

The 4548 meeting of the Brisbane City Council, Tuesday 20 February 2018

Councillor TOOMEY: Thank you, Madam Chairman. My question is to the LORD MAYOR. The Brisbane Metro is making great strides with our business case now being assessed by Infrastructure Australia. Can you please update the Chamber on the progress of the Brisbane Metro project?

Chairman: LORD MAYOR.

LORD MAYOR: Thank you very much, Madam Chairman, and I thank Councillor TOOMEY for the question. Well, Madam Chairman, it is the case that this Council last year, in fact, sent to Infrastructure Australia an initial business case, and then later in the year updated that business case for consideration by Infrastructure Australia and the board when it considers projects across Australia in terms of a priority listing around those projects.

Madam Chairman, the Brisbane Metro, when we first announced it, had what is called a benefit cost ratio of 1.91. At that time we assessed that on what is called the 10% discount rate. But projects across Australia under assessment are assessed on a seven per cent discount rate. So what that meant is that the project on a seven per cent discount rate goes to a benefit cost ratio of 2.37.

Now, you might say well, what does that mean in the scheme of things? Well, Madam Chairman, for a public transport project, that is an extremely high benefit cost ratio. It means for every dollar of investment in the project, there is a return to the community of \$2.37. If you, say, do some comparisons in terms of other projects—let's go to the Gold Coast light rail which is much hailed, Madam Chairman, it has a benefit cost ratio of 1.91. The Cross River Rail project has a benefit cost ratio in its latest iteration of 1.41. The Sydney Metro was 1.20, and the Melbourne Metro at 1.10.

So, Madam Chairman, as far as public transport projects go, it is an extremely high benefit cost ratio. Now, Madam Chairman, this project, as you know, is this Administration's key project because we believe that it is essential in terms of addressing bus congestion in our city, particularly at those crunch points of the Cultural Precinct and Victoria Bridge. Madam Chairman, we believe also that it is important to provide better-quality services to gain more attraction for people to catch public transport in Brisbane.

The benefit of this project is that it provides for a three-minute frequency in the peak, five minutes off-peak, and 10 minutes at night, operating 24 hours a day on Friday and Saturday nights, and 20 hours a day from Sunday to Thursday. Madam Chairman, apart from the fact that it produces a 30% travel time improvement in the morning peak and 50% in the afternoon peak, it is a connector—two Metros, as we know; Metro 1, Madam Chairman, from Herston through to the University of Queensland, and Metro 2 from Roma Street to Eight Mile Plains. So it takes in hospital and medical research precincts. It takes in educational institutions, student accommodation and precincts in education. It takes in knowledge base sectors, and then it takes in high technology precincts as well.

So, Madam Chairman, apart from the great public transport opportunities that come from this project, it also presents an economic driver, an opportunity for clustering of industries to occur and for job opportunities to arise out of that. Madam Chairman, there has been some previous attempts to get a project of this sort up. We started with the Suburbs to City link project back in 2013. We put forward a proposal, the need for a cross-river connection and, Madam Chairman, that was proposed initially

by way of another bus bridge. That wasn't to be. The Bus and Train project was then put together, Madam Chairman, with a change of government, and that again saw that put on the backburner with change of government.

So, Madam Chairman, I think we are now, though, in a position where we have a broad support in relation to this project. That's been instanced by two things. The first was a joint piece of work, *Connecting Brisbane*, which showed how Cross River Rail and that of the Brisbane Metro work together, a joint piece of work by the Queensland Government and Brisbane City Council for the Commonwealth or Australian Government.

Madam Chairman, on top of that, and importantly within the regional plan which was approved by the State Government late last year, approved by State Cabinet, the number two project listing within the priority region-shaping infrastructure is that of Brisbane Metro. So, Madam Chairman, we have a joint collaboration in terms of the project, but like all projects, we work together on the detail.