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Supporting a transport plan for the Northern Beaches

The Northern Beaches Link is included as part of a Sydney Strategic Road Network in the 20 year State Infrastructure Strategy released today by Infrastructure NSW to guide future infrastructure investment by the NSW Government.

The Northern Beaches Link would link the Gore Hill Freeway with the Burnt Bridge Creek Deviation via a tunnel under Mosman and a new bridge over The Spit, combined with a bus transitway from the Northern Beaches to the CBD.

While restricted State finances and current priorities inhibit the delivery of the Northern Beaches Link in the short term, it could be fast-tracked with private sector involvement. It is clear through private sector proposals such as the F3 to M2 that projects can potentially be accelerated. Infrastructure NSW will therefore engage with the private sector and report back in 18 months on the acceleration of Northern Beaches Link.

Other measures to reduce bus congestion on the north-south spine from the Sydney Harbour Bridge to the QVB will also improve travel times on key corridors including the Northern Beaches.

The priority for the Northern Beaches comes in three phases:

1. In the short term, bus priority measures along Military Road need to be determined via the process currently underway through Transport for NSW including consideration of dedicated centre lanes in peaks, park and ride sites and tidal flow options as well as the re-routing of buses in the CBD;
2. In the medium term, Infrastructure NSW has recommended investing \$200 million on further enhancements to traffic flow between the Spit Bridge and North Sydney; and
3. In the long term, the Northern Beaches need to be linked into the Sydney Motorway network with the acceleration of the Northern Beaches Link – a tunnel under Military Road (including access for buses) with consideration of tolling to bring the project forward.

Infrastructure NSW Chief Executive Paul Broad said the first step for improving travel times on the Northern Beaches' corridor was easing acute congestion over the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

"In the two hour morning peak, buses carry more people over the Sydney Harbour Bridge into Sydney's CBD than those travelling over the Bridge by train," Mr Broad said.

"Over the next five years, Infrastructure NSW supports significant bus re-routing to address congestion in the CBD, which is the first step in assisting bus commuters.

"Combined with the short-term measures, bus re-routing and implementation of the Northern Beaches bus corridor improvement plan, this would deliver significant benefits for bus travel times from the Northern Beaches, particularly along Military Road.

“Infrastructure NSW looks forward to working with Transport for NSW, the private sector and the Northern Beaches community to progress the Northern Beaches Link over the next 18 months.”

Mr Broad said phasing the projects would deliver value-for-money investment at a time when finances were tight and projects need to be prioritised.

“Consideration should also be given to start engaging with the private sector on the Spit Bridge upgrade and possible tolling arrangements to bring forward the project and the Bus Rapid Transit to deliver benefits to commuters,” he said.

The State Infrastructure Strategy 2012-2032 is Infrastructure NSW’s independent advice to the NSW Government on the priority infrastructure investments and reforms required to drive productivity and economic growth.

The Strategy’s recommendations have been provided to the Government for its consideration in developing future plans for infrastructure investment. For further information, the Strategy can be found on www.insw.com

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