlier compared to WA, Victoria and NSW, which provide subsidised long-distance regional and rural coach services that form a clear and cohesive coach network that can be displayed on a single map.

In Queensland, by contrast, there appears to be no planning or co-ordination of long-distance bus services, and no long-distance coach services map. BTQ therefore calls on the Department of Transport and Main Roads to investigate the feasibility of providing state-funded coach services to rural and regional urban centres as part of the Translink Network, similar to established coach networks in WA, NSW and VIC.

6. Priority Translink Services to Toowoomba

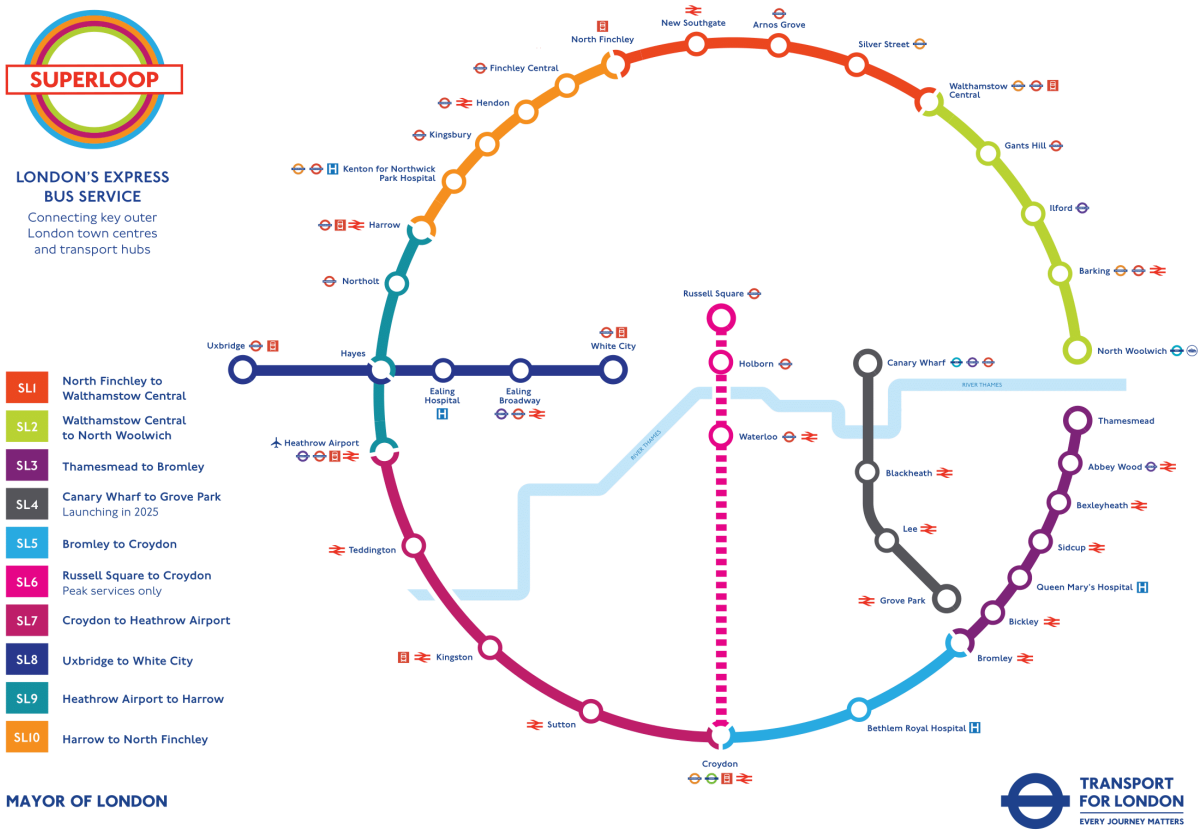
BTQ has identified a general gap in the provision of long-distance subsidised public transport coach services for Queensland. In particular, there is no Translink-subsidised public transport coach service between Brisbane and Toowoomba, which creates an equity and fairness disparity, given that other SEQ residents at similar distances from Brisbane can access Translink inter-regional or inter-city public transport services at the Translink subsidised fare (currently 50c).

BTQ calls for the establishment of a Translink subsidised coach service between Brisbane and Toowoomba to resolve this equity and fairness disparity.

