

# Industry confidence on rise

**EXCLUSIVE**  
**DARYL PASSMORE**

## After two dud years, infrastructure turns around

CONFIDENCE is rising in Queensland's infrastructure industry, with more than half of firms expecting to be busier in the next six months. Two years of low activity were turned around with a 58 per cent increase in major projects work during 2017-18, says the latest Spotlight Survey, to be released today by the Infrastructure Association of

Queensland. And 57 per cent of businesses in the sector expect things to continue to strengthen for the rest of this year, with just under half anticipating boosting staff numbers. "Fully funded projects like Cross River Rail, Inland Rail and Brisbane Metro are now reaching the market, driving tender activity and helping attract Queensland profession-

als back to their home state," IAQ chief executive Steve Abson said. Despite that, however, three-quarters of companies in the survey expressed dissatisfaction with the performance of state and federal governments in planning and delivering projects, especially when it comes to working together. "On the one hand, we're

seeing industry give governments a pat on the back for getting on with funding their projects. Yet on the other, it's saying that if you just sat down together more often and prioritised around a common long-term plan, we could see much more bang for taxpayer buck," Mr Abson said. The industry was a big supporter of the push towards

a City Deal agreement between federal, state and local government in southeast Queensland to co-ordinate a major projects strategy. And the IAQ is calling for the National Partnership Agreement to be reformed before next July's expiry to end squabbling between federal and state politicians over funding for initiatives such as

the Beerburrum to Nambour rail upgrade. "Like an MI road package before it, there's now a gap in funding of \$230 million for this critical rail link to the Sunshine Coast. This is because the feds will fund half of this \$780 million project but the state wants it to stump up 80 per cent. "Queensland companies asked to tender this major project can't do so with complete confidence when 30 per cent of the project is still unfunded."



'BETTER OUTCOME': An artist impression of the bridge that is proposed to link Kangaroo Point to Alice St in the CBD; (inset) the Neville Bonner Pedestrian Bridge proposal.

### NEW BRIDGE WILL GET TO THE POINT

**JACK MCKAY**

THE State Government has committed funding to a business case for a new bridge that would link Kangaroo Point to the city. It follows calls from Brisbane City Council for the proposed Neville

Bonner Pedestrian Bridge, linking the new Queen's Wharf Precinct to South Bank, to be scrapped in favour of the Kangaroo Point project. State Development Minister Cameron Dick yesterday said the Government would spend \$230,000 for the council to develop a business

case for the bridge. Deputy Mayor Adrian Schinnerer said halting plans for the Neville Bonner Pedestrian Bridge and progressing with the Kangaroo Point Bridge would be a "better outcome for Brisbane". "Having a jointly funded state and council green bridge that caters

for not just pedestrians, but also cyclists, would be fantastic," he said. The Kangaroo Point bridge would stretch more than 400m - significantly longer than the 340m Neville Bonner Pedestrian Bridge. It would likely link Alice St to Thornton or Scott streets in Kangaroo Point.

### Southeast Qld in line for nation's biggest 'City Deal'

WORK is under way to secure a landmark "City Deal" that could deliver a massive economic boost worth millions for the state's southeast. Deputy Premier Jackie Trad and Brisbane Lord Mayor Graham Quirk met with business leaders yesterday to discuss their plan to strike a City Deal with the Federal Government. It would lead to more funding for southeast Queensland and ensure there is a collaborative approach between all levels of government, as well as the private sector, to deliver essential infrastructure projects. The deal would affect about three million people who live in the southeast - making it the

biggest City Deal in Australia's history. Several other City Deals have already been agreed to in Australia, including one that is helping to deliver a new stadium in Townsville. Ms Trad said a deal in southeast Queensland would ensure the region was plugged into the "fastest growing economic zone in the world." "What we are really aiming to try and achieve through this collaborative City Deal process is to take the region ... to the next level economically." Property Council Queensland executive director Chris Mountford said "five years of really good thinking" had been invested into the idea.

### Our transport costs highest in nation

**FROM P1**  
The Australian Automobile Association's latest Transport Affordability Index shows the cost to own and run a car or catch public transport in Brisbane increased by \$184 a year in the June quarter, the second highest increase behind Sydney. RACQ head of public policy Rebecca Michael said Brisbane was the most expensive city for transport when average income was measured. "Residents are spending more than 16 per cent of their incomes on getting around Brisbane," she said. "Registration, licensing, taxes and tolls are hitting the hip pocket hard - and it's unacceptable." Residents in Sydney and Melbourne spend 15.37 per cent

| COSTLY COMMUTE                                                                  |                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Percentage of income spent on transport (and average household spend per year): |                       |
| BRISBANE                                                                        | 16.49%<br>\$19,745.22 |
| MELBOURNE                                                                       | 15.38%<br>\$19,982.32 |
| SYDNEY                                                                          | 15.37%<br>\$22,520.40 |

and 15.38 per cent of their wage on transport costs respectively. Rising fuel prices accounted for an extra \$5.41 being added to the weekly household budget. The average Brisbane household spends \$75.57 on fuel per week - more than both Sydney and Melbourne. Tolls are also more expensive in Brisbane than Melbourne, with motorists spending about \$49 per week. Transurban yesterday reported revenue from its Queensland toll roads, including the Clem7, Logan Motorway, Gateway and Legacy Way, increased 2.1 per cent last financial year, with motorists clocking an average 404,000 daily trips on the toll roads. Brisbane ranks third in the country for public transport costs behind Sydney and Melbourne with locals spending \$54.45 every week to commute. "Public transport in the River City costs are less of an issue now since the introduction of the State Government's Fairer Fares package in 2016,

which made catching buses, trains and ferries more affordable," Ms Michael said. "Brisbane locals do rely on their cars more than public transport so rises of up to 15 per cent in the last four years in registration and licensing fees, combined with an increase of stamp duty and expensive fuel puts the real pressure on household budgets." The results have prompted the RACQ to renew calls for the State Government to freeze registrations cost. "If the State Government was serious about driving down the cost of living it would start by freezing rego costs for three years," Ms Michael said. "These kinds of increases put added pressure on families." **BUSINESS P46**