

A review of the roles being played by governments in road provision in Australia

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1 Introduction

This paper aims to identify the optimal delivery of national highway infrastructure with respect to government roles. Part of this aim is to establish a holistic view of transport policy in Australia.

The objectives of this paper are to:

- look at strategies and differences in government stance including:
 - Australian Government: AusLink
 - Queensland Government: Road Implementation Program (RIP) and South East Queensland Regional Plan (SEQRP)
 - Brisbane City Council (BCC): Transport Plan and TransApex
- analyse the harmonisation between government policies and strategies
- summarise comments from industry professionals to understand the working context of the government strategies
- analyse how the current system operates and identify any hindrance to effectiveness and efficiency
- propose improvements to overcome existing obstructions to productivity
- propose alternative systems based on principles that are different to those currently used in Australia.

2 Independent government policy review

This section consists of a brief literature review of the transport policies of the Australian Government, the Queensland Government and BCC, and includes comments on how they operate in practice.

2.1 Australian Government

AusLink is intended as a planning, funding and delivery mechanism for the Australian National Network of roads and railways. It is the responsibility of the Australian Government's Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government (DITRD LG). Where this paper refers to transport policy under the former federal government, the Department is referred to as the Department of Transport and Regional Services (DoTaRS). AusLink is upheld by the *AusLink (National Land Transport) Act 2005*.

In April 2008 the Infrastructure Australia Act came into effect. The Act was to pave 'the way to establish Infrastructure Australia', which would develop a 'national approach to planning, funding and implementing the nation's future infrastructure needs'. It aims to identify existing needs in nationally significant infrastructure, and prioritise investment accordingly. Infrastructure Australia includes the Building Australia fund, committing \$20 million over

The information and conclusions presented are the product of a postgraduate project, and do not represent the views of Parsons Brinckerhoff (PB).

4 years to national infrastructure. As the Infrastructure Australia Act is a relatively new piece of legislation and thus opportunity for observation of its application is limited, it has not been examined further in this paper. The only point to be made since its introduction is that the Act does not acknowledge the AusLink Act or make any mention of land transport, except to say that transport infrastructure is nationally significant. It remains to be seen how transport projects will be addressed between AusLink and Infrastructure Australia.

AusLink is an Australian Government scheme that intends to be 'a clear national land transport plan that all levels of government can support and deliver together,' (Anderson & Campbell, cited from AusLink White Paper, DoTaRS, 2004). The White Paper 2004 anticipated that AusLink would reform the 'way Australia plans, funds and delivers land transport infrastructure' (DoTaRS, 2004). The reform referred to AusLink being the replacement of the existing National Highway System (NHS), which included highways that were generally the sole funding responsibility of the Australian Government, but managed by the state road authorities.

As well as joint delivery of the transport plan between governments, AusLink is notably different to the old NHS because it opens up the opportunity for private investment in the AusLink Network. AusLink provides a mechanism not only for private parties to be invited to play a role in project delivery, but also to propose a project through the AusLink process.

2.1.1 The AusLink process

The National Network is divided up into *corridors*, each of which has a *strategy*. *Priorities* are outlined for each *corridor*, which are then addressed by *projects*.

For a project to be funded by the Australian Government, it must be considered to be of high national priority. The states and territories concerned are expected to contribute to the cost of the projects as well (DoTaRS, 2004). The concept of shared responsibility is introduced with the reasoning that if a state government benefits from the local improvements of an AusLink project, then that government should contribute to the funding of the project. This shared responsibility is also extended to the private sector.

In the White Paper, the Australian Government does recognise the improved performance of a national network through integrating land use and transport planning. The Australian Transport Council (ATC) has published the National Charter of Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning, which the federal government endorses. However the National Charter is not mentioned in the White Paper and the responsibility of integrating land use and transport planning is left primarily to the state and local governments.

In 2007 it was made clear on the AusLink website <<http://www.auslink.gov.au>> that the then Australian government was not responsible for 'funding ... urban passenger (commuter) transport — this is the responsibility of state and territory governments' (DoTaRS, 2007). This statement has since been removed from the new federal department's website — however, a similar assertion remains in the White Paper (2004). It remains unclear as to whether commuter transport links are ultimately intended for inclusion AusLink's National Network under the current Australian Government.

The Australian Government collects funds from land transport through the fuel excise.

