




Speech By  
**Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe**

**MEMBER FOR SANDGATE**

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### **CROSS RIVER RAIL DELIVERY AUTHORITY BILL**

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Transport and the Commonwealth Games) (10.44 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority Bill 2016. The Cross River Rail project, when built, will not only transform the South-East Queensland public transport network for the better by making it easier and more efficient to travel in this growing region but help our state reap numerous economic benefits. A report from the Australian Senate's Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport References Committee in 2014 outlines a series of economic benefits from effective and efficient public transport—namely, connecting wealth and labour to the marketplace; removing productivity bottlenecks; and maximising opportunities for individuals, business and government to increase income and asset value. Make no mistake, this project will transform the region, and, in line with the remarks in the Senate report, and countless others, it will create jobs, better housing and increased productivity for the region.

The investment in Cross River Rail is not just an investment in critical rail infrastructure, which we desperately need; the project will unlock the city of Brisbane's potential so it becomes a more attractive, vibrant and connected place to live, work and play. In his *Quarterly Essay* earlier this year, George Megalogenis described investment in transport infrastructure as one of the magic keys of policy to unlock our potential. There is no doubt that Cross River Rail will be a magic key to unlock the potential of our city and our state.

I would also like to address the benefits of this project to my own electorate on behalf of my constituents in the electorate of Sandgate. You may wonder, Madam Deputy Speaker, how this affects an electorate such as mine, 15-or-so kilometres from the Brisbane CBD, and whether the river crossing would be required. We are all aware that the population of South-East Queensland is growing rapidly. By 2041, the population of greater Brisbane will have swelled by around two million people to 5.3 million. My electorate has a number of booming suburbs contributing to this growth, such as Fitzgibbon, Taigum and Bracken Ridge served by the north coast line. Of course, there is continued growth in infill and suburbs in my electorate served by the Shorncliffe line, such as Sandgate, Shorncliffe, Deagon and Brighton. With this booming population, we need to have reliable and efficient public transport to support it, as many of these people will have to commute to the CBD or to the inner-southern suburbs.

This ever-increasing flow of people will place additional pressure on a rail system that is already bursting at the seams, particularly with only one rail crossing over the Brisbane River. What is needed is not just extra services. What is needed is a better integration of land use, infrastructure and transport. What is needed is smarter, more efficient and better connected services. That is why Cross River Rail is critical to Queensland's future. Cross River Rail will ease rail congestion by doubling capacity across the Brisbane River and through the CBD from the south and it will expand the network for future growth. It will provide new or upgraded stations for the inner city's key employment and urban renewal areas, at Woolloongabba, Bowen Hills, Roma Street, Albert Street, the Exhibition and Boggo Road.

The Palaszczuk government believes that Cross River Rail is the infrastructure solution to meet the demands of our growing population. The Turnbull LNP government at a federal level has committed to its implementation as an indication of their agreement in relation to the importance of this project.

The LNP Lord Mayor and Deputy Mayor have also expressed their backing of the project, and they have done that in person to me and made it very clear that they see that this is important for the city and the city's growth. It appears that it is only some in this chamber who fail to understand the benefits.

A project of this significance, as with any piece of critical infrastructure, comes with a price tag. As a result, the state must work with our federal and council counterparts as well as the private sector to get the funding for this project. Establishment of an independent statutory authority provides the appropriate cover and certainty to lift this above political life, as has been one of the challenges in the past when the Newman government scrapped the shovel-ready previous iteration.

This government is in it for the long haul. As such we want to open up a number of funding avenues. Value capture was explored as part of the business case for the Cross River Rail project because it is a requirement of the Commonwealth government's principles for innovative financing. I want to make it abundantly clear to the House that the Queensland government has not yet made any decisions about whether value-sharing mechanisms should be used to help fund the Cross River Rail project. These federally imposed principles require that assessment of proposals include consideration of 'what proportion of the project can be funded by the beneficiaries of the infrastructure through targeted contributions and what proportion of the project should be funded by the broader community'.

I turn to the substance of the bill, which establishes the delivery authority for this vital project. As stated in the explanatory notes, the delivery authority will be an independent statutory body, operating on a commercial basis, with the power to acquire land connected to the Cross River Rail project and associated prescribed 'transport related projects'. The important part of this statutory body is that it will operate distinctly from the political vagaries of the day, with an independent board, but it will still be subject to oversight from the Queensland government. This way it will be an accountable body but free from political interference. This government wants it to be got on with and we want it to be built. Cross River Rail will no longer be a political football.

We have seen delivery authorities used as a mechanism for undertaking infrastructure projects not only in Australia but around the world. Similar bodies have been established for the Barangaroo redevelopment in Sydney and for Crossrail and HS2, projects in the United Kingdom. When the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority is established by this bill there will be an enabling of collective decision-making, bringing on board the possibility of Commonwealth and local government funding, separate from political cycles at those levels of government as well.

This bill will provide certainty to the project and to the commuters who rely upon it. As such, I commend the bill to the House.