



Roma Street tunnel site engineer Fioretti Sazali inside the Cross River Rail tunnel; future Roma Street Station (inset top) and the Roma Street tunnel site this month.

Digging no daily grind

DAN KNOWLES

A HUGE swath of land around Roma St will be transformed with the demolition of the old train station towers and their replacement with what has been dubbed Brisbane's Grand Central Station.

The first spoil from the \$5.4bn underground tunnelling has been bored from under Roma Street in the past week, creating access for what will become a 5.9km twin train tunnel.

The Cross River Rail Delivery Authority has released the first photos from inside the access tunnel, where a

road-header machine is boring through some of the toughest rock under Brisbane – Neranleigh Fernvale stone.

The 115-tonne, 22m-long road header can grind out 50 tonnes of rock an hour, boring out the cavern 18m below ground that will hold the twin underground platforms.

But it is above ground that will first catch the eye, with 32ha of land to be redeveloped around the new station.

The hunt is on for the best ideas and tenants for the area, with the CRRDA in talks with potential developers to transform the area on the CBD's western edge between Count-

ess, Roma and Albert streets, College Road and Parkland Boulevard, and state government land between Roma, Makerston and May streets.

The Courier-Mail, in conjunction with the CRRDA, is presenting a series looking at the project and what it will bring to the state.

CRRDA tunnels, stations and development project director Jeremy Kruger said the Roma Street Transit centre building – touted as one of Brisbane's least-loved buildings before demolition began – would make way for an interchange that would include the underground connected

to the rest of the rail network and Airtrain as well as buses, long-distance trains and the new Brisbane Metro.

The area surrounding the new station – which is projected to handle 46,000 people each weekday by 2036 – is a blank canvas.

"There's a lot of land there that provides a fantastic opportunity for Brisbane to really develop ... the western gateway to the CBD and turn it into a really impressive precinct," Mr Kruger said.

"Whether it is Brisbane Live, commercial, retail, leisure, mixed use, it is an exciting site halfway between

Suncorp Stadium and the CBD."

More than 7700 people will work on Cross River Rail over the five years of construction, with 400 local suppliers signed up and more than 160 apprentice and traineeship positions filled of 450 to be created.

Cross River Rail is a 10.2km rail line from Dutton Park to Bowen Hills, which includes 5.9km of twin tunnels under the Brisbane River and Brisbane CBD. Work has begun on four new underground stations at Boggo Road, Woolloongabba, Albert Street and Roma Street.