



Dedicated to a better Brisbane

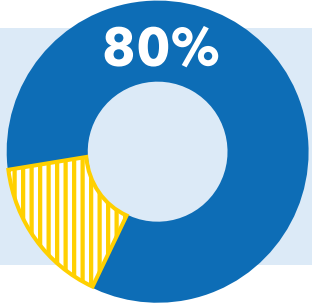
Story Bridge Renewal

Progress Update
JUNE 2026



Story Bridge Renewal

The Story Bridge Renewal Business Case is now 80% complete, marking an important step toward securing the future of one of Queensland’s most recognisable and important pieces of infrastructure.



Led by international bridge experts and grounded in local knowledge and technical analysis, the business case is identifying and planning the renewal needed to preserve the heritage-listed bridge, protect its critical transport function and secure its operation for another 100 years.

Major works on other bridges of comparable age, size and scale to the

Story Bridge are typically funded by federal and state governments, both in Australia and internationally.

We are ready to get on with the job of a major renewal to secure the bridge's future. However, we need the Queensland Government and Australian Government to help fund this once-in-a-century renewal.



The Story Bridge is locally owned and nationally utilised, with around 43% of users coming from outside Brisbane.



A full renewal needs to be funded by all levels of government.



Why renewal is needed

Built more than 86 years ago, the Story Bridge is a vital cross-river connection and a defining part of Brisbane’s identity.

The bridge forms part of State Route 15 (Bradfield Highway) and carries more than 100,000 vehicles each day as well as thousands of pedestrians and cyclists, with around 43% of users coming from outside Brisbane.

The Story Bridge was built for a very different Brisbane. In the 1930s, it was designed around a 24-tonne lorry - then considered a heavy load - and carried fewer than 10,000 daily trips in the 1940s, including motor cars, horse-drawn vehicles, motorcycles and bicycles.

Today, heavier vehicles are placing far greater demands on the structure than in its early operating years. The bridge now carries around 10 times more daily traffic than it did in the 1940s and supports a very different traffic mix, including modern cars, buses, freight and commercial vehicles, some weighing up to 42.5 tonnes.

Decades of heavy use, combined with the bridge’s age and changing traffic demands, are placing growing strain on the structure. Without major renewal, the bridge is expected to become unsafe for most users within the next 20 years.

Through the life of the Story Bridge, Council has invested over \$3 million on maintenance annually, and more than \$120 million in improvements and repairs over the past 20 years. Nonetheless, the bridge is now reaching the end of its 100-year design life.

Brisbane now faces a critical decision-point to renew, replace, or decommission the bridge. Our business case work has so far confirmed renewal as the best, and only practical option to preserve the bridge beyond 2040.

The Story Bridge was not designed to cater to the volumes of traffic and size of vehicles it currently carries.



The difference between bridge maintenance and bridge renewal

Bridge maintenance is routine work done regularly to keep a bridge in good condition and avoid bigger issues. Bridge renewal is major work carried out when a bridge is nearing the end of its life, involving significant upgrades to extend its use.

Our stewardship over the years

Built by the Queensland Government, the Story Bridge was transferred to Brisbane City Council in 1947. For nearly 8 decades, we have maintained, operated and funded the asset on behalf of the community.

We are continuing to significantly invest in the bridge’s upkeep, with the business case being developed alongside ongoing maintenance and improvement works already underway on the bridge.

