

News

Moreton Bay Rail Link expected to cut congestion by 600 cars for every full train

- **by: Robyn Ironside**
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Yvette D'Ath, Alan Sutherland Jason Spears (Theiss) and Scott Emerson at Thursday's announcement about the Moreton Bay Rail Link. Picture: Philip Norrish
Source: News Limited

HUNDREDS of cars could be taken off the Bruce Highway north of Brisbane when the long-awaited Moreton Bay Rail Link opens in late-2016.

The firm that built Brisbane Airportlink, Thiess Contractors, was yesterday awarded the \$1.1 billion contract to build the 12.6km rail line between Kippa-Ring, on the Redcliffe Peninsula, and Petrie.

Transport Minister Scott Emerson said each full train on the new line would take up to 600 cars off surrounding roads.

"This will help unlock congestion between the Redcliffe area and Brisbane, particularly along busy stretches of the Bruce Highway and Gateway Motorway," Mr Emerson said.

The Bruce Highway carries about 80,000 vehicles a day between Boundary Rd, at Deception Bay, and Brisbane.

RACQ's Paul Turner said it expected the Moreton Bay Rail Link to make a noticeable difference.

"Certainly rail is a significant contributor to improving congestion," Mr Turner said.

"Whereas many commuters see bus travel as a grudge purchase, rail directly replaces cars as a choice by commuters to get to work."

First mooted in 1894, the Moreton Bay Rail Link was finally funded as a result of a 2010 election promise by then Prime Minister Julia Gillard.

Mr Emerson yesterday acknowledged the \$742 million contribution by Canberra and said the state had pitched in \$300 million and Moreton Bay Regional Council \$105 million.

"This is a project that many people talked about in the past (and said) wouldn't occur," he said.

"I acknowledge three tiers of government working together."

Less certain is the proposed Cross River Rail project, which has become something of a political football between the State and Federal governments.

Although the May Federal Budget provided \$715 million for the \$5 billion rail crossing, Mr Emerson has rejected that on the basis it does not amount to a "genuine 50-50 partnership".

Federal Labor MP Yvette D'Ath yesterday condemned the State Government's stance and urged it to stop playing games.

"We gave them exactly (the funding) they asked for. So the question is why have they changed the goalposts?" Ms D'Ath said.

"Are they waiting for a change of government, because Tony Abbott has said he will not invest one dollar in urban rail across this country."

Mr Emerson said he was continuing to negotiate with the Federal Government and Coalition to obtain a better deal for Queensland on Cross River Rail.

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