



Gladys Berejiklian MP

Minister for Transport

MEDIA RELEASE

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NORTH WEST RAIL LINK TO BE STATE OF THE ART

Minister for Transport Gladys Berejiklian today announced the North West Rail Link will be a fully-automated rapid transit system – an Australian-first incorporating driverless trains and high-tech customer safety and security measures.

The new system is part of a series of customer service requirements the operator of the North West Rail Link will have to meet – as well as ensuring trains are on time, that trains and stations are clean and safe, and that customer service is paramount.

Automated systems optimise the running time of trains and increase the average speed of the system, allowing more trains to operate closer together and reducing the time it takes a train to slow down at stations, load and unload, and accelerate off.

The requirements are set out in tender documents for the operations contract, with the formal request for proposals being issued this month.

“Fully-automated train technology has been in use around the world for 30 years, keeping customers safe and ensuring rapid transit systems like the one we are building operate fast and efficiently, while catering for future growth,” Ms Berejiklian said.

“Automated systems deliver safe, efficient and reliable train services in global cities like London and Barcelona, with even higher levels of automation in Paris, Singapore and Dubai - and now Sydney will also finally have its own world-class network.

“This technology is focused on safety and reliability – there’s no point building a 21st century system with 20th century technology in it.”

Millions of people on more than 40 rail lines in at least 14 countries travel every day on fully-automated rail systems.

Features of the system will include:

- Driverless train operations, with trains constantly monitored by a team of expert controllers at a new state-of-the-art train control centre;
- Platform screen doors on all platforms, making loading and unloading faster and safer;
- Cooling and heating at underground stations for customer comfort;
- Multiple cameras and help points in trains and on platforms and stations, with live links to the train control centre; and

- The Police Transport Command and transport officers patrolling the new rapid transit network, the same as the rest of the rail network.

On the North West Rail Link – the first stage of Sydney’s new rapid transit system – operations will start with a train at least every five minutes in the peak.

When rapid transit expands beyond Chatswood with the crossing under Sydney Harbour, this automated system will allow the operation of up to 30 trains an hour on the wider network – a massive boost to future capacity.

As already announced, the Operations, Trains and Systems (OTS) contract will be a Public Private Partnership, subject to value for money criteria being met.

The NSW Government will pay a private sector operator to run the North West Rail Link and meet the customer service contract requirements – if they can’t, they will suffer a financial penalty which will be written into the operating contracts. This kind of initiative can only be achieved with a private operator. Importantly, the Government will set and control fares.

“Our focus is on getting staff where they are needed – like answering customer questions on the transport system and giving advice on connecting services,” Ms Berejiklian said.

“Over the past two years we have been talking closely with the community and industry experts about the North West Rail Link and the feedback has been clear: Sydney wants – and needs – a modern, fast, reliable rail network and this is the best way to deliver it.”

The two consortia, Northwest Rapid Transit and TransForm, have until the end of this year to finalise their proposals. The OTS contract will be awarded in the second half of next year.