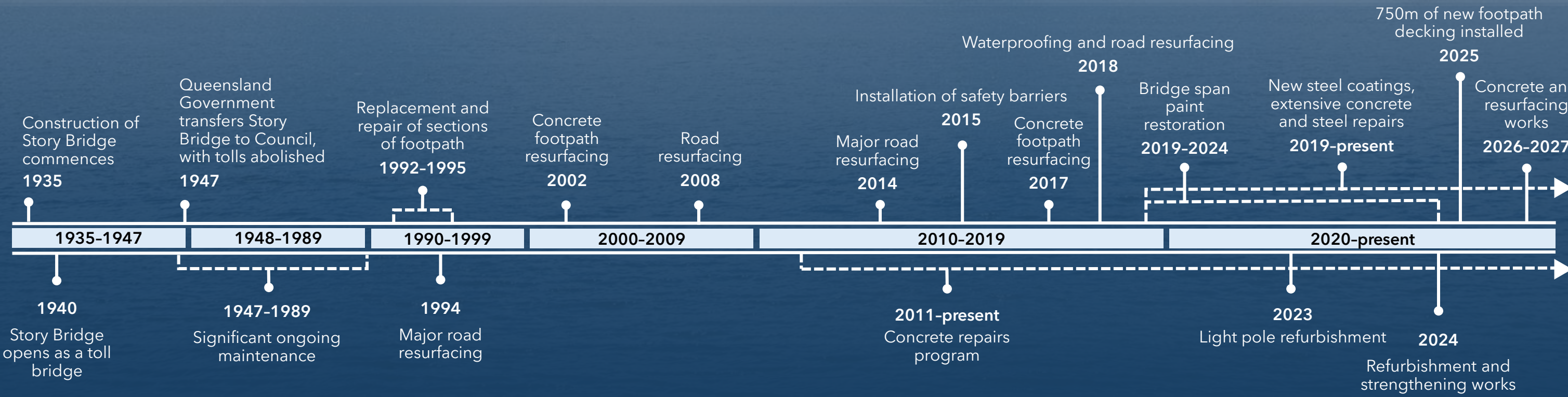
Since 2019 alone, we have spent more than \$80 million to prolong the bridge’s life. This includes new footpath decking installed in late 2025, with more than 750 metres of lightweight, custom-made panels fixed to a locally sourced steel frame.

Future works will include major waterproofing and asphalt resurfacing of the bridge’s southern approach, which will require a temporary full bridge closure in late 2026/early 2027 during lower traffic periods.

While separate from the business case, these works provide important insights into asset condition, delivery challenges and staging considerations that will inform future renewal planning.

Reaching the end of its design life

Regardless of regular upkeep over many decades, the Story Bridge has naturally aged and it now requires a major renewal to preserve its legacy and keep Brisbane moving.



Early business case findings

Work to date has focused on building the evidence base required for a detailed business case and establishing the strategic case for renewal. This has included physical on-site testing and inspections of the bridge's current condition, structural engineering analysis, construction assessments, and alignment of the project with broader transport, heritage and city-shaping priorities.

These activities are helping shape a staged renewal approach that can respond to asset risk, preserve the bridge's historical significance and minimise impacts on the community.

Early work confirms the scale of the challenge and the importance of acting now. The bridge remains safe and operational, but like thousands of other ageing transport assets around the country, the design life will soon be reached, and major interventions are required to extend that life.

Current investigations reinforce the need for a long-term, staged renewal program to keep the Story Bridge safe, functional and fit for purpose for decades to come. Our work also highlights the bridge's significance not just as a critical transport link, but as a heritage icon with deep economic, social and city identity value.

Expected total renewal cost

Current business case work indicates the total cost to undertake the full Story Bridge renewal project over a 20-year period is expected to be in the order of \$3.6 billion.

This is the full, all-inclusive cost of delivering the project, including base costs (the cost to deliver the renewal based on today's scope and prices), risk, contingency and escalation (future cost increases).

The figure reflects the complex nature of major heritage infrastructure projects and the scale of works likely to be required over the life of the program to renew, protect and preserve the bridge.

It allows for a staged approach that balances engineering need, heritage considerations and the practical realities of delivering work on a live transport asset.

The expected cost of a staged renewal is

\$3.6 billion

over a 20-year period



A centrepiece during Brisbane 2032

The Story Bridge will play a major role during the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, providing the key southern gateway to the Victoria Park precinct and the expanding city centre.

The bridge will serve as a vital link between competition venues, accommodation sites, and key tourist destinations across the region.

