




Speech By
Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Record of Proceedings, 13 October 2015

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Gold Coast Light Rail

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Premier and Minister for the Arts) (9.44 am): There is no infrastructure project more important to the Gold Coast region than the continued extension of the city's light rail. It was a Labor government that delivered stage 1 of the landmark transport system, and today I am delighted to inform all members of the House that the light rail second stage is on track to be delivered in time for the Commonwealth Games after my government successfully lobbied the new Prime Minister for Commonwealth funding. All three levels of governments—state, federal and the Gold Coast City Council—are now committed to fund the extension.

Together with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, I announced the funding agreement to progress this key piece of infrastructure on Sunday. Unlike his predecessor, Mr Turnbull considers the project to be one of national significance and he has been quick to commit \$95 million to the extension of the light rail from the Gold Coast University Hospital to Helensvale. That Commonwealth support, in addition to \$55 million from the Gold Coast City Council, ensures that the project will now go ahead with state government support, which we are currently assessing through a tender process. Once again I want to place on record my thanks and congratulations to Mr Turnbull for casting politics aside so that we can kickstart the project, which will support up to 1,000 jobs during construction.

My dealings with the Prime Minister have been very refreshing, and I want to cooperate with him in the hope that we can foster a new era in state-federal relations. I very much welcome his commitment to better cities and funding public transport infrastructure.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Mr Speaker, they obviously do not want to hear about this new era of cooperation.

Mr SPEAKER: Order, members! Please! I call the Premier.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Until now the major obstacle in funding stage 2 of the light rail was the Commonwealth's lack of support. My deputy, Jackie Trad, and the tourism minister, Kate Jones, lobbied long and hard and publicly to make the light rail stage 2 a reality. Now that a funding agreement has been secured, my government will be able to appoint a preferred contractor early next year after tenders close on 23 December.

This project is a pacesetter, sound investment for the Gold Coast's future. It will set the Gold Coast up for boundless future tourism opportunities. It will offer Gold Coast residents connectivity between the light and heavy rail systems all the way from Broadbeach to Brisbane. Importantly, it delivers for the Commonwealth Games and Queensland's opportunity to shine on the international stage.