2.1.2 Comments on AusLink in practice

AusLink's initiative of shared responsibility between federal and state governments does not appear to be always reflected in practice. In cases where a state's priorities are different to those of the federal government, it may be a reluctantly shared responsibility. This can be

because while the federal government provides funding for projects, it has the power to provide the funding for the projects and options of its choice, forcing the states to decide whether to accept that funding and thereby also agree to contribute, or not receive the funding at all.

Harmonious relationships between governments, or lack thereof, can be seen in the recent history of the Ipswich Motorway. The motorway is part of the AusLink National Network and a major freight route between Brisbane and the region's west, making up part of the Brisbane–Melbourne, Brisbane–Sydney, and Brisbane–Darwin corridors. The former federal-preferred option involved bypassing part of the Ipswich Motorway. The advantage of this option would be little disruption to traffic during construction and the addition of a new link to provide relief for the existing motorway. The state-preferred option involved upgrading the existing Ipswich Motorway. The advantage of this option would be lower costs and less residential resumption.

The Ipswich Motorway serves mixed functions: local and interregional trips, by urban commuter and freight users. While the Australian Government does not provide funds for infrastructure to provide for commuter traffic, it has been acknowledged in AusLink that some significant freight routes are affected by urban congestion, mainly intermodal connections, and especially to ports and airports on the eastern seaboard. The Ipswich Motorway serves as part of the connection to the Port of Brisbane, and to the domestic and international airport.

Furthermore, AusLink is a 5-year rolling plan, with a broad 20-year horizon. Even with the 5-year plan, project commitments often coincide with 3-year election terms.

2.2 Queensland Government

The Queensland Government provides roads for the state through state legislation. The *Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994*, the *Transport Infrastructure Act 1994* and the *Integrated Planning Act 1997* require planning and programming documents to be produced by the government departments and agencies. The SEQRP provides overall planning direction and the RIP reflects short- and medium-term road planning.

Government stakeholders in transport infrastructure include the Queensland Department of Main Roads (QDMR), along with Queensland Transport (QT), the Office of Urban Management (OUM), and the Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation (DLGPSR). QDMR delivers the road projects on behalf of the Queensland Government.

The SEQRP and RIP require a close working relationship between QT and QDMR, because the state recognises that travel behaviour and public transport influence the needs of road infrastructure.

Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ) also has a close working relationship with QDMR and QT, and local government road funding is provided by the state through the Roads Alliance, an addendum to the RIP for roads other than state-controlled roads.

2.2.1 RIP summary

The RIP is a 5-year rolling plan of works for the state's roads, produced annually by QDMR on behalf of the Queensland Government. While the focus of the RIP is on delivering roads in the state, it also makes mention of intermodal connections, and coordination with public transport, cycling and walking plans in the introductory chapters.

Some state views of AusLink are reported in the RIP as follows:

- Significant additional funds are required from the Australian Government.
- The Australian Government has acknowledged that the condition of the highways in Queensland is worse than all of those under the former NHS of Australia, i.e. Queensland has the greatest needs — both existing network deficiencies and increasing traffic demands of rapid population growth and industry expansions.
- Compared to other states, Queensland’s former national highway network is rougher, has more congestion, is less safe, and carries a higher share of total traffic.
- Australian Government funds have remained static over the past three decades whereas the state’s road funding has increased (QDMR, 2006).

2.2.2 SEQRP summary

The SEQRP outlines the future development pattern for the south-east corner of the state on a 20-year horizon. The South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program (SEQIPP) outlines the government’s infrastructure priorities to ensure the SEQRP is implemented.

SEQRP transport principles are to:

- establish compact urban development patterns through integrating transport and land use planning and promote self-contained travel in sub-regions
- provide access for all community members through sustainable travel choices
- provide an efficient and integrated transport system for south-east Queensland, including freight, and extending to air and sea transport
- maintain effective inter-regional links in the sub-region of the Gold Coast to Brisbane and northern New South Wales via the Pacific Hwy (OUM, 2006).

2.2.3 Comments on SEQRP and RIP in practice

Figure 1 illustrates how several of the state government’s plans and policies influence each other, as inferred by the authors.