Throughout the Games, the Story Bridge is poised to be a focal point for celebration including lighting displays and fireworks.



Priority works before the Games

The business case has developed an optimal pathway for delivering the renewal works and prioritising critical investment ahead of the Games.

Pre-2032 work focuses on the most critical renewal activities needed to present the bridge at an appropriate standard, manage longer-term asset risk, maximise value for money, and mitigate level of service impacts ahead of this global event.

Based on current investigations and analysis, the expected cost to complete these pre-2032 works is estimated to be \$1.35 billion.

These works would represent the highest-priority components of the broader renewal program and would be subject to further refinement through detailed design and procurement.

Pre-2032 activities



Targeted structural works to renew the bridge's strength, including upgrades to key concrete and steel elements



Major renewal of the main span, including treatment and protection of structural steel



New and improved access systems to enable safe, efficient inspection and future works



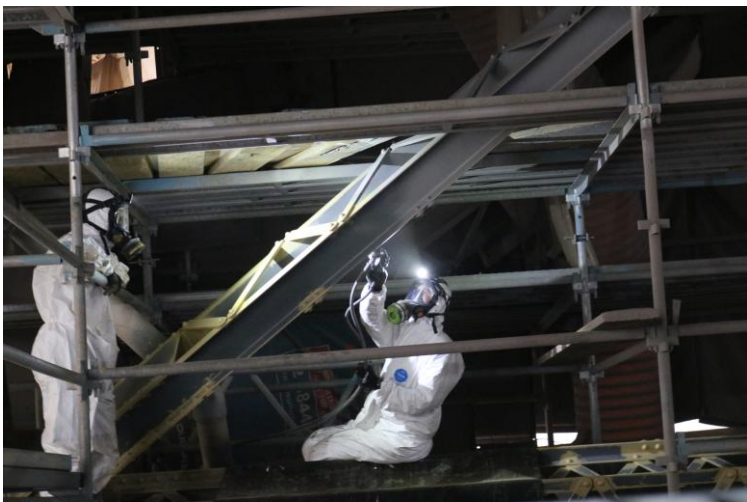
Modernisation of safety, security, and essential operational systems (fire, electrical, lighting)



Replacement of end-of-life lighting to enhance the bridge's appearance and civic presence



Comprehensive life-extension of critical bridge components to ensure long-term performance



