Queensland Budget: $2 billion for Cross River Rail

Sarah Vogler & Steven Wardill, The Courier-Mail
June 13, 2017 12:00am
Subscriber only

- Labor’s ticket to poll hopes
- Metro, Cross River Rail in funding pitch
- Palaszczuk: PM’s funding excuses don’t add up

THE State Government will today signal it is prepared to go it alone on Cross River Rail by adding a further $2 billion towards the much vaunted project.

*The Courier-Mail* can reveal today’s State Budget will allocate the extra $2 billion to kick-start the project, taking the state’s contribution to almost $3 billion.
The massive funding injection still leaves a hole of about $2.5 billion to build the inner-city Brisbane rail link between Dutton Park and Bowen Hills, which includes three new underground stations.

Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk yesterday took another swipe at Mr Turnbull for not guaranteeing Commonwealth funds over the project. The State Government will leave the door open for future federal contributions and deals with the private sector or a combination of the two. However, it is understood the Government will indicate that it is prepared to go it alone on the 10.2km link, which has been mooted for more than a decade.
Cross River Rail, seen in green. Additional cash from coal prices, GST receipts and wholesale energy costs, as well as lower government-sector debt, has helped the Government boost infrastructure spending in today’s Budget after two years of subdued capital investment.

The Federal Government has so far refused to commit any more than the $10 million it has already allocated to Cross River Rail, raising concerns with the business case undertaken by Building Queensland. Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has not ruled out allocating money in future years from a promised $10 billion national rail fund, should it decide CRR does stack up.

Federal Labor has pledged to help fund CRR, should it win the next federal election, due in 2019.

Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk yesterday took another swipe at Mr Turnbull for not guaranteeing Commonwealth funds.

“All I am getting is roadblock after roadblock after roadblock,” she said.

“We are not seeing Malcolm Turnbull come to the party when it comes to our number one project, Cross River Rail. What we need once again is we need the Federal Government to put some money into Cross River Rail.
“We will not give up on that fight. We will continue to fight for Queensland and we will continue to fight for our fair share.”

The Government has argued Cross River Rail is needed after 2021 when Brisbane’s only southbound rail river crossing, the William Jolly Bridge, will reach capacity.

Infrastructure Minister Jackie Trad had previously hoped construction could start as early as this year on the project, which she previously said was “shovel ready”.

Treasurer Curtis Pitt will today also announce that the Government will cap future rises in fees and charges, such as vehicle registration, to inflation.

It follows several years of above-inflation increases at 3.5 per cent.

The change will come into force from July 1, 2018, following the next state election.