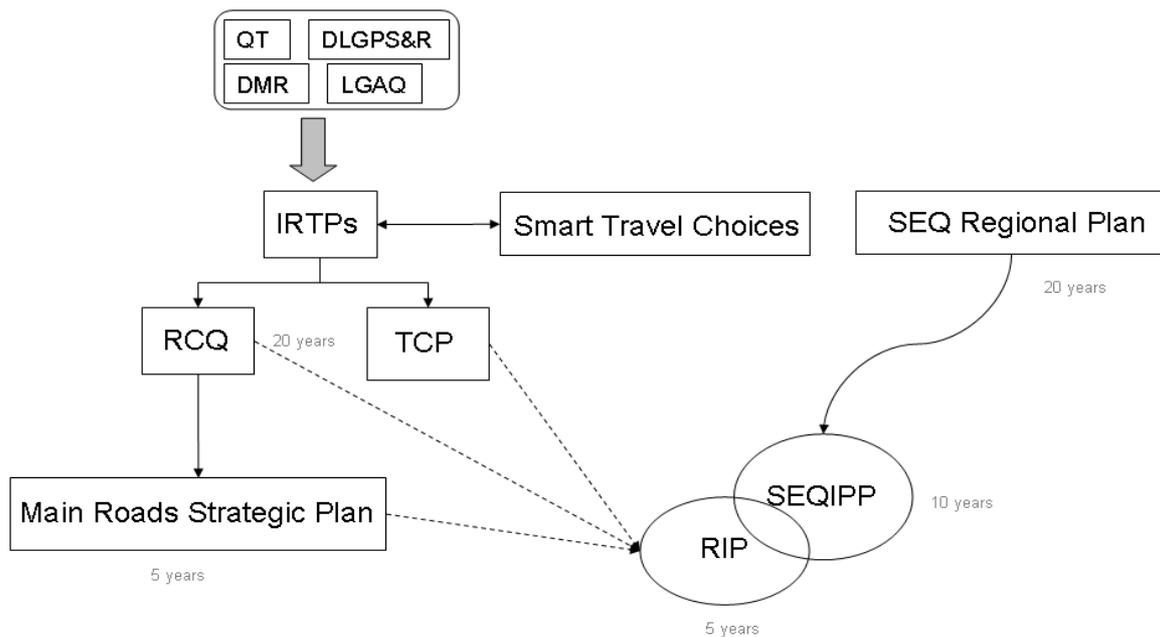


Figure 1 – Relationships between state government plans and policies

QT, QDMR, DLGPS&R, and LGAQ all influence Integrated Regional Transport Plans (IRTPs). These IRTPs provide the outline for the state's transport system at a regional level, including the interim IRTP (Transport, 2007). This guides QDMR's broad direction via Roads Connecting Queenslanders (RCQ) and the Transport Coordination Plan (TCP).

The RIP outlines Queensland's increased level of funding in comparison to the federal government's contribution. It also points out that the department is deserving of far more AusLink funding, but does not let the lack of required federal funding hinder the working relationship between QDMR and DoTaRS (Tesch, 2006). This is not exactly how the relationship appears in the media, nor how it is described by academics. It seems that in reality the state holds the view that the federal government has never properly acknowledged or addressed the transport needs of Queensland.

The land transport sector contributes to the state's revenue by means of vehicle registrations. The state's road funds are acquired from the state budget allocations, and federal government funds from AusLink and its associated programs.

2.3 Brisbane City Council

BCC is one of the largest councils in Australia, with a sizeable metropolitan area and, in 2006, a population of 1.76 million (ABS, 2007). BCC has committed itself to providing and maintaining connections to the national transport network.

The main BCC plans driving its transport infrastructure and initiatives are the Transport Plan for Brisbane, and TransApex (BCC's plan for a new inner city road network). The council's overall plan for the city, Living in Brisbane 2026, directs the strategies in the Transport Plan and outcomes of TransApex.

2.3.1 Transport Plan summary

The aim of the Transport Plan is to change the city's strong, traditional car-orientated culture.

The strategic objectives of BCC's Transport Plan are:

- quality public transport
- managed travel demand
- coordinated transport and land use
- safe and efficient road network
- delivering the goods on time to the right place
- more clean and green personal transport (BCC, 2002).

The Transport Plan considers funding for capital, operation and maintenance for each level of government. It also acknowledges private sector potential. The council believes that its spending on transport in Brisbane should be proportioned as 51% on public transport and 49% on the road network (BCC, 2002).

2.3.2 TransApex summary

TransApex aims to provide road users with an alternative route for cross-city trips using motorway standard infrastructure. The benefits are cited as reducing congestion, freeing up surface streets, improving public transport, and fostering urban renewal around tunnel alignments.

