

Transport plan sets 20-year course

A 20-year plan that would see the South East's rail passenger capacity triple by 2031 has been unveiled by Premier, Anna Bligh and Minister for Transport, Rachel Nolan.

Ms Bligh said *Connecting SEQ 2031: An Integrated Regional Transport Plan for South East Queensland*, mapped the way forward for the State's transport networks.

"*Connecting SEQ 2031* is a clear statement of intent. The next 20 years will see a concentration on new railways and new services to manage growth in our region," Ms Bligh said.

"This plan for a rail revolution in SEQ is the next stage of our journey towards an absolutely world class public transport system."

She said that when the integrated plan to build dedicated busways was first published in 1997 there was not a single kilometre of dedicated busway in the State.

"Today we have 24 kilometres of busway in Brisbane, more than any other city in Australia and more under construction right now," she said.

"This new plan is visionary, but I believe our experience with the busways shows that when you have a clear plan for the future you can make it happen."

She said the 20-year plan outlined 207 kilometres of new railway lines including a 15 kilometre rail line between Alderley and Strathpine; extensions to Maroochydore (38km), Coolangatta (17km), Moreton Bay Rail Link (12.6km), Springfield (16.5km), Ripley (13.5km) and Flagstone (31.5km) and an extension of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit project to Coolangatta.

Ms Bligh said the Cross River Rail project, now undergoing a \$25 million feasibility study, was a vital lynchpin for the future of rail travel.

"Cross River Rail will transform South East Queensland's rail network by providing essential capacity at the core of the network that could double the number of train services from the suburbs to the city," she said.

Ms Nolan said other important initiatives in *Connecting SEQ 2031* included ambitious targets for cycling in South East Queensland, including a 3,000km network of cycleways by 2031; plans to remove heavy vehicles from suburban roads and provide a 'ring road' system around Brisbane and continuing the busway network with construction of the Northern and Eastern Busways to Bracken Ridge and Capalaba.