7. Priority Split Sections of the Great Circle Line Bus Route (Brisbane)

BTQ believes that the Great Circle Line (GCL) in Brisbane should be split into multiple sections. This would allow Translink to selectively amplify service frequency along individual sections while still maintaining a complete orbital bus service. This model of operation mirrors London's 'Superloop' bus route service, which has proven successful.

London's SuperLoop Express Bus Service - High-Frequency Orbital Bus Routes



Splitting the GCL into sections would also enable the existing route to extend beyond the current destinations and provide improved service and connectivity to new areas.

For example, the Great Circle Line could be split into the following separate routes:

- **GCL1**: Altandi/Sunnybank — Carindale via Garden City
- **GCL2**: Carindale — Aspley via Chermside
- **GCL3**: Nudgee — Brookside via Chermside
- **GCL4**: Brookside — UQ via Indooroopilly
- **GCL5**: Indooroopilly — Garden City

For the avoidance of doubt, the above suggestion is an example. The exact routes are for later determination.

4.6.5. Improve Bus Network Usability

1. High Priority Rationalise Bus Stop Spacing

BTQ advocates for improved bus network legibility and rationalised bus stop spacing. The location and spacing for many bus routes are often historical, resulting in closely spaced stops that require the bus to spend excessive time stopping.

As each stop a bus makes takes about 30-45 seconds, bus routes designed with closely spaced stops cost more to operate, provide a slower level of service, attract less patronage, generate lower farebox revenue, represent an increased maintenance cost (for shelters, amenities and DDA upgrades), and are more disruptive to traffic flow.

BTQ therefore urges Translink to establish a clear, consistent set of bus stop spacing guidelines and apply these to the network.

2. High Priority Improved Bus Stop Infrastructure

BTQ advocates for the enhancement of bus stop infrastructure and amenities along high-frequency and heavily patronised routes, aligning with the standards seen in Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Light Rail systems. Queensland's climate is characterised by intense heat, humidity, bright sunshine, and sudden storms and many bus stops currently offer insufficient protection, particularly during peak loading periods. BTQ believes all bus stops must be designed to provide adequate shelter and shading during peak hours to ensure passenger comfort, safety, and accessibility.

BTQ also urges Translink and Local Governments to ensure that all bus stops are fully compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). Where full compliance cannot be achieved at the existing location, stops should be relocated to nearby sites where DDA standards can be met. Additionally, all bus stops must be supported by accessible footpaths and surrounding infrastructure to guarantee safe and equitable access for all users.

3. High Priority Improved Bus Stop Crossing Facilities

BTQ believes that little is achieved by providing bus stops that passengers cannot safely or easily walk to and access as pedestrians. BTQ is aware of certain bus stops located on high-speed, high-traffic roads with insufficient pedestrian crossing options. This forces able-bodied passengers to jaywalk or take long detours. For people with a disability, safe access becomes impossible.

BTQ calls on the Department of Transport and Main Roads to set an annual target for assessing bus stops for safety and accessibility (both on the initial and return pedestrian access trip) and installing new, safe crossing facilities near bus stops.

4. High Priority Address Bus Route Over-branding

BTQ believes that there are too many bus route brands and variations (over-branding). A good product generally only has to rely on one or a minimum number of brands. Over-branding and the perception of inconsistency it creates thus signals to passengers

that the services provided may potentially be complex, confusing, and not meet expectations.

To aid network navigation, BTQ urges Translink to rationalise bus route classification and adopt a statewide unique numbering system for all bus services, including school services.

Outdated or confusing terms such as “Rocket”, “Bullet”, “CityGlider”, and “BUZ” should be replaced with simple, clear, and descriptive labels that apply across Queensland for frequency (e.g. “High Frequency”) and stopping pattern (e.g. “Limited Stops”, “Express”). This will better reflect the quality of services provided and set clear expectations for what passengers will receive from different branded bus services.

5. **High Priority Incorporate Train Station Bus Stops Into Train Station Numbering**

   BTQ believes that passenger Bus-to-Rail interchange is discouraged in part due to confusing signage and disjointed numbering approaches. BTQ believes that where bus stops and busway platforms also serve rail stations, these should be numbered together.

   Example - Rather than having Platform 1 and Platform 2 for Buranda Train Station and Platform 1 and Platform 2 for Buranda Busway Station, platforms could be numbered 1 and 2 for the rail part of the station, with the busway platforms numbered 3 and 4.