The TransApex prefeasibility study was commissioned by BCC and jointly funded by the Australian Government (DoTaRS). The projects, however, are not funded by the Australian Government.

The Australian Government is committed to funding the Ipswich Motorway Upgrade, and the state government is delivering the Gateway Upgrade Project. BCC saw the need to play its part in providing the TransApex projects for Brisbane's inner city suburbs (BCC, 2002).

The freight transport benefit from the TransApex project not only entails improved network capacity, but also has implications for freight corridors to the airport, Port of Brisbane and Australia TradeCoast (a commercial and industrial precinct consisting of more than 7000 businesses around the Brisbane River between Port of Brisbane and the airport).

Public transport benefits are assumed on the parallel surface streets to each of the TransApex links, in the form of general traffic lanes being converted to transit lanes. However, there has been recent debate between council and the state government about this promise.

The TransApex projects were set out to be delivered as 'user-pays' tunnels with the assistance of the private sector.

2.3.3 Comments on the Transport Plan and TransApex in practice

BCC has continued to deliver the North–South Bypass Tunnel linking Bowen Hills with Woolloongabba via twin 5-km road tunnels under the Brisbane River and the CBD without any federal government funds and less-than-anticipated state government funding. This has seen a local government playing a significant role in high-level road links in the Brisbane city network. The tunnel benefits the state government by providing an alternative link to state arterial roads, without the state having to be responsible for the property acquisitions (one of the most significant social challenges of the project).

BCC's TransApex network is being delivered without any federal government contribution so far. When complete, it will provide an urban motorway-standard link between Brisbane's west and eastern fringe (where the airport, Australia TradeCoast and the Port of Brisbane are located). The freight movement between Ipswich and the east is significant. This will open up a new freight route across Brisbane's suburbs — for some traffic it will be a preferred alternative to the Brisbane Urban Corridor in the National Network. It will be interesting to see if the Australian Government attempts to gain control of new freight-significant links and incorporate them into its National Network in the future.

The public transport infrastructure initiative is largely the responsibility of the state government under QT. Public transport operation became the responsibility of the state's TransLink Transit Authority on 1 July 2008. A good working relationship between the state and BCC had developed over the years as the state gradually increased its responsibilities for public transport network in south-east Queensland. It is now coordinating 17 different bus, train and ferry operators in an integrated public transport system (TransLink, 2008). The cooperative relationship between the two governments has also seen the introduction of a combined traffic management centre. This has improved the integration and efficiency of the whole road network, regardless of which government holds authority over which road.

BCC appears to have a good working relationship with QDMR, and a positive association with the federal department. The approach of the council as communicated in the media and public documents does not concentrate on funding from other levels of government. Despite not receiving the expected funding from state and federal governments, BCC has persisted in its delivery of major road infrastructure.

BCC's Transport Plan does not state the source of transport funds, but it may be surmised that funds are most likely acquired through the Australian Government's AusLink local government allocations, the state government's Roads Alliance allocation, and through the local ratepayer base.

2.4 Summary of planning and policy documents

The main advantage of AusLink, as presented in the White Paper, is that it is a single policy for facilitating the planning, funding and delivery of nationally significant land transport infrastructure in Australia. All components of AusLink are easily accessed through the department's website and its intentions are easily interpreted. The federal government's transport policy is largely focused on links significant to freight movements, and when improvements to these links will also benefit the states, funding is expected from both the federal government and the states.

BCC's system is slightly more complicated, with the overall visionary publication *Living in Brisbane 2026* informing the Transport Plan, and TransApex being an accompanying major road network project. Nevertheless, the policies are still interpreted without much difficulty. BCC's objectives focus on investing in public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure, and reliable road networks.

The state government has the more difficult task of developing policies that address many competing objectives, including:

- road and public transport networks in urban areas
- road and rail networks in rural areas
- passenger and freight transport
- facilitation of land use and coordinated infrastructure
- travel demand management.

QDMR addresses many of these issues by closely relating its direction as a government department as well as a roads organisation (Roads Connecting Queenslanders) with several of the state's transport policy documents (including IRTPs, Transport Coordination Plan, Smart Travel Choices and more). When considering the RIP and strategic business and department plans from QDMR, the public transport and travel behaviour plans from QT, and the SEQ Regional Plan and Program from OUM, it is difficult to discern the state's overall transport policy. Not all of the documents are easily accessed or well advertised outside of certain departments. This makes it a challenge to establish exactly how the various policies direct or complement each other.

