

# Spotlight on Brisbane Olympics

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Michael Bushby  
Roads Australia



Julie Mitchell  
Department of  
Transport and Main  
Roads



Justin Riley  
Aurecon



Mary Haverland  
Arcadis



Joshua Hannan  
Department of  
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Lucinda Hoffman  
Department of  
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## About Roads Australia

[Roads Australia](#) (RA) is the peak body for roads within an integrated transport system, representing an industry that contributes \$236 billion annually to the economy and supports 1.4 million jobs. RA brings industry, government, and communities together to lead the evolution of Australia's roads, integrated transport and mobility.

Roads Australia's members include all of Australia's transport agencies, road owners, major contractors and consultants, material suppliers, service and technology providers, and other relevant industry groups.

RA's policy focus extends across five activity streams: Safety; Capacity; Transport Reform; Customer Experience; and Sustainability. Diversity and Inclusion is a commitment across each stream.

## Background

RA held an industry lunch on 1 September that explored the work being done by Queensland's Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) and others to prepare for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Brisbane.

The keynote address was delivered by TMR's Julie Mitchell, Deputy Director-General, Policy, Planning and Investment Division. This was followed by a panel session with Joshua Hannan, Lucinda Hoffman and Mary Haverland, moderated by Justin Riley.

Limiting emissions while managing movement for an event that will be 7.5 times the size of the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games will require a major focus on operational planning, timetabling and new approaches to infrastructure delivery.

## Event summary

The speakers were:

Keynote speaker:

[Julie Mitchell](#) – Deputy Director-General, Policy, Planning and Investment, [Department of Transport and Main Roads](#)

Panel Session:

[Justin Riley](#) – Queensland Transport Industry Leader, [Aurecon](#)

[Mary Haverland](#) – Transport Planning and Advisory, [Arcadis](#)

[Joshua Hannan](#) – General Manager (Transport Strategy and Planning), [Department of Transport and Main Roads](#)

[Lucinda Hoffman](#) – General Manager (Strategic Policy), [Department of Transport and Main Roads](#)

The industry lunch was hosted in Brisbane by RA’s President, [Michael Bushby](#), and sponsored by Arcadis and Aurecon.

## What the Olympics mean for South East Queensland (SEQ)

**Julie Mitchell** set out the kind of infrastructure and services challenge hosting the Games poses for SEQ.

With a population expected to grow by more than 750,000 by 2031, SEQ has the highest expected population growth on the Eastern seaboard.

At the same time, TMR must deliver on its commitment to a climate-positive games and investment program. This requires attention to a multitude of areas in terms of policy, planning, investment, customer experience and partnerships.

Whilst the Games will only involve 30 days of actual competition, they nonetheless bring about nine weeks of transport network disruption. That’s partly because Brisbane 2032 will be the first regional Olympic and Paralympic Games, with venues across SEQ, as well as in several regional cities such as Townsville, Cairns and Toowoomba.

A consequence of this regional focus is that a significant proportion of the accommodation in inner Brisbane will be reserved for games officials, family and media, with spectator accommodation predominantly on the Gold and Sunshine Coast. The result of this will be more dispersed and multi-seat journeys for visitors between international airports,

accommodation and to and from major event venues, greatly increasing the scale and complexity of the transport task.

*“Transport infrastructure and services will be critical considerations for any Olympic and Paralympic Games bid. All infrastructure built must provide a long-term legacy. So the Games are a catalyst to bring forward investment and community economic, social and environmental benefits (including climate).”*

- Julie Mitchell, TMR

## The games strategy

With no parking at venues, there will be a heavy focus on fully accessible public transport facilities and services. Quality walking and cycling connections to venues are also expected. The heavy focus on public transport, with a bid commitment of over 80% of spectator and Games workforce accessing venues via public transport, will be reliant on rail as a backbone.

This requires a lot of work on strategy and operational planning, rolling stock and buses, and timetabling. Many event venues will require one or more park and ride facilities. And shuttle buses will play an important role in games transport, as will taxi and rideshare.



## Demand modelling

TMR expects the Games public transport task volume to be 4.5 times the background journeys with higher demand throughout the day and evening. 21 million public transport trips are expected across 16 days, with 700,000 one-way trips per day.

As a result, comprehensive travel demand management to reduce, retime, reroute and remode transport demand will be necessary. Through these efforts TMR will aim for the total traffic (including the increased traffic associated with the Games) to be reduced to levels close to the background business-as-usual traffic.

The bid for the Games committed to average travel times less than 20 minutes from villages to competition venues, so efficient and reliable movement on the road network for Games athletes, officials and dignitaries will be vital.

In achieving this, Julie said that in the interest of sustainability, the bid maximised the use of existing infrastructure.