The cost of doing nothing

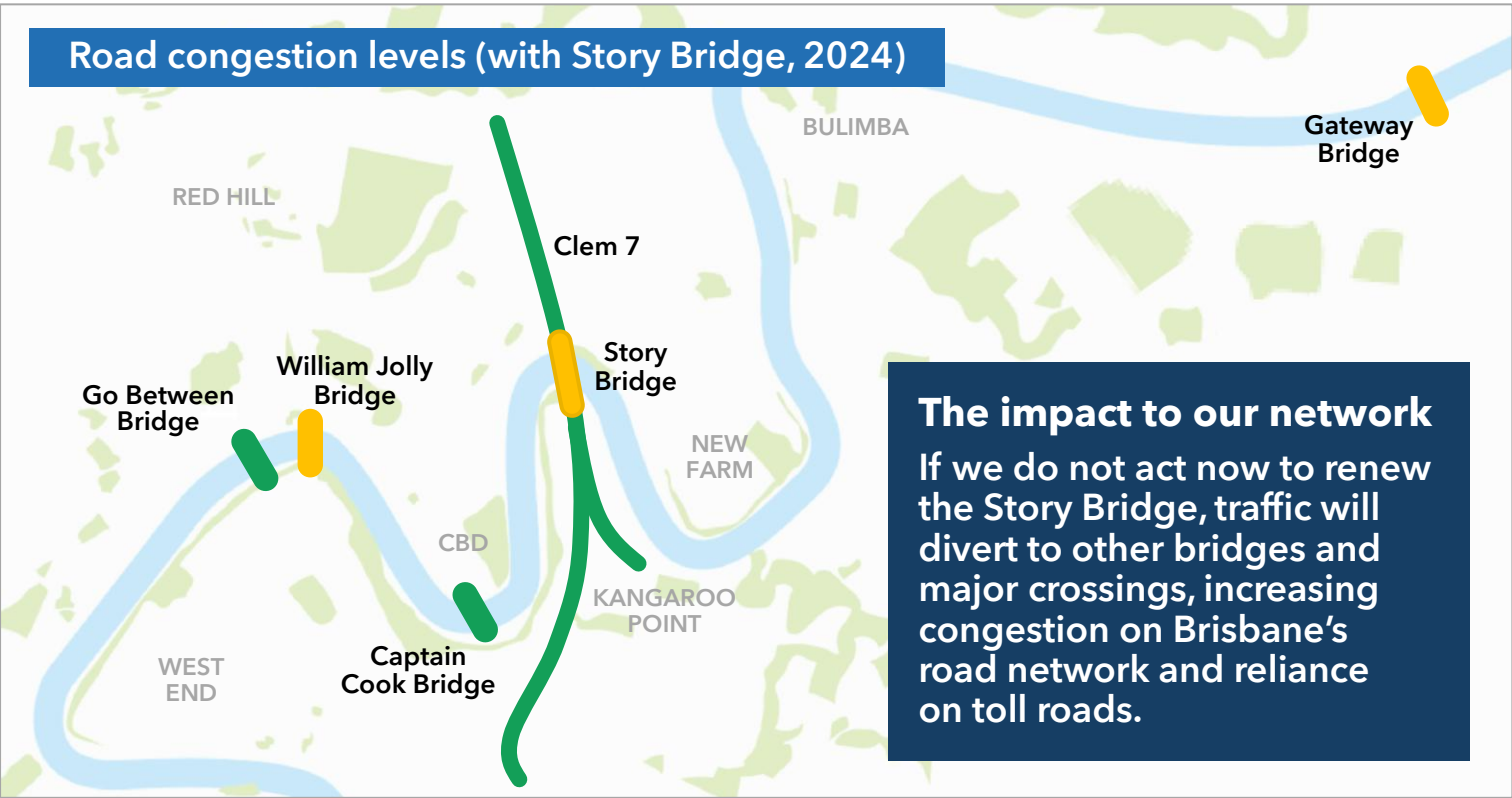
Without life-extending renewal, heavy vehicles and public transport would be removed from the Story Bridge within the next 10 years, and the bridge would ultimately be decommissioned and deconstructed from 2046.

The cost of inaction and the eventual full decommissioning of the Story Bridge is substantial and will result in city-wide road network impacts.