Very few state or local government transport links are recognised in the Australian Government's transport network map (see Figure 2). This does not show how significant links, which may be state or local government roads, complement the National Network. However, both the SEQRP and TransApex maps acknowledge the AusLink links in their areas. This illustrates the nature of a tiered Australian transport policy in the way the states and local governments have to be reactive to the federal government's policies and plans in order to 'fill in the gaps' around the National Network. The exception is at the borders between the states.

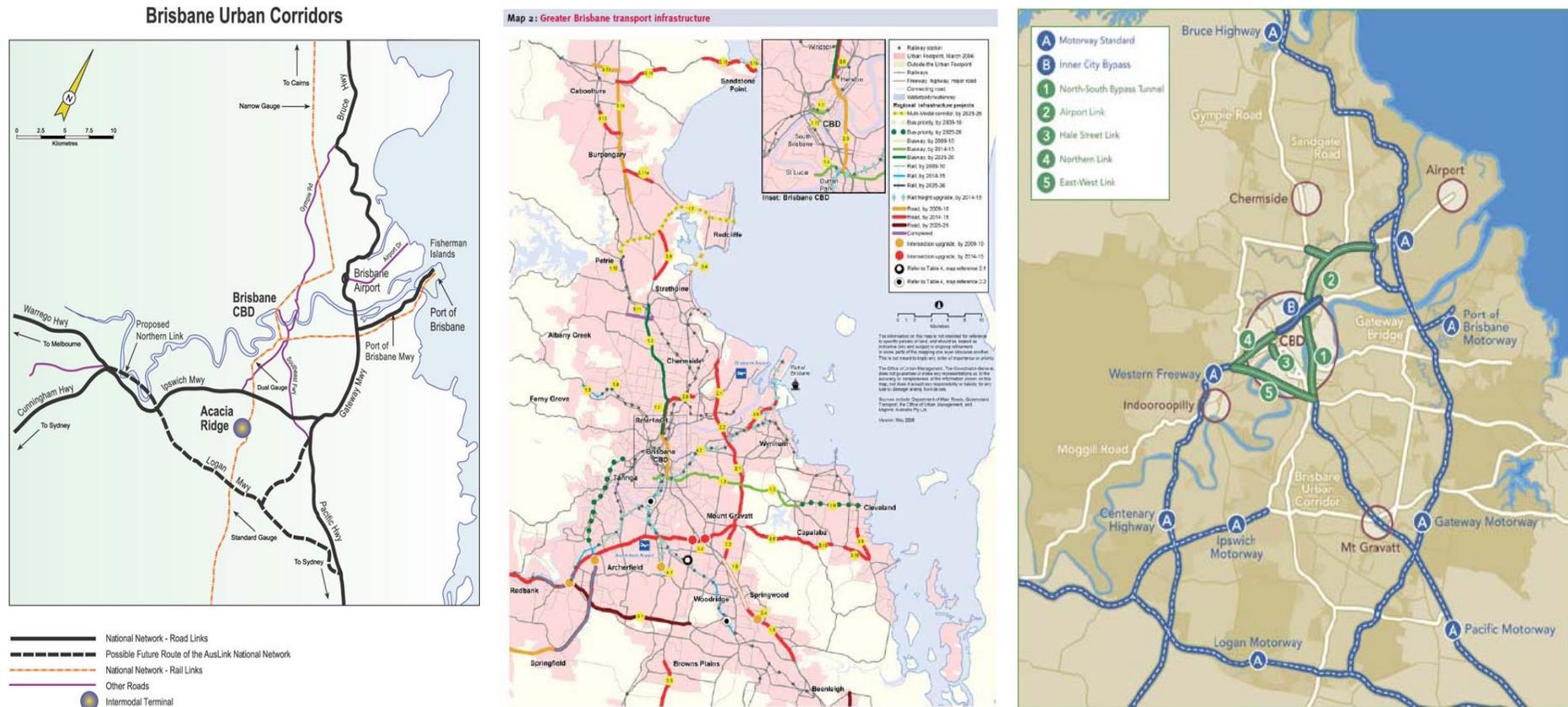


Figure 2 – AusLink, SEQRP and TransApex Networks (DoTaRS, 2004; OUM, 2005; BCC, 2003)

3 Professional opinions

Professional opinions were sought from nine people, including engineers, planners and economists, with more than 15 years experience, and who were (or had been) state government employees, university academics, private consultants or contractors.

