



PRIME MINISTER

56/92

GOLD COAST RAILWAY SITE INSPECTION

The Prime Minister, Mr Keating, the Queensland Premier, Mr Goss and the State Transport Minister, Mr Hamill, today conducted the first site inspection of the \$300 million Gold Coast Railway.

They inspected earthworks at Helensvale, north of the Gold Coast, where the track bed for the new railway is being prepared.

The new Brisbane-Gold Coast link is scheduled to carry its first services in 1995 - some 30 years after the original rail link was closed by the Coalition State Government.

Mr Keating and Mr Goss announced that preliminary works worth more than \$20 million were progressing or about to commence.

Included in this figure are:

- . earthworks at Lake Coombabah, next to Helensvale (\$2.75 million of works on a 2 kilometre site);
- . a road-over-rail bridge on the Pacific Highway at Staplyton, near Beenleigh (valued at \$2.5 million);
- . earthworks on a 20-kilometre section of the railway between the Albert and Coomera Rivers (valued at \$7 million);
- . a rail bridge over Main Street, Beenleigh (valued at \$2.3 million);
- . a road-over-rail bridge contract at Nielsens Road, Carrara (valued at \$560,000);
- . earthworks on a 5-kilometre section at Merrimac, near the site of the Robina station (contract to be awarded shortly, valued at \$6.2 million).

The establishment of the new rail link, at a total cost of \$330 million, is being funded jointly by the Queensland and Federal Governments.

The Federal Government will contribute up to \$58.5 million under the Building Better Cities program and a further \$15 million will contribute to the Kuraby - Beenleigh section under the Commonwealth's Urban Public Transport program.

Mr Keating said his visit to inspect work on the railway underlined the Federal Government's commitment to the project.

"The decision to close the original rail link was extremely short-sighted.

"The Gold Coast-Brisbane region has been growing into one of Australia major urban agglomerations, yet this development has had to take place without appropriate public transport.

The environmental benefits of this major public transport facility will be considerable.

"The Federal Government sees the benefit, as I outlined in the One Nation statement, of using rail links to unite the nation and helping it to work more efficiently and to better environmental effect.

"There is no better place to start than replacing the valuable infrastructure on the Gold Coast which was, in effect, vandalised 30 years ago by a short-sighted coalition government."

Mr Goss said the project also represented a huge capital investment in urban public transport infrastructure which is generating major employment and income for the region.

"This project has provided hundreds of jobs at a time when those jobs are truly needed," Mr Goss said.

"We are not just making work for the sake of work. We are building a major project to benefit Queensland well into the next century."

Mr Hamill said the Gold Coast railway would restore a vital transit link between Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

"This project will resurrect a link built with foresight more than a hundred years ago, and the ripped up unceremoniously by the National-Liberal State Government three decades ago," he said.

"We promised in 1989 to rebuild this important rail link, and that promise is being fulfilled."

Helensvale,
June 5, 1992.