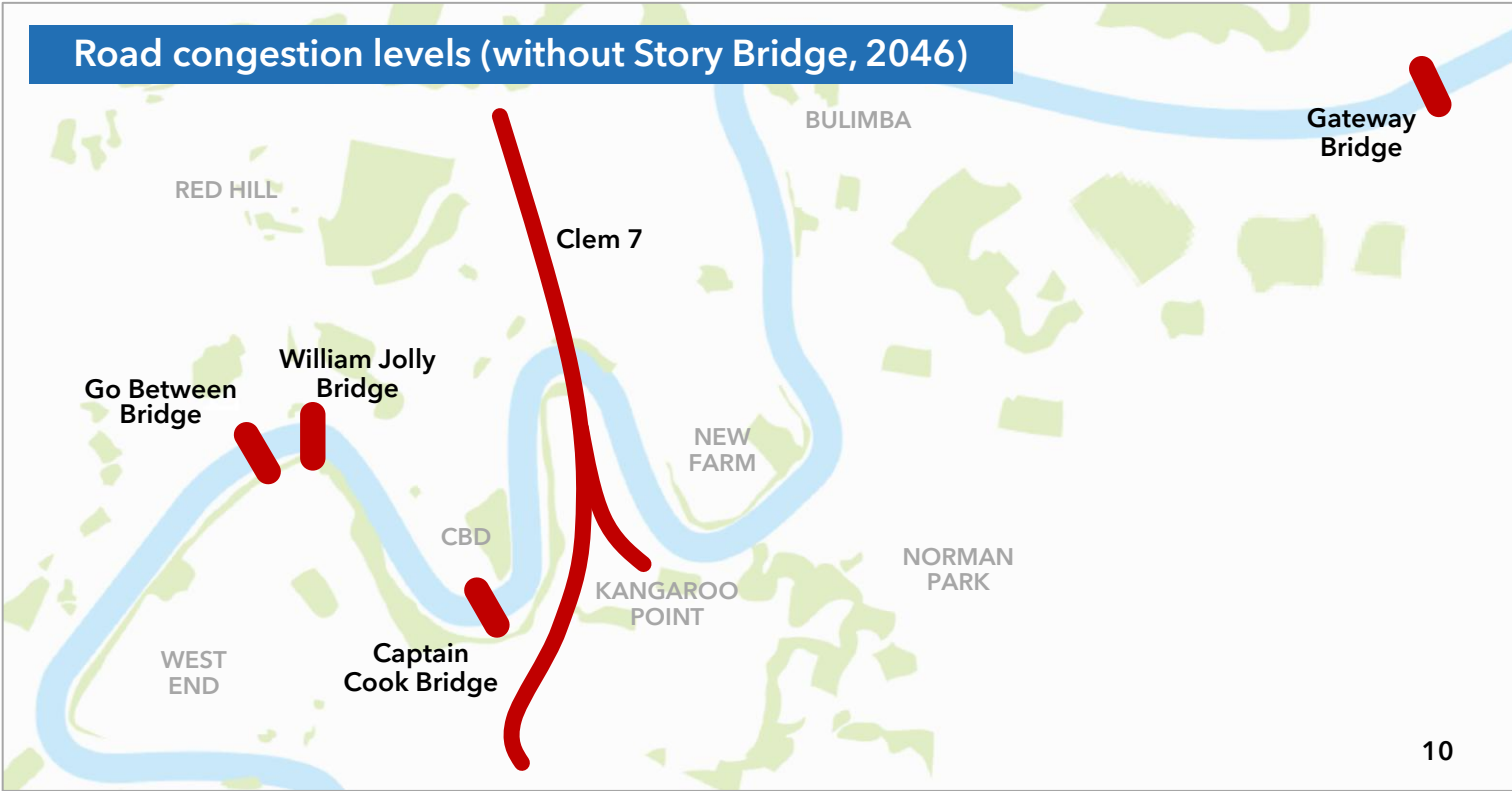
The economic assessment indicates a present value cost of approximately **\$6.39 billion**, driven overwhelmingly by increased congestion, travel time delays, vehicle operating costs and public transport inefficiencies across the network.

These impacts are compounded by financial costs, including an estimated **\$740 million** for deconstruction, ongoing maintenance and life-extension costs prior to closure, as well as additional unfunded regulatory risks such as potential toll subsidy liabilities.

While the Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) is being calculated as part of business case activity, current evidence and the established cost of the problem indicate that renewal is expected to return a strong positive economic outcome.



Bridge	Daily vehicles	2024 congestion (with Story Bridge)	2046 congestion (Story Bridge closed)
Story Bridge	100,000+	●●●●●●●●	-
Captain Cook Bridge	110,000+	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●
Gateway Bridge (toll)	130,000+	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●
William Jolly Bridge	25,000+	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●
Go Between Bridge (toll)	10,000+	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●
Clem 7 (toll)	32,000+	●●●●●●●●	●●●●●●●●



Without renewal



A new bridge is not an option

Business case investigations indicate that replacing the Story Bridge with a new structure is not a practical or realistic alternative to renewal.

Notwithstanding the heritage status of the Story Bridge, in a built-up inner-city environment a new bridge solution would create major challenges for alignment, property impacts, timing, cost and transport network performance.

