

Cross River Rail locked in for 2024

**SARAH VOGLER
DARYL PASSMORE**

ANNASTACIA Palaszczuk has declared commuters will be travelling on Brisbane's new underground in 2024 after the State yesterday locked in the future of its \$5.4 billion Cross River Rail project on the eve of the Federal Election.

The Premier revealed the State had chosen the successful bidders to build the 10.2km rail line, which includes 5.9km twin tunnel and four new underground stations.

Ms Palaszczuk said Pulse consortia would deliver the tunnel and new underground stations in a public-private partnership with the State while Unity will deliver the design, supply and installation of the supporting rail system.

Hitachi Rail will look after the European Train Control System to be used with the project. Financial close is now expected by mid-year meaning tunnelling could begin by next year.



"By the end of the year the old (Roma Street) transit centre ... will come down and you will see work commence at Albert Street," Ms Palaszczuk said. "It will allow an extra 18,000 seats into Brisbane during the morning peak across all lines. But what is absolutely critical about this project is the travel times that commuters will save.

"They will save 15 minutes on the Gold Coast line, 15 minutes on the Beenleigh line, eight minutes on the Caboolture line, eight minutes on the Redcliffe line and 14 minutes on the Cleveland line."

Deputy Premier Jackie

Trad (pictured with the Premier) said work would now begin to reach financial close with the successful bidders so further work could begin.

"We anticipate tunnelling to start in late 2020. It all depends on the final financial close and all of the particular elements," she said.

Ms Trad said conversations in relation to the Brisbane Live development proposed for the Roma Street site in tandem with Cross River Rail were continuing with the government yet to consider a business case for the development which would include a 17,000-seat arena at the site.

A spokesman for the Opposition yesterday indicated they would not rip up the contracts should they win Government at the next State Election in less than 19 months' time.

"Labor cannot even run the current train system but the LNP is not in the business of ripping up contracts," he said,