***“The IOC were not focussed on mega stadiums for Brisbane that are disproportionate to the needs of the city. They are no longer looking at Olympic venue precincts that won’t necessarily be there for legacy in the future.”***

- Josh Hannon, TMR

This is in keeping with what Josh Hannon called the IOC’s “new norm” [2020+5](#) agenda that focuses on a region’s existing growth agenda (in recognition of the huge impost the Olympics represent on their host). The 10-year runway’s key decision points provide sufficient time for orderly infrastructure and services planning and delivery to achieve that.



Julie said it was important to note projects being planned and delivered now, such as the [Logan to Gold Coast Faster Rail Project](#), are all contributing to the requirements of the Games.

Network upgrades will be mostly those already committed to publicly and funded. Further upgrades may be required with a focus on completing motorway connections and public transport connections that will significantly improve network reliability and provide for efficient inter-city movement. Based on TMR’s modelling, the priorities that will support the regional growth are the same priorities that support Games operations.



## The Net Zero emission roadmap

TMR has compiled a draft Net Zero Emissions Transport Roadmap that will propose adoption of a multi-faceted approach towards decarbonising the transport sector.

This targets both operational emissions (from vehicles at the exhaust pipe) and infrastructure-related emissions.

With about 45% of direct transport emissions from light passenger vehicles in Queensland, the Roadmap includes investing in infrastructure for (and encouraging use of) alternative, more sustainable transport modes (like cycling and public transport), maximising opportunities for low-emission and recycled materials in transport infrastructure, the use of renewable energy for our transport sector, as well as encouraging low and zero emission vehicles (including cars, bus fleets, ferries and trains).

To alleviate range anxiety, Queensland has invested in the longest EV public charging superhighway in the world in one state. Julie explained that the [Queensland Electric Super Highway \(QESH\)](#) has 31 charging locations, with 24 to be delivered from 2022.

## Climate positive Games

For transport infrastructure delivery, Julie said the Department of Environment and Science is working out the framework for what's required to achieve a climate positive games, but measures like targeting excellent or better infrastructure sustainability ratings, zero net waste and 100% renewable electricity and fuel use (in construction and operational phases) may be considered. She said a positive legacy would be to create demand in the industry for low carbon technologies and materials, and build capacity in new construction practices and supply chains.



The bid commits to a 100% low emission / electric fleet for cars and buses for athletes and officials. Outside of the Olympic process, the government has committed that from 2025 all new buses in SEQ will be electric; with the requirement rolling out to the rest of the state from 2025 to 2030.

Transport will be a large part of the overall Games carbon footprint so there will be pressure to minimise operational emissions generally. It is expected that the focus on public transport (80% of travel to venues) and active connections will address a good portion of those emissions.

**Lucinda Hoffman** said she expected new technologies to influence travel behaviour, as seen through current first and last mile options such as Uber and e-Scooters.

***“We’re providing live data and information to passengers so they can plan their journeys...we’re looking for policies that can nudge behaviours and support decarbonisation of the transport sector through uptake of ZEVs and mode shift increasing active transport.”***

- Lucinda Hoffman, TMR

## New types of Olympic legacy

Beyond the traditional Olympic infrastructure contribution, **Mary Haverland** said she expected new types of “regeneration” and “sustainability” legacies.

What was most exciting for Mary was investment in things that were not only positive during the games (such as a more nuanced addressing of demand management), but which also had the ability to contribute truly individualised benefit packages for the community that endure well beyond Olympic events.

***“You end up with a mobility-as-a-service app or investment in digital that benefits me as part of my future, whether I live in Townsville or Toowoomba or Cairns.”***

- Mary Haverland, Arcadis

The panel agreed that another wider benefit was better collaboration between all levels of government and industry. Josh concluded the panel discussion with the observation that the Olympics have triggered the same sort of collaboration seen during disasters, but, happily, without a disaster catalyst.

He said the Olympics bring forward the ability to harness good ideas, providing a “special permission” to both influence and engage the community in the transport system differently.

## Parting Thoughts

Justin brought the panel discussion to an end on a positive note, with Josh pointing out that the ultimate challenge of the Games was to ensure the great outcomes that had been discussed were “sticky” enough to be retained. This means finding enough leverage to achieve things like permanent behavioural change. Josh expressed confidence that Queensland had enough transport and operational planners to ensure it truly harnessed those great opportunities and did not let them slip by.

RA’s President, Michael Bushby, concluded the discussion, noting the momentum that had been established and how the Olympics had given SEQ licence to operate in a significantly different way.

## Event outputs & next steps

An overview of the discussion and the broad themes addressed by each speaker was circulated via [RA’s LinkedIn feed](#). This account of the keynote and panel was published to [RA’s Web site](#).

Speaker presentations can also be viewed [here](#).