



Speech by

Hon. Rachel Nolan

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Gold Coast Rapid Transit

Hon. RG NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Transport) (10.03 am): The Gold Coast is Queensland's second largest city and the Bligh government is committed to getting its public transport right. Not only have we boosted bus numbers and increased train services on the Gold Coast to help cater for massive growth in passenger numbers; we are extending the train line from Robina to Varsity Lakes. These are achievements that people on the Gold Coast can be proud of, but they almost pale into insignificance when it comes to the rapid transit project.

The Gold Coast Rapid Transit project has secured funding commitments worth almost a billion dollars from all levels of government. In less than 10 years, the rapid transit system will take 75,000 cars off the coastal strip every day while reducing local greenhouse gas emissions by 114,000 tonnes. Early works such as surveying will start this month, with construction commencing next year. This partnership reflects the common objective of the three levels of government: to build and deliver first-class infrastructure while providing local jobs and a stimulus to the Gold Coast economy.

The private sector has embraced the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project, too. Last Wednesday I opened an industry briefing on the project at the Gold Coast Convention Centre. Around 700 representatives from 400 different companies showed up to hear how they could be a part of the project. While the briefing attracted significant interest at national and international levels, I am pleased to inform the House that more than 75 per cent of the people attending the briefing were from Queensland registered companies and businesses. The successful bidders will be encouraged both to work with local companies and, most importantly, to employ local workers. The project is expected to generate 6,300 direct and indirect jobs for the local community. It will be a win for Gold Coast jobs and a win for Gold Coast public transport.

I would like to personally thank the industry representatives who attended the briefing. The people I spoke to were very positive about the project and very positive about the opportunities it could bring with it. We are committed to public transport right across South-East Queensland, and this project shows exactly what we can do when governments at all levels and businesses work together.