Tuesday 14 June 2016

Joint Statement

More than half a billion dollars to pave way for Cross River Rail

The Palaszczuk Government will invest $634 million over the next eight years to fund a world-class rail signalling system – a critical first step to building Queensland’s number-one infrastructure project, Cross River Rail.

Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said the investment in a new European Train Control System (ETCS) would lay the foundation for the delivery of Cross River Rail and would improve rail capacity and safety in the inner city rail network.

“The Palaszczuk Government is investing in this project as an essential first step to delivering Cross River Rail – our number one infrastructure priority,” the Premier said.

“The new European Train Control System, subject to final approvals, will boost inner-city rail capacity by 20 per cent and allow an extra 12,000 people through the CBD each peak period.

“We are also investing $50 million next financial year to establish a Cross River Rail Delivery Authority to oversee the final planning and delivery of this project.

“This funding announcement is a clear commitment to Queenslanders that we are serious about delivering this crucial infrastructure project to ease congestion and unlock the economic potential of our state.”

Deputy Premier and Minister for Infrastructure Jackie Trad said once finalised, the updated business case for Cross River Rail would be provided to Infrastructure Australia to make the urgent case for Federal Government funding.

“Queensland cannot afford to delay Cross River Rail, which is why the Palaszczuk Government has said we are determined to make this project happen,” Ms Trad said.

“This announcement of establishment funding for a Delivery Authority sends a clear message to private enterprise, the Federal Government and local councils in South East Queensland that we’re going to forge ahead and it’s time for them get on board.

“The Cross River Rail Delivery Authority will be able to commence early works on the project including gaining environmental impact approvals, scoping of value share opportunities and commencing appropriate procurement activities.

“This today’s funding announcement lays the foundation for future investments in Cross River Rail. We will consider further contributions to this significant project once our independent infrastructure advisor, Building Queensland, provides final recommendations and the business case to government.”

Treasurer Curtis Pitt said the new ETCS would allow an extra 21 million commuters to move through the CBD by rail each year.
"The signalling system to be installed between Milton and Northgate stations will unlock urgently needed rail capacity through Brisbane’s CBD and support on average 120 jobs per year over the eight year implementation period," Mr Pitt said.

"ETCS will completely modernise the inner-city rail network, with state-of-the-art technology set to increase capacity, maximise rail safety and allow us to safely run trains closer together.

"An extra eight trains – four in each direction – every hour will increase core capacity by 20 per cent, which means there is the potential for an additional 12,000 people to be transported through the CBD during each peak period. Over the course of a year this means we will be able to move an extra 21 million commuters."

Minister for Transport Stirling Hinchliffe said every single train line on the South East Queensland City network merged into a single corridor through the CBD, with every service stopping at Roma Street, Central, Bowen Hills and Fortitude Valley stations.

"This new system will allow trains to move far more quickly through this bottleneck," Mr Hinchliffe said.

"The signalling technology will support safety through the inner-city, by providing an automatic braking system, ensuring a safe distance between trains and allowing them to travel closer together."

Mr Hinchliffe said ETCS was a critical project to boost inner-city capacity and address the demand for additional capacity on the rail network while Cross River Rail was being built.

"Rail demand is expected to double by 2026, and triple by 2036, yet our current rail system is approaching capacity and is expected to reach crush-capacity in five years by 2021," Mr Hinchliffe said.

"The new signalling system will revolutionise the way we are using our existing rail infrastructure, making it work harder and smarter, while increasing safety."

"This project will be delivered entirely by Queensland Rail and will bridge the looming capacity gap in our transport network."

Mr Hinchliffe said while the new state-of-the-art signalling system is an interim measure that optimises our existing rail infrastructure, a second rail river crossing is still the critical long term solution to unlock inner-city rail capacity.

"The only long term solution to South East Queensland’s transport needs is Cross River Rail," Mr Hinchliffe said.

"The $50 million funding allocation for the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority will establish the team we need to do the early works required on Cross River Rail – as well as progressing commitments from the Federal Government, local councils and private sector to partner with the State to deliver this crucial project."
The Cross River Rail Delivery Authority will be able to commence early works on the project including environmental impact approvals, scoping of value share opportunities, starting early works and commencing appropriate procurement activities.

Queensland Rail will manage the delivery of the ETCS project, which is expected to be operational from 2021.

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