The statements in this section are a summarised account of opinions expressed in the interviews, and thus are not necessarily the views of the author.

The views are categorised by planning, funding and power. A tick represents agreement with the view stated, and a cross represents disagreement. Where the interviewees did not have an opinion to offer in support of or against the concept, it is listed as not applicable (n/a).

3.1 Impediments to the current system

Table 1 – Impediments to the current system

	<i>View</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Academic</i>	<i>RACQ</i>
Planning	AusLink is narrowly freight focused	✓	✓	✓
	Urban congestion, public transport and travel demand management should be included in AusLink	✓	✓	✓
	It would be better if the Australian Government did not assume a role in planning	✓	n/a	✓
	QDMR sufficiently addresses holistic transport network planning needs through a state-wide plan	✓	✗	n/a
Funding	The Australian Government does not commit enough funding to transport	✓	✓	✓
	Maintenance is not well accounted for in AusLink	✓	✓	✓
	Federal government funds are closely aligned with election seats and times	✓	✓	✓
Power	The federal government unofficially acquires power for decision-making by holding funds for projects	✓	✓	✓
	It is the state's role to provide highway infrastructure	✓	n/a	✓

The RACQ understands the complex task the state has in being responsible for so many facets of transport policy. All parties interviewed held the view that having the funding responsibility for the National Network lie with a different tier of government is not always conducive to achieving the state's overall network priorities. Both the state and RACQ also admire the determination of the BCC to deliver significant infrastructure to the region — a task not normally assumed by a local government.

3.2 Possible changes in the future

Table 2 – Potential/preferred changes for the future

	<i>View</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Academic</i>	<i>RACQ</i>
Planning	Governments should share a higher level of vision extending to the transport task, and connectivity	✓	✓	n/a
	The federal government needs to fund a western link in SEQ, similar to the Gateway Motorway	✓	n/a	✓
Funding	Ability to spend funds needs to be well aligned with infrastructure delivery responsibilities	✓	n/a	✓
	The Australian Government should allocate funding to the states to spend as the states see fit	✓	n/a	✓
	Congestion charging should be introduced as an ultimate solution	x	x	✓
	User-pays system for roads, like public transport, is fairer, and makes more sense	✓	✓	✓
Power	The power to make decisions on projects funded by the federal government should be returned to the states	✓	n/a	✓

The RACQ was alone in being a strong advocate for the congestion charging system, reasoning that users who choose to drive in the CBD should pay a concession for that, and users who choose to take bypass roads should be rewarded for using that service instead (rather than having to pay a fee to a private operator). The state is strongly opposed to all forms of road user charging as it is not a well-received concept politically — voters are not expected to react well to being forced to pay fees where they did not previously. The academic view is that congestion charging is only an interim solution, and does not fully address funding or travel demand management for congested links in the long term. Rather, road user charging for all roads based on use and location would be a fairer source of funding.

Reviewing proposed future scenarios, it was interesting to note the RACQ and state representatives believe the federal government should only play a role as providing funds, and that the state should make the decisions in how to spend the funds on the state's roads (similar to the old NHS system). One flaw identified in this proposal is that this would not account for how interstate connections would be addressed.

Drawing on the Ipswich Motorway example, the RACQ believes disputation between state and federal governments has wasted time while the situation on the Ipswich Motorway worsens, with longer delays due to congestion and continuing high crash incidence. The lack of a clear responsibility to be assumed by one government or the other has led to a long running delay from taking action.

