



Speech by

Hon. STEVE BREDHAUER

MEMBER FOR COOK

Hansard 3 March 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Brisbane Light Rail Project

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (9.59 a.m.), by leave: The Brisbane Light Rail Project recently reached another significant milestone. On 24 February 1999, expressions of interest were called for the project. This follows the recent confirmation of Federal funding and the completion of a public consultation process. Brisbane light rail will provide a modern, state-of-the-art public transport system for inner Brisbane. Cabinet has determined to proceed with the light rail project after axing the ill-conceived Briztram, which had been initiated by the previous Government. Briztram was wound up by Cabinet on 28 July 1998, due to a number of factors including its inability to integrate with the heavy rail system, its failure to embrace the most modern technology trends and community concerns regarding the proposed route. There were also community concerns over the consultation process.

Commonwealth funding for the new Brisbane Light Rail Project of \$65m was announced by the Federal Minister for Transport and Regional Services, John Anderson, on 25 January 1999. Public consultation on the light rail project was undertaken between 9 December 1998 and 12 February 1999. This consultation included public displays, meetings with local residents and stakeholder groups, an information office and web site and newsletters distributed to over 27,000 households living in the vicinity of the project. Key issues identified during this consultation included—

- the proposed route;
- the impacts on traffic; and
- the impacts on kerbside uses such as parking, loading zones, taxi ranks and bus stops.

A number of further detailed planning studies are currently under way including—

- a detailed Planning and Preliminary Impact Assessment Study;
- Demand Forecasting Study; and
- Financial Analysis Study.

These planning studies are scheduled to be completed by April 1999. Options for a modern light rail system for Brisbane have been developed in close consultation with the Brisbane City Council.

The proposed light rail system will now be fully integrated with other transport modes. This will be achieved through the use of—

narrow gauge track compatible with the existing Queensland Rail system to allow for possible future extensions onto heavy rail by light rail; joint use of heavy rail track is a feature of successful recent light rail systems in France and Germany;

station locations as close as possible to other existing transport terminals including current bus and ferry stops, Queensland Rail stations, and proposed busway stations; and

a seamless integrated ticketing system featuring smartcard technology will enable passengers to travel on Queensland Rail, Brisbane Transport, and Brisbane Light Rail services using a single ticket. This will resolve one of the greatest single impediments to public transport integration in Brisbane.

Significant features of the system are—

the proposed project consists of an 11.2 kilometre track network built on street;

the system will connect to all major destinations within the inner city including the central business district, Fortitude Valley, Royal Brisbane Hospital, the Exhibition grounds, Roma Street Transit Centre, the QUT Gardens Point campus, South Bank Parklands, the cultural centre precinct in South Brisbane, and West End;

the use of modern low-floor vehicles will allow the easiest possible passenger access;

light rail stops will be on raised platforms to ensure that the aged or people with a disability will be able to conveniently use the system;

modern electric vehicles with traction control and regenerative braking technology will achieve high energy efficiency and reduced greenhouse gas emissions in the inner city; and

wherever possible the light rail system will run on track separated from normal traffic lanes, which will be shared with buses in some locations. This will reduce safety concerns, and make the system fast and reliable.

Technical advice indicates that CBD traffic changes can be accommodated with improvements to the current road system including updated traffic signal operation and coordination. The preferred network includes links to the QUT Gardens Point campus and South Bank Parklands, which were not previously included in Briztram. The project is proposed to be delivered by a build, own, operate and transfer method of delivery with joint public/private sector funding. Prospective consortia were briefed on the project on 28 January 1999 and 23 February 1999. The total construction cost has been estimated at approximately \$235m with all levels of government, Federal, State and local, making a contribution to the project. This will generate significant job opportunities for Queenslanders.

The project will be developed in two stages with Stage 1 to be completed in 2001 to coincide with the centenary of Federation. I anticipate construction of the light rail system will start as early as the first half of next year. The evidence from many other cities around the world is that modern light rail systems encourage an increase in the use of public transport, and contribute to the revitalisation of city centres. This project will make a significant contribution towards achieving the targets of the State's Integrated Regional Transport Plan for south-east Queensland, and it will enhance Brisbane's image as a livable city.
