SUCCESSFUL BIDDER NAMED TO CONSTRUCT & OPERATE GOLD COAST LIGHT RAIL

The company which will build and operate the $1 billion traffic-busting Gold Coast Rapid Transit network stretching from the new University Hospital to Broadbeach has today been announced.

Premier Anna Bligh said the successful bidder, GoldlinQ is a consortium which includes companies Keolis, Downer EDI, McConnell Dowell, Bombardier and Plenary - each with a proven track record of transport construction both within Australia and overseas.

Ms Bligh said they were chosen from three consortia shortlisted for Stage One of the project last year.

"Over the last year the government's project team has been pouring through 150 boxes of documents from the final three short listed bidders," Ms Bligh said.

"The end result is a public private partnership with GoldlinQ that will deliver light rail to the Gold Coast and more than 6,300 direct and indirect jobs.

"This is one of the biggest public transport projects in the country - and the first light rail project for Queensland - and when it's completed in 2014, it will give Gold Coast residents and visitors alike easy, hassle free commuting.

"It will transform the face of the Gold Coast City, which will boast the most modern public transport system in the country."

Ms Bligh said following the completion of road works later in the year construction of the light rail corridor will begin in earnest with track expected to be laid in the second half of 2012.

Stage One of the light rail project includes a 13 kilometre light rail corridor that will service the new Gold Coast University Hospital, Griffith University, Southport medical precinct and the fastest growing recreational centres of Southport, Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach.

Federal Infrastructure and Transport Minister Anthony Albanese said today's announcement is continuing proof the Gillard Labor Government is delivering on its commitments.
"When it comes to public transport infrastructure, the Gillard Labor Government means what it says and does what it promises," said Mr Albanese.

"What's more, funding for this project was provided as part of our recession-busting, job-creating Economic Stimulus Plan, the very initiative the Federal Coalition voted against and have consistently opposed ever since.

"Indeed if Steve Ciobo, Stuart Robert and their Liberal colleagues had got their way a light rail network on the Gold Coast would still be nothing more than a dream.

"Only the Gillard Labor Government has a plan to move our cities forward, one which recognises the task of renewing and expanding their public transport infrastructure requires a partnership between all the levels of government."

Queensland Transport Minister Annastacia Palaszczuk said early works for the project which started in August last year is progressing ahead of schedule despite 30 wet weather delays.

"In the not too distant future we will have a world class public transport system which will change the way people move around the coast," she said.

"I thank people for their patience while this work is continuing.

"To date more than $25 million has been invested in the local community sourcing labour and materials.

"This investment has directly and indirectly assisted a number of the city's major industries including construction and retail trade.

Gold Coast Mayor Ron Clarke said South East Queensland's population is expected to grow from 2.8 million to 4.4 million people by 2031 - an increase of 57 per cent.

"By that time we expect our population on the Gold Coast to be more than 800,000 people," he said.

"More people means more traffic but light rail is a high quality solution for coping with this growth and influencing the travelling habits of our residents.

"This project will create a lasting legacy for our city and help address key activity and growth in areas such as Southport, Surfers Paradise and Broadbeach."

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6 May 2011