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Toowoomba Range Bypass: saving time, saving money

The Queensland Government is stepping up its bid to make the second Toowoomba Range crossing a reality with a new design which cuts the cost of the proposal by half a billion dollars.

Main Roads Minister Craig Wallace said the revised design had the potential to save up to 23 minutes in travel time for trucks and 18 minutes for cars travelling between the Warrego Highway near Helidon and the Warrego Highway at Charlton.

"That's a huge saving for truckies, tourists, business and commuters, and will hopefully see us get the Australian Government support we need to fund the project," Mr Wallace said.

Toowoomba residents, especially those living in James, Tor, Taylor and Bridge Streets are having to put up with increasing noise levels and are concerned about safety.

"The road closures caused by the flooding of early 2011 in the Western Downs and Toowoomba region highlighted the importance of this project in providing a safe alternative route across the Toowoomba Range.

"We all agree that this second range crossing is needed, and we've done something about it.

"By pushing ahead with this re-scoping, we are making it a reality."

The revised design remains within the corridor currently owned by the Queensland Government with the estimated cost between \$1 billion and \$1.5 billion.

The new design includes:

- a 700 metre long three-lane tunnel at the top of the range
- dual two-lane carriageways between the Warrego Highway near Helidon and the eastern end of the tunnel
- a two-lane link between Warrego Highway at Charlton and the Gore Highway which has the potential to be delivered as part of a staged approach to meet both the medium and long term transport needs of the area.

Member for Toowoomba North Kerry Shine said the next step for the proposal was to work with the freight industry and Toowoomba Regional Council to seek their feedback.

"Working with industry at this planning stage will help us determine the best design to improve travel times, while minimising impacts on local roads and diverting traffic away from Toowoomba's local streets," Mr Shine said.

"Transport and Main Roads anticipates the lower-cost detailed business case will be completed in late 2012.

Mr Shine said that last year almost 23,000 vehicles travelled on the range crossing each day - 13 per cent of which were trucks. By 2031 it's expected 30,000 vehicles would use the route each day.

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