

Queensland Legislative Assembly	
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Cross River Rail: Infrastructure Australia rejects project for priority funding

BY CHRIS O'BRIEN AND STAFF

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PHOTO The Cross River Rail proposes a rail link from Dutton Park to Bowen Hills.

ABC NEWS: NIC MACBEAN

Infrastructure Australia (IA) has panned the proposed Cross River Rail plan, saying the costs of the project are likely to exceed the benefit.

The federal funding body has left Brisbane's planned 10.2-kilometre tunnel off its priority list, however its document contains several mistakes.

It shows the CBD located south of the Brisbane River and a new suburb named "Hill Gate" in place of Highgate Hill.

In its analysis, Infrastructure Australia refuted the business case projection that passenger usage on trains would increase by what it called an "unprecedented" 6.9 per cent per year until 2026.

Queensland Transport Minister Jackie Trad said the agency's understanding of passenger statistics was flawed and defective, leading to the assessment that the project was not needed in the short term.

PHOTO The Infrastructure Australia document showing the Brisbane CBD in the wrong spot and the mysterious suburb named "Hill Gate".

Assessment
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Overall, she said there were 23 "unsubstantiated opinions, assertions or errors" in the evaluation, proof the project was not being taken seriously.

"Their analysis is based on mistakes and assumptions that are clearly false," she said.

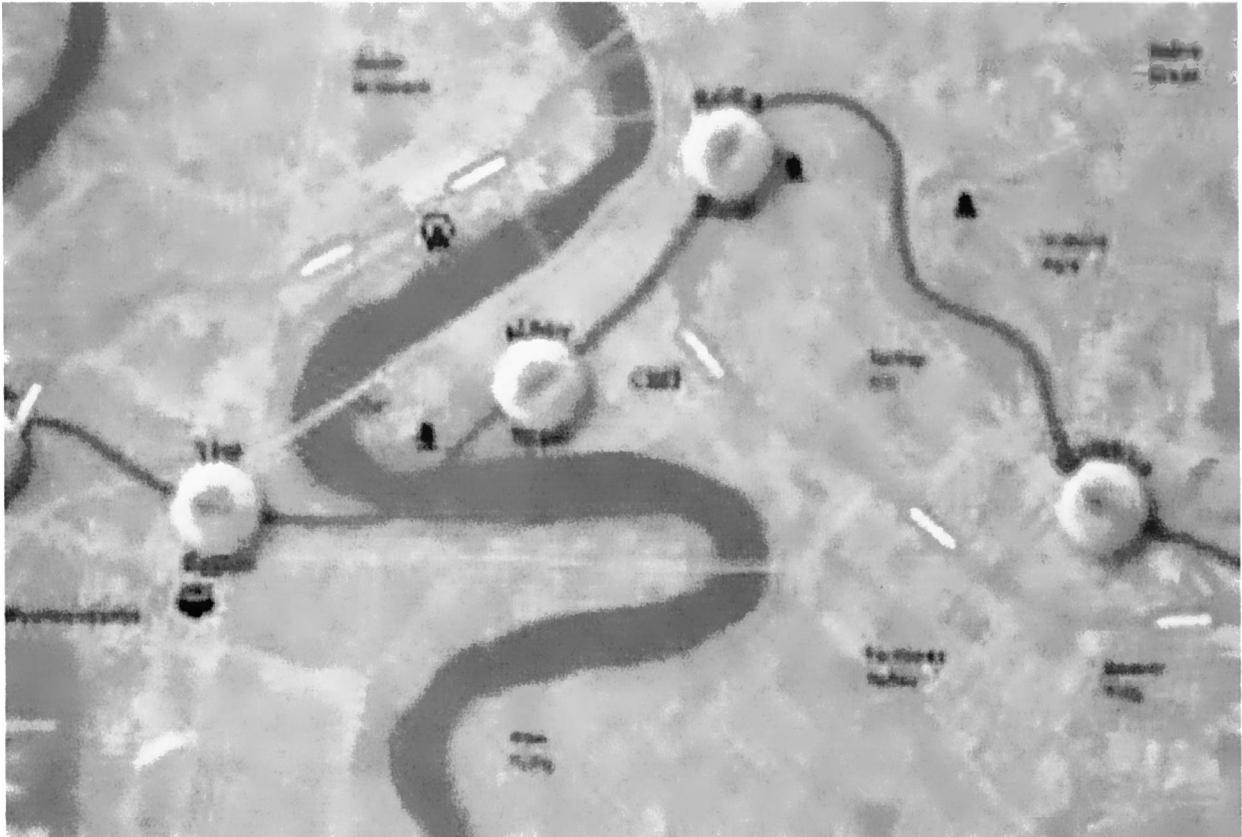
"What they are telling Queenslanders is Cross River Rail shouldn't be built until we reach a crisis on our network, until we see patronage figures increase to 150 per cent."

Ms Trad said the state would go it alone to deliver the project.

A full assessment by Infrastructure Australia, an independent agency advising the Federal Government on spending of more than \$100 million, is likely to be released in the coming days, once the Queensland Government has had the opportunity to provide its feedback.

Federal Urban Infrastructure Minister Paul Fletcher said it would give more detail on how it reached its conclusion.

PHOTO A look at the Queensland Government's vision for the Brisbane Cross River Rail project.



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"Infrastructure Australia has made its assessment based on the business case provided to it," Mr Fletcher said.

"But it has also indicated that it stands ready to consider a revised business case which might include benefits from land-use change and urban renewal which are not included in the business case it has assessed."

Cross River Rail is the Queensland Government's top infrastructure project, and proposes a rail link from Dutton Park to Bowen Hills.

The State Government has an estimated price tag of \$5.4 billion for the works, which would involve nearly six kilometres of tunnels under the Brisbane River and CBD.

Queensland's Opposition infrastructure spokesperson Deb Frecklington said Infrastructure Australia was doing what the Palaszczuk Labor Government failed to do — act in the best interests of Queenslanders.

"We agree with IA's assessment," she said.

"If the business case for the project stacks up why hasn't Labor released it in full for all Queenslanders to see?"

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