

Integrated design to be centrepiece of planned village

Varsity on track for green rail station

by Sacha Watson

THE new Varsity Lakes railway station design was officially unveiled yesterday with plans to lay tracks for a sustainable future.

The \$324.4 million eco-friendly railway project ticked all the green boxes, with the station using solar energy, recycled building materials and rainwater storage tanks in its innovative design that allows for natural lighting and ventilation.

Minister for Transport John Mickel said the sustainable features were an important part of the new station design.

"There is an expectation from the community now and the new rail shows a lead in design. We're not just talking the talk, we're walking the talk," he said.

"It will be one of the first stations in QR's urban rail network to be installed with rainwater storage tanks to collect roof water for its bathroom and garden irrigation needs," he said.

Mr Mickel said the new railway station would be the centrepiece of the future Varsity Station Village, the first of its type to be built in Queensland.

"It's excitement-plus for the community with its fully integrated design that brings the railway transport right into where the community will be, with access to residential, commercial and retail," he said.

The 4.1km Robina to Varsity Lakes Extension Project is the first in a series to extend the railway line to

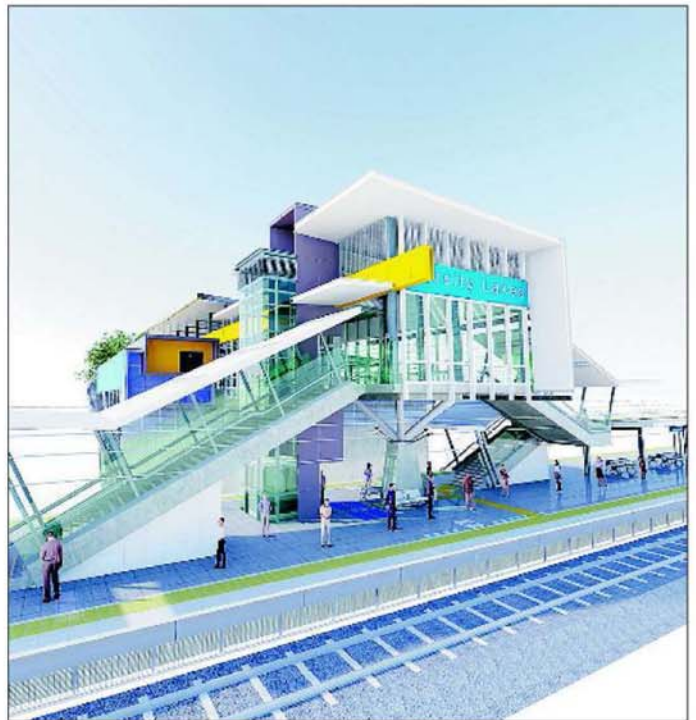


John Mickel

Coolangatta, which will link Gold Coast Airport to Brisbane Airport.

The project will deliver twin electrified tracks from Robina to Varsity Lakes, a 300m tunnel under Easthill Drive at Robina, three road overpasses and the Varsity Lakes station by 2010.

Mr Mickel said the new rail had its fair share of



Computer model of the Varsity Lakes station, which will use solar energy, recycled materials and rainwater tanks

critics raising concerns that the money being spent was 'unnecessary'.

"If they hadn't been so short-sighted in the '60s to rip up the track in Coolangatta, then yes, it's true the money could have been spent better. But I am not responsible for the past, I am here to ensure the misdeeds of the past are corrected," he said.

Construction of the Varsity Lakes station is set to start in mid July.

The extension is just one of the infrastructure projects under way to upgrade the line and improve services to and from the Coast.

The first half of the Helensvale-to-Robina track duplication is complete, with the second track between

Helensvale and Nerang commissioned this weekend.

"The entire second track between Helensvale and Robina will be complete in August 2008, allowing for extra capacity to operate more services from Robina in the longer-term," said Mr Mickel.

"These projects are all part of the Queensland Government's \$82 billion Southeast Queensland Infrastructure Plan, of which \$7 billion has been committed to building a better rail network, delivering 144km of new track and 44 new trains."

Plans and artists' impressions are on display at the Robina Station and Robina Town Centre for public comment until April 24.