Taken together, these issues point to renewal of the existing bridge as the most feasible path to preserve this critical connection and maintain its role in the lead-up to, and beyond, the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Alignment and city impacts

The Story Bridge sits in a dense inner-city environment. A new bridge on a different alignment is not feasible without catastrophic property impacts, resumptions and significant changes to the surrounding road network, which could undermine the bridge’s transport function. A new bridge of the same 6-lane and active transport capacity would need to be built to current technical standards, requiring an increase to the existing bridge width. On the existing alignment, this would result in significant property impacts on the southern approach.

Timing and Brisbane 2032

Timing is another major constraint. Current estimates suggest it would take around 2 years to decommission the existing bridge and around 6 years to construct a new one, in addition to more than 2 years for planning, approvals, funding and procurement.

This means a new bridge solution is not realistic before 2032. That matters because the Story Bridge is expected to play a major role as both a transport link and a city icon in preparation for, and during, the Games. Brisbane cannot reasonably be without this cross-river connection in the lead-up to or during the Games period, meaning any new bridge pathway could not begin in earnest until after 2032.

Cost and value for money

The cost of a new bridge would be enormous. Decommissioning the Story Bridge alone is estimated at **\$740 million** in nominal terms. Keeping the bridge safe and operating until 2033 would still require a further **\$102 million¹** in interim works and operating costs – money that would effectively be sunk if the bridge were then replaced. However, by this point renewal may no longer be a viable scenario due to deterioration progressing to a point where it is beyond saving, forcing the need for a costly new bridge. Building a new bridge on the same constrained inner-city alignment could cost more than **\$8.5 billion²**. For that level of investment, Brisbane would still face a geometrically constrained crossing with limited scope to increase capacity.

Why a new bridge is not the answer - key cost figures	
Interim works to 2033	\$102 million
Decommissioning cost 2033-2034 (nominal)	\$740 million
Estimated new bridge cost 2035-2040 (nominal)	\$8.5+ billion ²

Economic and network consequences

A new bridge would come with a heavy economic price. Brisbane would lose this vital cross-river link for more than 8 years, triggering widespread traffic disruption, longer travel times and major pressure across the road network. Indicative estimates put the economic impact at more than **\$7.3 billion²** over the life of the disruption. By comparison, renewal allows works to be staged while keeping the bridge operating and limiting the broader cost to the city.

Economic impact of a new bridge - key figures	
Estimated total economic impact over disruption period	\$7.3 billion ³
Expected duration of disruption	8+ years

Legal and regulatory impacts

A full decommissioning of the Story Bridge over an 8-year period (while a new bridge was built) would expose Council to potential toll subsidy liabilities. With the Story Bridge no longer operating, tolling on the Clem7 may need to be suspended which would require compensation to be paid to the concessionaire for lost revenue and associated costs.

Not in time for the Games

A new bridge could not be delivered by the Games in 2032.

See page 19 for footnotes

Next steps

Council will finalise the Story Bridge Renewal Business Case in the coming months. The work completed to date is clarifying the scale of renewal required and helping shape a coordinated, long-term pathway for preserving the bridge for future generations.

The finalisation of the business case will continue to be informed by international bridge and renewal experts, helping ensure it reflects global best practice alongside local knowledge and technical analysis.

In parallel, we will get a head start on delivery by working with industry to progress procurement, investigations and design work, so renewal activities are ready to commence once funding is secured from all levels of government.

Renewal timeline

- Council funding commitment
- Finalise business case
- Mid-2026**

Independent review of business case
Mid-to-late 2026

- Design and procurement
- Queensland Government endorsement of business case
- Business case submitted to Infrastructure Australia for national evaluation
- Funding request submitted to Australian Government
- Late 2026**

Australian Government budget announced
May 2027

Queensland Government budget announced
June 2027

Stage 1 renewal works commence
Late 2027 to 2032

Ongoing program of renewal works
Late 2032 and beyond

Keeping Brisbane moving

We are getting on with the job of renewing the Story Bridge, and backing its future with a \$135 million investment through to 2032 to deliver the priority works needed to ensure we can stand proudly in front of a global audience.