4 Discussion

4.1 State and federal government responsibilities

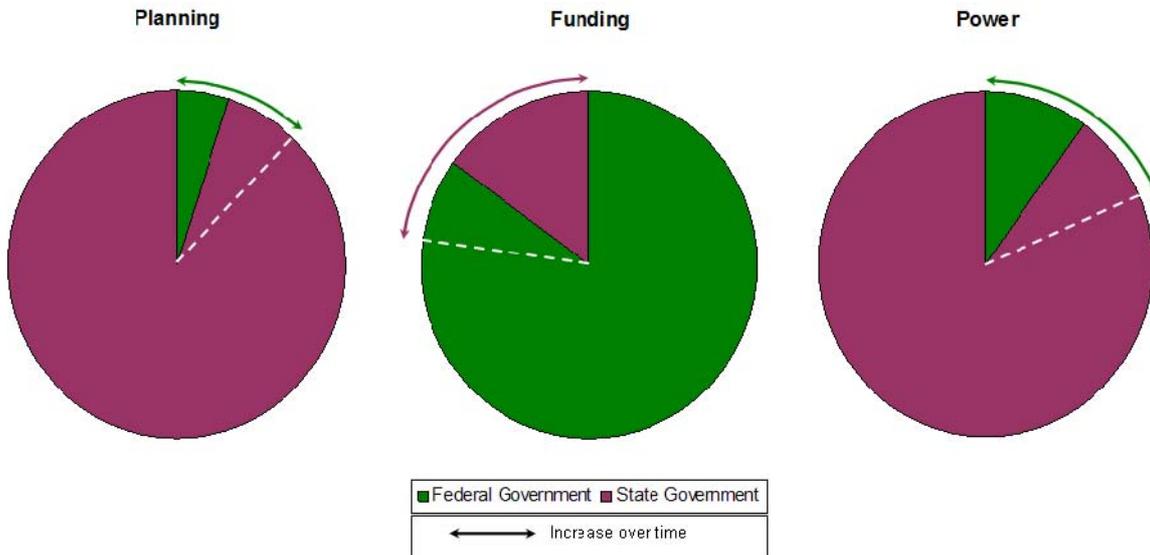


Figure 3 – Changes in state and federal government responsibilities over time

Figure 3 illustrates the contrast in proportions of the state and federal government responsibilities of planning, funding and power in relation to the National Network. Also indicated is how the shared responsibilities have changed and are changing over time.

The states have largely been responsible for planning for projects and identifying their priorities, considering how the National Network (or National Highway in the previous system) fits in with the regional network of other state-controlled roads. AusLink has introduced an increasing federal role in the prioritising of projects in the National Network.

Where under the previous system, National Highway projects were fully funded by the federal government, the funding responsibilities have changed under the AusLink policy to partially fund each project on the National Network, with the remaining contribution expected from the states.

The states have the constitutional power to plan, build, operate and maintain the states' roads (section 51 where roads are not included in the legislative powers of the parliament). However, the federal government has increased its decision-making influence on projects in the National Network by way of section 96 of the constitution (where the federal government can choose to provide funds to the state where it sees fit).

In short, where the smaller share of the responsibilities is held (see Figure 3), that share has increased over time. However, this does not necessarily mean that the shareholder (state or federal government) is in support of this trend.

The role of the private sector in the overall picture is still very unclear.

Figure 3 does show some evidence of the vertical fiscal imbalance claimed to exist by the RACQ. The changes over time indicated in Figure 3 also imply government moves towards federalism. The general tone of the AusLink White Paper suggests the policy is to ensure a consistent, national approach to land transport, which is associated accordingly with the federalism concept. The AusLink plan could be described as conditional fiscal federalism, as opposed to the NHS, which may be an example of unconditional fiscal federalism. That is,

AusLink is a plan that commits the federal government funds to projects that the federal government chooses and requires state funds to be committed, whereas the NHS projects were completely funded by the federal government.

It seems logical that there would be two ways to rectify a vertical fiscal imbalance:

1. Reallocate the funding responsibility to where the planning and decision-making responsibilities are.
2. Realign the planning and decision-making responsibilities to the source of funding.

The RACQ only points out the first proposition as a solution to this imbalance.

In the case of scenario 1, this is the change the RACQ and state would prefer, which would be similar to the NHS, but giving the states the ultimate say on how federal funding is spent.

Scenario 2 would mean DITRDLG would need to increase its capabilities as a transport agency and become a national equivalent of QT and QDMR. It would need to increase its in-house capabilities before it could play a significant role in planning and decision making. If the federalism approach were to prevail, the DITRDLG could distance itself further from the dynamics of government election terms.

The economist and academic perspectives of user-pays systems were significantly more pioneering than the state and RACQ propositions (which were essentially to restructure the currently existing framework to be more like the previous National Highway System).

Despite this, it is agreed on all levels that transport facilitates communication and connectivity, as do telecommunications, for example. When transport and access by means of road or rail are considered as services providing communication and connectivity, it is logical that those services should be paid for as they are used, whether road or rail, for freight or passenger transport. The transport system, as a user-pays system, may be charged in a variety of ways, taking into account frequent users, lengths of trips, and peak times of day. Caps or plans similar to those already existing in public transport, energy, internet and mobile services could even be included.

5 Conclusion

5.1 Existing government roles

This literature review of the transport policies of the Australian Government, the Queensland Government and the BCC reveals that there are many overlapping elements, but there are different levels of detail between government's policies.

