

EDITORIAL
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Cross River Rail will change the game

WHEN it comes to transformational projects for Brisbane, it doesn't get much bigger than the Cross River Rail (CRR). In fact, as fresh, new details were released over the weekend, it seems CRR will not only provide commuters with faster, easier options to get around, but the economic stimulus is clear to see.

CRR is much more than travelling on trains. As is seen in Japan, train stations are a hive of passenger activity and they have become commercial hubs.

The Brisbane project will spawn separate entertainment, health, housing, medical and cultural hubs for locals and international visitors.

It will also complement the private investment that is being pumped into projects such as Queen's Wharf.

Brisbane Live, the world-class entertainment precinct, is now part of CRR, which makes sense.

It is another strong feature in Queensland's 2032 Olympic bid.

If Queensland wants to win the Olympics, it must demonstrate that our transport infrastructure is world-class.

Winning the Olympics would speed up major infrastructure projects and CRR is the game-changer. It connects people in a way that is revolutionary certainly by Australian standards.

Of course, the Government is having to deal with the buffoonery of the CFMEU as it tries to extract the same deal it did with the Star Entertainment Group for Queen's Wharf. It was the Australian Workers' Union who struck a very lucrative deal with CRR bosses, guaranteeing workers averages of \$190,000 a year.

But this was not good enough for the CFMEU. It wanted an extra \$50,000 a year for its workers, plus a 5 per cent annual wage increase.

The Government must stick to its guns on wage deals with the CFMEU. They are an opportunistic union with a terrible record of industrial unlawfulness.

Queenslanders want this Labor Government to stare down the CFMEU. CRR is the project to do that. We cannot afford cost blowouts to this project, especially with the parlous nature of the state's finances and spiralling debt.

Nevertheless, we must appreciate the fact that CRR is a once-in-a-generation project that will make Brisbane a true world-class city.

The CRR train stations are proposed for the Exhibition precinct, Roma St, Albert St, Woolloongabba and Boggo Rd. Health, science, education and research precincts will be created as a result of the new cutting-edge station around Boggo Rd, while the Albert St station will transform much of the CBD.

It will also signal the next wave of development and private investment for the city. That is so important because Queensland's economic narrative has stalled in recent years.

Getting greater private investment into Queensland is vital to bringing renewed economic growth, especially with global fiscal conditions tightening.

Queensland has struggled on its fiscal narrative in recent years under Labor. The fact that Labor has put on so many public servants has hurt the bottom line.

There is nothing wrong with extra public servants, as long as they are in front-line services.

CRR will go a long way towards putting our economic credentials back on track. It needs to be given every opportunity to succeed - and that includes the CFMEU being responsible in the way it negotiates its workplace agreements.