This investment is a clear demonstration of our commitment to protecting one of Brisbane’s most recognisable and internationally resonant symbols as the city heads toward a defining moment in its history. However, the future of the Story Bridge depends on sustained investment from all levels of government.

Our \$135 million commitment represents 10% of the current estimated cost of

renewal works required by 2032, with the balance of funding to be sought from the Federal and State governments.

An 80 / 10 / 10 funding split between the Australian Government, Queensland Government and Council is sought for the full renewal to ensure the Story Bridge continues to serve Brisbane, South East Queensland and the nation for another 100 years.



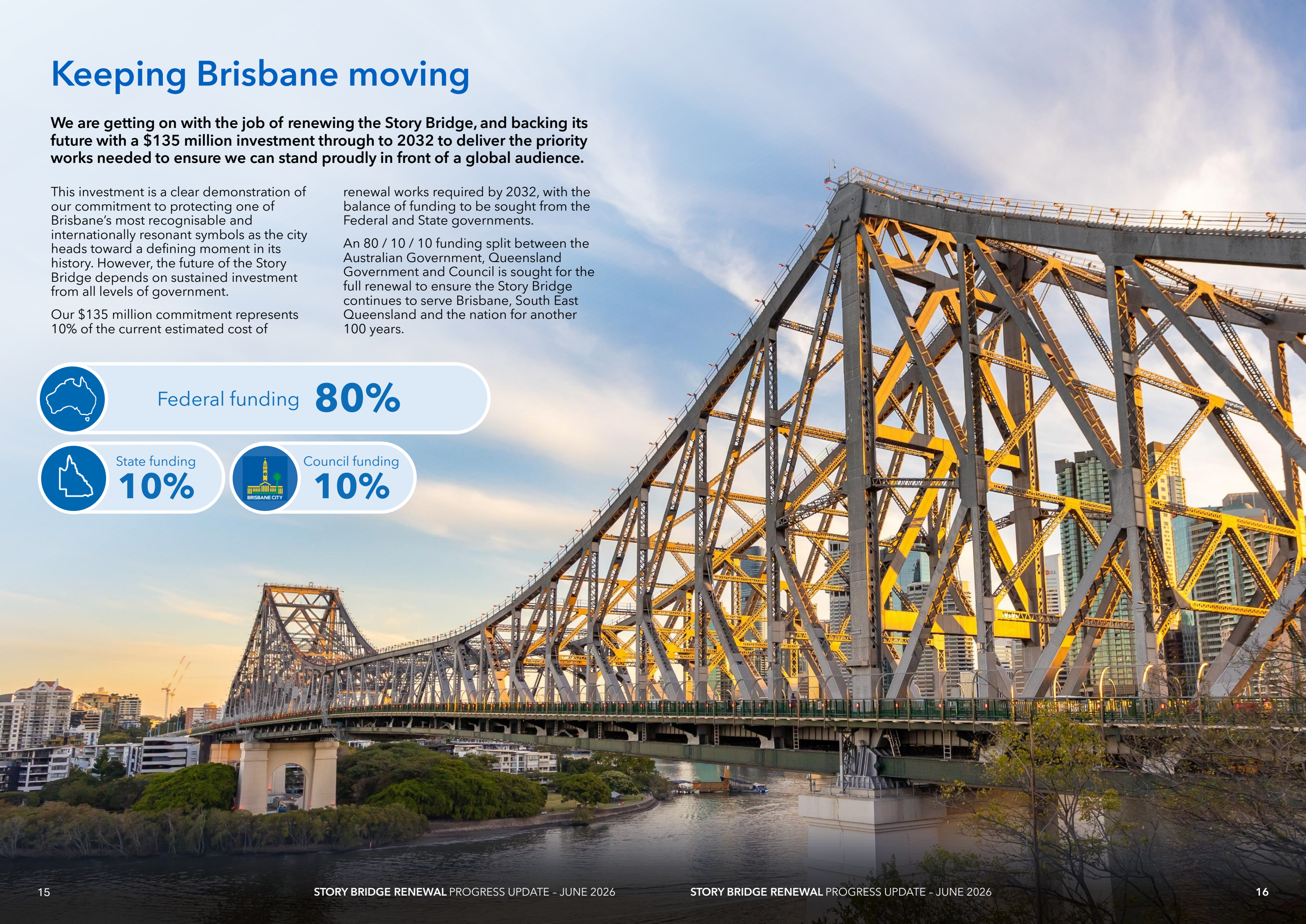
Federal funding **80%**



State funding **10%**



Council funding **10%**



The pathway to renewal

The Story Bridge delivers benefits well beyond Brisbane. The consequences of inaction would be felt across the wider South East Queensland network.

Given the scale, cost and regional significance of the works, renewal is a shared problem requiring a shared solution and can only be delivered through a partnership between all 3 levels of government.

The Australian Government has already recognised the broader significance of the project by contributing \$2.25 million toward development of the detailed business case. Council will continue to work with both the Queensland Government and Australian Government to secure a long-term funding partnership for the Story Bridge renewal.

Similar projects that have received funding

There are several recent examples of federally funded transport asset renewal and restoration projects.

Much like the Story Bridge renewal, these projects are focused on ageing asset renewal and preservation, where co-funding is the norm.

There are further examples of co-funded projects where end-of-life infrastructure assets are being replaced, and numerous examples of major road projects that have secured an 80% funding contribution from the Australian Government.

Project	State	Capital Cost	Funding split			Description