The National Land Transport Plan, AusLink, is designed to connect the country through a series of multi-modal corridors and intermodal connections. It provides a transport policy for road and rail, and addresses both freight and passenger connectivity. However, the White Paper specifically states it does not address public transport as that is the responsibility of the state and territory governments (DoTaRS, 2004). AusLink is widely viewed as being freight focused, despite the policy document including passenger transport (though only private passenger transport). It is also believed that the policy does not always prevail in delivering the 'best' projects for country, due to the local priorities being considered differently by the states.

The Queensland Government has several policies, plans and programs to address the state's land transport task. These include a mix of focuses, including travel behaviour policies, strategic business and department plans, land use and transport plans, and roads programs. It is unclear how these instruments relate to and inform each other to dictate the outcomes of transport infrastructure in Queensland. That aside, it is partly the state's role to fund projects from the federal government's AusLink, as well as urban and regional roads, rail and public transport in the state. The Queensland Government plans and policies can be hard to follow between the two departments, QT and QDMR. While the RIP is delivered by QDMR, predominantly for roads, it mentions integrated transport systems several times, but this concept appears to be better addressed through other publications. It is not very clear what the state's overall transport policy is. The state does make it very public that the federal government's contribution to land transport funding is very small in comparison to the state's, and should be far more. This message is portrayed through the state government planning and policy documents, as well as regularly through the media.

BCC predominantly uses a Transport Plan for Brisbane, which is informed by the visionary document 'Living in Brisbane 2026'. This policy addresses the urban connectivity of Brisbane through roads, public transport, and walking and cycle paths. The council has taken on a role in providing links significant to the connectivity of both commuters and freight traffic through its TransApex plan — a network of cross-city motorway standard facilities. BCC has a very good working relationship with the state, and appears to be on good terms with the federal government in general. This appears to be in part, due to the council's determination to play a significant role in providing infrastructure in Brisbane, and without a great deal of public debate through the media on which governments' responsibility it is to provide funding for the infrastructure required.

5.1.1 Hindrances to current systems

The Australian Government's increased role in planning does not always complement the regional priorities set by the state or local plans relevant to the area. This leads to a narrow corridor or network perspective, which is the framework of AusLink, and does not seem to consider land use or development of wider regions very well. The freight focus and detachment of responsibility for travel demand management also mean AusLink cannot address a National Network effectively as only parts of the transport task are addressed. Queensland's statewide plan is not widely recognised or understood, and it is unclear whether it assists in defining the state's overall policy.

Although the state governments hold the constitutional right to provide land transport infrastructure, the Australian Government holds an indirect power through the provision of a proportion of funding. AusLink enables the Australian Government to provide funds only for the projects it sees fit, and if a state disagrees with those decisions, it has very little influence in changing the funding allocations to where it prefers.

Combined, these issues can result in a misalignment between what the states plan and what the federal government funds.

5.2 Consideration for the future

Two concepts for improvement in the way highway infrastructure is provided in Australia are offered here:

1. Realign the governmental responsibilities to match government's constitutional powers in the current system.

This first concept would mean either funding responsibilities are handed to the states, or that the federal government plays a bigger role in planning and decision making.

2. Abolish current funding mechanisms to implement a road and rail user charging system that collects funds from users more fairly, similar to public transport.

This second concept would mean that rather than through registrations and the fuel tax, revenue for roads are sourced by use, similarly to energy and telecommunications services.

Detailed investigations particularly into the political science, public policy, and constitutional aspects of these concepts need to be carried out to determine whether they would be feasible, how they would operate, and how they would be implemented.

It will be interesting to observe the development of Infrastructure Australia and the extent of its influence on the way transport systems are addressed by governments in the future.

Glossary

BCC	Brisbane City Council
DITRDLG	Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government
DLGPSR	Department of Local Government, Planning , Sports and Recreation
DoTaRS	Department of Transport and Regional Services
IRTP	Integrated Regional Transport Plan
LGAQ	Local Governments Association of Queensland
NHS	National Highway System
OUM	Office of Urban Management
PB	Parsons Brinckerhoff Australia
QT	Queensland Transport
RACQ	Royal Automobile Association of Queensland
RCQ	Roads Connecting Queenslanders
RIP	Roads Implementation Program
SEQIPP	South-east Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program
SEQRP	South-east Queensland Regional Plan
TCP	Transport Coordination Plan

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