

Rapid transit system a boon for business

JOHN Witheriff, chairman of the Business Gold Coast advisory board and the GC17 consortium that successfully bid for the latest AFL licence, has welcomed the federal government's \$365 million commitment for the Gold Coast rapid transit system.

Mr Witheriff said the money announced in the federal Budget was a vote of confidence in the project's viability.

It will also ensure local jobs are created and public transport improved in Australia's fastest growing large city, he said.

"The Gold Coast faces unique challenges in job creation and the efficient movement of people," Mr Witheriff said.

"A viable public transport system, in particular an effective and efficient light rail, will help to protect the city's economic future and get the Gold Coast moving again."

Mr Witheriff said the rapid transit project was expected to create about 6300 jobs and generate \$1.3 billion in economic benefits.

He said the support of Premier Anna Bligh and Gold Coast City Council had been critical.

"There has been a combined effort by many areas of government over a number of years to ensure this project remained on top of priority lists.

"The Premier and the Transport and Main Roads Department remain fully supportive and have publicly announced their desire to see the project through.

"And like the support received for the new Carrara stadium development, if it weren't for the leadership shown by Gold Coast City Council on this very important infrastructure issue, I suspect our dream of a light rail would never have become a reality."

Mr Witheriff noted Council had committed \$120 million for stage one of the light rail and \$30 million for future stages.

The first stage of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit system will connect Griffith University to Broadbeach, passing through Southport and Surfers Paradise.

Further stages have been proposed to connect the light rail to Burleigh.

CAT WOMAN: Feline Masquerade organiser Jennifer Finlayson and furry friend Sandra, looking forward to a great night out at the AWL fundraiser. **BELOW:** An AWL helper with dogs Jodi and Lucky.

A purrfect night for pet lovers

WE all know cats can contort themselves into uncomfortable looking positions, but some very elastic and acrobatic human performers are set to give our feline friends some not-so-stiff competition.

The Super Performance Centre team from Ashmore will be at a special Feline Masquerade on June 12 to raise funds for the Animal Welfare League of Queensland's 2009 building project - a hand-in and whelping facility for dogs.

The new doggie centre will create more room for dogs in adoption pens. It will also ensure pregnant mums have a safe, secure environment when they give birth to their litters.

So if you want to help dogs, and

don't mind dressing up like a cat, get along to the Courthouse Hotel at Southport, where you'll be amazed by the Super Performance Centre team's acrobatic skills.

The centre teaches competitive and recreational classes in gymnastics, acrobatics and circus.

As well, auctions held on the night will also surprise and entertain, along with canapés, beer, wine and live music.

AWL public relations manger Gabrielle Wheaton said she had been scouting out her special cat-themed mask for the evening and could not wait to see what other people had found or made themselves.

"We've been looking forward

to this for a while now and I can't wait to see what the Super Performance Centre has prepared," Miss Wheaton said.

She also said the fundraiser could not have come at a better time, as the AWL's Southport opportunity shop was destroyed by fire earlier this month.

AWL op shops are a vital source of funds for the not-for-profit organisation.

The shop is being rebuilt and it could be some time before it starts to raise money again.

Tickets for the once-only Feline Masquerade cost \$75 or \$65 for bookings of 10 or more. Call 5509 9033 or 0418 281 808 to RSVP before June 10. All proceeds will assist the AWL 2009 building project.



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