			Federal	State	Local	
Commonwealth Avenue Bridge Upgrade	ACT	\$137.5m	100	0	-	Asset renewal - aging bridge infrastructure
New Richmond Bridge and Traffic Improvements - Stage 2	NSW	Pending	86	14	0	Asset replacement - road upgrade and construction of a new bridge to replace an existing bridge that has flood resilience issues
Bruce Highway South Corridor Program: Bracken Ridge to Anzac Avenue	QLD	\$4,681m	80	20	0	Major road program of works. \$2,443m funding gap exists for future stages
Bruce Highway Upgrade: Goorganga Floodplain Upgrade	QLD	\$470m	80	20	0	Major road project to improve flood resilience, safety and connectivity of an existing asset facing maintenance issues and recurring closures
Rockhampton Ring Road	QLD	\$1,980m	71	29	0	Part of the Bruce Highway Upgrade Program, delivering flood resilience, safety improvements and congestion reduction. Original funding split of 80/20
Bridgewater Bridge	TAS	\$786m	80	20	0	Asset replacement - new 1.2km 4-lane bridge replacing ageing lift-span bridge (built 1946) to improve freight reliability, safety, and network efficiency

Footnotes

Page 12:

1. Interim works include replacement of end-of-life lighting, electrical and deck wearing surface, increased inspections, concrete diaphragm strengthening, localised concrete patching and repairs, localised steel touch-ups and repairs, maintenance of access equipment, washdowns and reactive maintenance.
2. High level estimate is provided to give an indication of the potential costs of building a new bridge in the location of the existing Story Bridge and should not be relied on for budgeting or funding purposes.
3. This analysis should be treated as indicative as there is no traffic modelling outputs developed where the Story Bridge fully closes in 2033.





Dedicated to a better Brisbane

Brisbane City Council
GPO Box 1434
Brisbane Qld 4001

Every effort is made to
ensure that information is
correct at time of printing

Printed on sustainable paper



IMAP-200000338-02-7617
©2026 Brisbane City Council

 brisbane.qld.gov.au
 3403 8888

 /BrisbaneCityCouncil
 @brisbanecityqld
 @brisbanecitycouncil