   This integration would reinforce the concept of buses as an extension of a train station catchment area, making journey planning more intuitive for passengers.

4.7. Fares & Ticketing

BTQ members value access to an affordable public transport network. BTQ notes that 50c fares for public transport are now a permanent and established policy supported by both major parties. BTQ therefore believes that its resources are now best focused on improving service quality and frequency, rather than on reopening debates on fare policy.

4.7.1. The 50 Cent Fare Policy

1. **Priority Resource Prioritisation and Adaptive Stance**

   BTQ recognises that in the past, fares were often a point of contention in the run-up to a local or state election. Often the focus on fares took the focus away from other considerations, such as the need to provide new or improved public transport service to areas that were lacking it.

   BTQ therefore believes that the association’s resources are best invested in building on the positive sentiment that the 50 cent fare policy has created. BTQ will thus focus on advocating for additional funding to drive service improvements.

While BTQ is committed to the Queensland Government's 50c fare policy as part of its policies to address cost-of-living pressures, we remain open to reviewing our position should the Queensland Government indicate that the 50 cent fare program be altered or discontinued.

4.8. Quality of Customer Information and Communications

BTQ believes that reliable and easily accessible public transport data can support the active monitoring and improvement of the public transport network. Passengers also depend on real-time, accessible information to plan and adjust their journeys. BTQ calls on Translink to enhance the quality of its service updates through refined GTFS feeds, headway-based data integration, and strategically placed passenger information displays.

BTQ supports ongoing efforts to make customer information simpler and more legible.

These measures will ensure that all passengers receive timely, consistent, and relevant travel information. By improving these data channels, passengers can put greater trust in the true performance of Queensland's public transport network.

4.8.1. Service Updates

1. **Priority** **Accurate Service Update Tagging**

   BTQ calls on Translink to refine its communication of service updates by implementing consistent severity tagging (e.g., severe, minor, informational). Standardisation is essential for accurate, real-time communication of service conditions and setting public expectations around the impacts of various disruptions.

2. **Priority** **Clearer Disruption Communication**

   BTQ urges Translink to improve public communication regarding both planned and unplanned service alterations or disruptions, such as stop closures or diversions. This must be reflected in realtime data (and the base schedules for significant change known well in advance) so that journey planners can do useful processing rather than have passengers relying on decoding lengthy text-based service updates.

3. **Priority** **Headway-Based Operations**

   Better Transport Queensland (BTQ) calls on Translink to fully adopt headway-based operations for very high-frequency services such as the CityGliders and Brisbane Metro. Transitioning to headway-based feeds, operational practices, and performance metrics would complement the existing frequency diagrams displayed along these routes and enhance service legibility and usability. This approach would also improve frequency reliability by mitigating vehicle bunching and ensuring more consistent intervals between services.

4.8.2. Passenger Information Displays

1. **Priority** **More Real-Time Passenger Information Displays**

   BTQ calls on Translink to significantly increase the number of real-time passenger information displays across all modes of transport on the public transport network.

   In particular, BTQ recommends that all bus stops within the top 60% of patronage be equipped with these displays. Such an upgrade will help ensure that commuters receive timely and accurate updates, thereby enhancing the overall transit experience.

5. Active Transport

BTQ recognises that every public transport user is also a pedestrian. Stops and stations must be easily accessible by foot or by cycling if there is to be patronage.

BTQ also recognises that active transport investments in walking, cycling, and other non-car travel are very cost-effective compared with other modes. Active transport also offers health and recreational benefits that other transport modes do not.

5.1. Infrastructure and Investments

1. High Priority Include Active Transport Infrastructure From Day 1

BTQ believes that active transport improvement represents some of the lowest cost, least disruptive opportunities to enhance our transport network. As every passenger journey begins or ends at a station or stop, investments that promote walking and cycling directly improve access to the public transport network and improve patronage.

BTQ strongly recommends that any new transport corridor project must have a presumption in favour of including active transport infrastructure.

2. High Priority Invest in Veloways & Cycleway Networks

Better Transport Queensland advocates for the expansion of the veloway and bicycle network to provide more coverage for residents.

BTQ believes that investing in veloways and protected cycleway networks is relatively inexpensive compared to other infrastructure such as roads or car parking. An extensive cycling network improves safety, mobility, and expands the catchment area of public transport services. This reduces the community's heavy reliance on cars and reduces costs on the state's health services.

