

Gold Coast Light Rail



Australia and New Zealand

Transport

Stage 1 of the Gold Coast Light Rail project consists of 14 vehicles and 16 stations servicing a 13 kilometre route between the Gold Coast University Hospital and Broadbeach; part of one of the fastest growing regions in Australia.

This is Queensland's first light rail system and is considered more than just a transport project but also a city-building project to support sustainable development, reduce congestion and improve connectivity between major activity centres on the Gold Coast.

Project facts		
Location Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia	Client Queensland Government	Value (NVP) A\$1.2 billion
Our role Equity investor Financial adviser Commercial advisor	Builder McConnell Dowell Constructors (Aust.) Pty Ltd	Lead engineer Bombardier Transportation Australia Pty Ltd
Maintenance KDR2 Gold Coast Pty Ltd	Financial close June 2011	Completion date July 2014
Services commenced July 2014	Contract terms Design, build, finance, operate and maintain for 18 years	Stage 2 value A\$420 million
Stage 2 builder CPB Contractors	Stage 2 lead engineer CPB Contractors	Stage 2 financial close April 2016
Stage 2 completion date December 2017	Stage 2 services commenced December 2017	Stage 3 value \$1.2 billion
Stage 3 builder John Holland	Stage 3 financial close March 2022	Awards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silver, Best Operational Project – Transport, 2020 Partnerships Awards • Government Partnership Excellence, 2018 Infrastructure Partnerships Australia National Infrastructure Awards
Project website www.goldlinq.com.au		

Plenary Group is part of the GoldlinQ consortium selected by the Queensland Government to design, build, finance, operate and maintain a light rail public transportation system.

Construction on Stage 1 commenced in early 2012 and the first passengers boarded the light rail in July 2014.

The G:link network has since made more than 85 million passenger trips and travelled more than 15 million kilometres.

Stage 2 consists of 7.3 kilometres of dual track and an additional four trams to connect the Gold Coast University Hospital light rail station to the Helensvale heavy rail station, creating a one-transfer journey between the Gold Coast and Brisbane.



Design features

The trams that service the route are Bombardier Flexity Gold Coast Trams that have been designed to travel at up to 70km/hr.

Standing 3.4 metres high, 2.65 metres wide and 43.5 metres long they are bi-directional with a cab at each end.

Designed for a passenger capacity of 309 people, the trams feature air conditioning, wheelchair and multipurpose areas and surfboard racks.

Innovations

The tendering of Stage 1 – during a time of significant financial market constraint following the 2008 global financial crisis necessitated innovation in the development of an efficient financial structure.

Plenary coordinated the group of exclusively foreign banks and Canadian export credit agency EDC on behalf of GoldlinQ. The outcome was a senior debt package that extended for the full term of the project, significantly mitigating risks associated with a refinance.

GoldlinQ also called for careful commercial and contractual structuring to ensure the delivery and operational model was robust enough to support a PPP financing structure. This was done in a way that still afforded significant flexibility to the State around operational models and future expansion of the network.

In 2015, the Queensland Government requested an Operator Franchise Initiated Modification process begin to initiate the procurement of Stage 2. Plenary coordinated and implemented an innovative financing structure with minimal refinancing risk that involved senior lenders (all of which were foreign banks), multiple State Contributions as well as domestic and international equity investors.

Stage 2 also required innovative structuring and contractual arrangements to ensure appropriate separation of Stage 1 (already in operations) during the construction phase of Stage 2, with both stages then combining into an integrated expanded network upon Stage 2 completion.

Extending the light rail will greatly improve livability and ease congestion while supporting economic growth in the area.

Local economic impacts

Job creation

Some 390 new positions were directly engaged by GoldlinQ in the delivery of Stage 1, and 140 new ongoing jobs were required to run the light rail system.

Through works packages tendered out by GoldlinQ, Stage 1 created some 6,000 direct and indirect jobs for Queensland.

Stage 2 is expected to generate up to 1,000 direct and indirect jobs to the construction industry during the two-year construction period.

Similar to Stage 1, CPB Contractors are required to engage local workers and businesses for the entire project

Urban renewal

The project generated a number of social, environmental and economic benefits for the city including; reducing greenhouse gas emission by 114,000 tonnes over the first 10 years of operation, reducing the number of private vehicle trips by up to 10 per cent,

and providing a frequent, affordable and reliable alternative to car travel, contributing to a fully-integrated public transport system for the Gold Coast.

Stage 2 will have the capacity to carry 3,000 passengers per hour and will supply an additional 1400 spaces at two Park and Ride facilities.