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Menu

Gold Coast Light Rail



The new Queensland Government supports the next stage of the Gold Coast's light rail project, hoping it will be built in time for the Commonwealth Games in April 2018.

And it may come at no cost to the Queensland Government over the next four years.

Stage two of the Gold Coast light rail project connects stage one – which runs between Southport and Broadbeach – out to the main Brisbane to Gold Coast rail line.

The previous government did not provide a commitment to have the project finished in time for the Games in April 2018.

Queensland's deputy premier, transport and infrastructure minister Jackie Trad said on Tuesday the Palaszczuk Government backed the project, which she has identified as "critical."

"Labor supports the extension of the light-rail system to connect with heavy rail at the northern end of the Gold Coast," Ms Trad said.

"The light-rail project has been an incredible success, thanks to the joint contributions from former State and Federal Labor Governments, as well as Gold Coast Council," she said.

Ms Trad said the Queensland Government and Gold Coast City Council have exchanged letters in the past fortnight about an alternative funding model for the project.

"I recognise that this project is critical to the Gold Coast, and I am working hard to explore all options available," she said.

"I have been corresponding with Gold Coast Council on the light rail extension, and have requested they provide the Department of Transport and Main Roads with documentation about their alternative funding proposal to assist with finalising planning work."

Ms Trad said she had also asked the federal government for help with rail infrastructure funding for the project, an issue raised in Brisbane on Tuesday by infrastructure economist Adrian Hart from infrastructure consultants, BIS Shrapnel.

"I also personally asked the Federal Minister for Infrastructure to consider funding for public transport infrastructure, such as the light rail extension, when I met with him recently," she said.

The \$1 billion stage one of the project received funding from all three levels of government.

The Bligh Queensland Government committed \$464 million, while the former Australian Government provided \$365 million.

Gold Coast City Council provided \$120 million to complete the construction phase.

Gold Coast Mayor Tom Tate said the Gold Coast City Council has promised to provide a similar 12 to 15 per cent to the \$600 million Stage 2.

Gold Coast City Council proposes to build stage two – out from Griffith University’s Southport campus – to Parkwood and Helensvale.

Earlier, Cr Tate said he and GoldLinq chairman, John Witheriff had explained their model to Commonwealth Games and tourism minister, Kate Jones, a fortnight ago.

GoldLinq is the private company that has the right to operate the Gold Coast light rail for 18 years.

“The design work is done, the engineering part is ticked off and we propose going from Griffith University up to Parkwood and then to Helensvale,” Cr Tate said.

“And John said it was ‘shovel ready’ from his point of view.”

Cr Tate said Mr Witheriff had explained that GoldLinq does not need state government funding for three years.

“He said with the financial funding, they do not need any funding for three years,” Cr Tate said.

“They can get it from the future cash flow.

“So it is not going to hurt Treasury at all.”

Cr Tate said the Gold Coast would prefer the connection ran to Helensvale, with a stop at Parkwood, effectively at the end of Smith Street at Southport.

Cr Tate, who is arguing with the state government over the future of a proposal to build cruise-ship terminal on a sand island in the mouth of Gold Coast Broadwater, welcomed the news from Ms Trad.

“The consistent message from the private sector is that they stand ready to deliver the next stage with no upfront cost to taxpayers – or ratepayers,” Cr Tate said.

“In my view this is the best possible outcome because it is a win for the operator, a win for commuters and a win for the government.”

* The state government stressed on Wednesday the extension would need council, state and federal funding.