3. Priority Include Bike Lanes into Road Upgrade or Resurfacing Projects

BTQ believes that resurfacing projects offer a timely opportunity to incrementally enhance the bicycle network. By combining road maintenance with the installation of dedicated bike lanes separated from general road traffic, the Queensland Government and local councils can realise project and cost efficiencies.

5.2. Cycling Facilities

1. Priority Enhancing Bike-Rail Integration

BTQ strongly recommends that Translink and Queensland Rail provide high-quality secure bike parking at all rail and bus stations. The provision of bicycle storage or stands is cheaper than providing expanded station car parking, and will assure residents that their bicycles are safe when left at a station.

5.3. Safety

1. Provisional Opposing Left Turn on Red

BTQ opposes any proposal to reintroduce the road rule allowing motorists to turn left after stopping on a red traffic light. Such a change would increase safety risks for pedestrians, particularly those accessing public transport and those with mobility difficulties, and undermine efforts to create safe, walkable environments around key transport hubs.

6. Roads & Urban Planning

BTQ believes that we need to rethink our urban landscape to create communities that are connected, sustainable, and prioritise the movement of people over the movement of vehicles. BTQ therefore advocates for higher-density development around high-frequency public transport services and local centres. This increases the utilisation of existing infrastructure, promotes vibrant, walkable neighbourhoods and further reduces car dependency. We call for transforming local streets into low-traffic, people-centric environments.

Furthermore, BTQ and its members strongly oppose high-cost, low-capacity 'Car Rapid Transport' projects such as the Gympie Road Tunnel. We instead advocate for public works funding to be directed towards public transport projects. Generally, these projects have a higher peak hour capacity than a comparable road project and provide a broader mix of benefits for a longer duration than a competing road project.

6.1. Transport Led Land Use & Planning

1. **High Priority Road Expansion Busts State and Local Council Budgets, Not Congestion**

   BTQ believes that expanding road capacity has repeatedly been shown to be ineffective at alleviating congestion. New or diverted traffic demand is induced when the trip times for driving are reduced (which fills the provided capacity). As roads are also inherently low-capacity (when compared against alternatives such as busways or railways), any time-saving benefits are quickly consumed. This, in turn, necessitates further road projects.

   In short, expanded roads are often the wrong mode choice for moving high volumes of people quickly during peak hour over medium to long distances. Investments should instead focus on higher-capacity modes such as busways and heavy rail, which can scale more effectively.

   If local councils and the Queensland Government are so concerned about peak-hour traffic congestion, why are they consistently proposing road projects which offer the lowest capacity option as the solution?

2. **High Priority Higher Density Around High-Frequency or High-Capacity Public Transport**

   BTQ advocates for medium- to high-density zoning for residential areas located within walkable distances of frequent public transport stops or stations (e.g. 800 m), regardless of mode. Higher densities create vibrant, accessible communities, provide much-needed housing for Queenslanders, and increase the utilisation of public transport services. Such zoning has already been adopted as policy by the New South Wales and Victorian Governments.

3. High Priority Higher Density in Local Activity Centres

BTQ believes that neighbourhood centres that provide access to many amenities are ideal candidates for denser development and application of the 15-minute local neighbourhood concept. These local centres should be identified and prioritised for high-frequency bus routes to ensure accessibility and community connectivity.

4. High Priority Integrate City Planning and Transport Planning

BTQ believes that public and active transport must be integrated into every local government city plan. New suburbs are currently being developed at great distances away from any existing busway or railway infrastructure.

This creates a congestion load on the existing road network, which cannot be alleviated as no other viable options (other than driving) are available for residents. It also creates a future infrastructure deficit, which can only be resolved through the slow and costly extension of railways or busways into the area.

BTQ believes that new suburbs should be developed with high-quality public and active transport options from day one. This ensures that residents can benefit from efficient, walkable, and well-connected communities that do not lock them into car dependency and do not create costly and looming future infrastructure deficits.

5. Priority Adopt an Objective Definition of What a TOD is

BTQ believes that the public interest, transparency and accountability are best served when agreed and consistent definitions are adopted. A development near a railway station, for example, may still produce high car use due to the inclusion of excessive underground parking or low service frequency, for example.

BTQ therefore recommends that the Department of Transport and Main Roads adopt an objective and performance-based definition of what a Transit Oriented Development (TOD) precisely is. We recommend that the following definition be adopted, which differentiates between TODs and TADs (Transit Adjacent Development):

The Hale (2013) definition of a TOD (Chris Hale, 2013):

> "... mode share should be the apex metric for determining TOD project success or failure. It is suggested that a majority (50%+) of travel movements need to be accommodated by the sustainable modes (walking, cycling, and public transit) for a location to assume the label of 'genuine TOD'.
>
> Equally, other locations that attempt TOD, but do not deliver a sustainable travel majority, might be placed in the 'TAD' category.

Travel surveys at the building level, for example, could be used to determine if a development meets the TOD benchmark. By adopting an objective and performance-based definition of a TOD, the Department of Transport and Main Roads can better

adjust policy and support for projects that deliver the greatest actual (rather than perceived) benefits to the public.

6. Priority Discourage Inner City Park and Ride

BTQ believes that inner city bus and train stations should not be surrounded by extensive commuter car parking. Within inner city areas, this high-value land is better used for high-density TODs that house people rather than vehicles. This is because denser inner city areas typically do not require the extended catchment areas that a suburban or rural station might need through Park and Ride.

6.2. Low Traffic Neighbourhoods for all Suburbs

1. High Priority Prioritise People Over Cars on Local Streets

BTQ believes that pedestrians and cyclists must be prioritised on local streets. This can be achieved by implementing traffic calming measures and narrowing roads to create more space for footpaths and cycle lanes separated from general traffic. Lower speeds and narrower streets have been shown to reduce fatalities and enhance living standards (James M. Daisa & John B. Peers, n.d.).

6.3. Opposition to the Gympie Road Tunnel

1. High Priority A High-Cost, Low-Capacity Project

BTQ and its members strongly oppose the construction of the Gympie Road Tunnel.

Congestion is primarily a peak-hour phenomenon. In essence, the Queensland Government will pay $10+ billion for the ability to move approximately 4,320 additional people towards the Brisbane CBD during a 1-hour peak period. To place these figures into context, this is a similar capacity to adding just 4-5 Queensland Rail NGR trains to the train network (Department Of Transport And Main Roads, 2025), or about 30 Brisbane Metro BRT Bus Services (a bus every 2 minutes), during a 1-hour peak period.

In our opinion, low peak-hour capacity is a key reason why the Queensland Investment Corporation (QIC)'s investment summary report reflects **a very poor financial Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) of 0.2** (North Brisbane Infrastructure, 2024). Generally, private investors and the public expect that a project should produce more benefits than its construction costs. Therefore, the BCR should ideally be at least 1 or above to attract approval.

In our opinion, this also suggests that after spending $10 billion for construction, the tunnel would only be worth a fraction of its construction costs, say $2 billion, on the private market (e.g. if the tunnel was then sold to a toll road operator). Generally, private investors will not pay for the social or environmental benefits, as there is no market for these and the benefits often accrue to third parties other than the toll road owner or drivers that use it (the remaining $8 billion of value).

BTQ also notes the proposed Gympie Road tunnel's low peak-hour capacity. The QIC summary report omits mentioning the 1-hour peak capacity, which we believe to be around 4,320 people for a 1-hour peak period (per direction). As such BTQ, finds that the Gympie Road Tunnel project as proposed, fails to meet both financial and SEQ regional planning objectives.

BTQ is very concerned that the Gympie Road Tunnel project has recently passed from a commercial entity set up by QIC into the Department of Transport and Main Roads. Inside the Department, the project can now compete for public funding against other key SEQ regional priorities, such as the Sunshine Coast train line extension to Maroochydore, or the Stage 4 extension of the Gold Coast Light Rail, and the Brisbane 2032 Olympics.

BTQ strongly recommends that the Gympie Road Tunnel project be terminated. Any funding for it should be spent on improving public transport on Brisbane's Northside and within the Moreton Bay Regional Council local government area instead.

Once again, if local governments and the Queensland Government are so concerned about peak-hour traffic congestion, why has a high-cost, low-capacity option been selected as the only solution? It is simply the wrong mode for the job.

2. Priority Construct the Gympie Road Tunnel as an Exclusive Busway

BTQ believes that the Gympie Road Tunnel could be redesigned to reduce costs while also increasing peak-hour people throughput.

For example, the tunnel could be built as an extension of the Northern Busway, requiring a tunnel half the size of that for cars (two lanes in total rather than four). We believe this would reduce the construction cost by approximately half while increasing people-moving capacity during peak hour by about four times.

For example, as a road tunnel with cars, about 4,320 people/hour/direction can be moved in a 1-hour peak period. In contrast, this rises to 18,000 people/hour/direction when the tunnel is used as an exclusive busway. This represents a fourfold increase in peak-hour capacity. It is a similar peak-hour capacity to the existing South East Busway.

Reimagining the Gympie Road Tunnel as an extension to the Northern Busway would also alleviate peak-hour congestion by converting motorists driving cars into public transport users. The remaining surface transit lanes on Gympie Road could then be converted into a separated cycleway.

3. High Priority Public Transport Must Not be an Afterthought

BTQ believes that should the Gympie Road Tunnel proceed as a car tunnel, public and active transport must be embedded within its design. This includes extending the Busway from Kedron to Chermside as part of the project works and transforming surface streets into safe, landscaped corridors that feature a separated, shaded cycle lanes along the entire length of Gympie Road to Chermside.

7. Freight Rail

7.1. Freight Rail Strategy

1. High Priority Advancing Freight Rail Investments

BTQ believes that moving the majority of freight by rail (except for last-mile deliveries) is both economically and environmentally advantageous.

The current underinvestment in Queensland's freight rail infrastructure forces many businesses to rely on transporting goods by trucks and roads. This results in more heavy vehicles travelling along major arterial roads and highways, which puts the community at greater risk of a deadly collision. It also exposes more workers to the dangers of night work and fatigue.

We call on the Queensland Government to implement a long-term strategy that includes improvements to the state freight rail network. This will reduce freight journey times, and thereby take more freight off roads and onto rail.

Examples of improvements to investigate include:

- Duplication (between major urban centres);
- More and longer passing loops;
- Curve easing to support sustained speeds of at least 80 km/h;
- Additional intermodal facilities.

8. References

Alan Warren. (2007). *BUZ Routes, Frequency + Reliability - the winning formula*. https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/6058

Chris Hale. (2013). *TOD Versus TAD - The Great Debate Resolved...(?)*. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/02697459.2012.749056

Dave Mabe. *Amazon Delivery Truck as Car Trip Reducer?*. https://www.davemabe.com/amazon-delivery-truck-as-car-trip-reducer/

Department Of Transport And Main Roads. (2025, July 27). *About the New Generation Rollingstock trains*. https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/projects/New-Generation-Rollingstock/About-the-NGR-trains

James M. Daisa, & John B. Peers. *Narrow Residential Streets: Do They Really Slow Down Speeds?*. https://nacto.org/wp-content/uploads/narrow_residential_streets_daisa.pdf

North Brisbane Infrastructure. (2024). *Gympie Road Bypass Investtment Proposal Summary*.

PA Management Consultants. (1984). *Review of Metropolitan Transit Authority, Final Report*. https://www.tmr.qld.gov.au/_/media/aboutus/rti/disclog/2023/rti-3474-release.pdf

Peter Martinovich. (2009). *Application of a commuter railway to low density settlement*. https://www.bitre.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-12/2009_infrastructure_colloquium_peter_martinovich.pdf

Public Transport Victoria. *Melbourne SmartBus Services*. https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/assets/PDFs/Maps/Network-maps/18388783f7/SmartBus-Network.pdf

9. Appendix

9.1. Gympie Road Tunnel Calculations

Capacity of a Queensland Rail Train = 1000 persons/train

Capacity of a Brisbane Metro BRT bus = 150 persons/bus

Seconds in an hour = 3600 seconds

Minimum distance between two vehicles on a public road = 2 seconds

Average vehicle capacity = 1.2 persons/vehicle

Vehicle frequency = $\frac{3600}{2} = 1800$ vehicles/hour

One-lane throughput = $1800 \times 1.2 = 2160$ persons/lane/direction

Two-lane throughput = $2160 \times 2 = 4320$ persons/direction/hour

Train equivalent = $\frac{4320}{1000} = 4.32$ trains

Bus equivalent = $\frac{4320}{150} = 28.8$ buses (Round up to 30 buses/hour → a bus every 2 minutes)

Conclusion: During a 1-hour peak period, the Gympie Road tunnel will move a similar volume of people to just over 4 Queensland Rail trains, or a Brisbane Metro BRT bus running every 2 minutes. This figure is for travel in one direction (e.g. towards the Brisbane CBD in morning peak).