



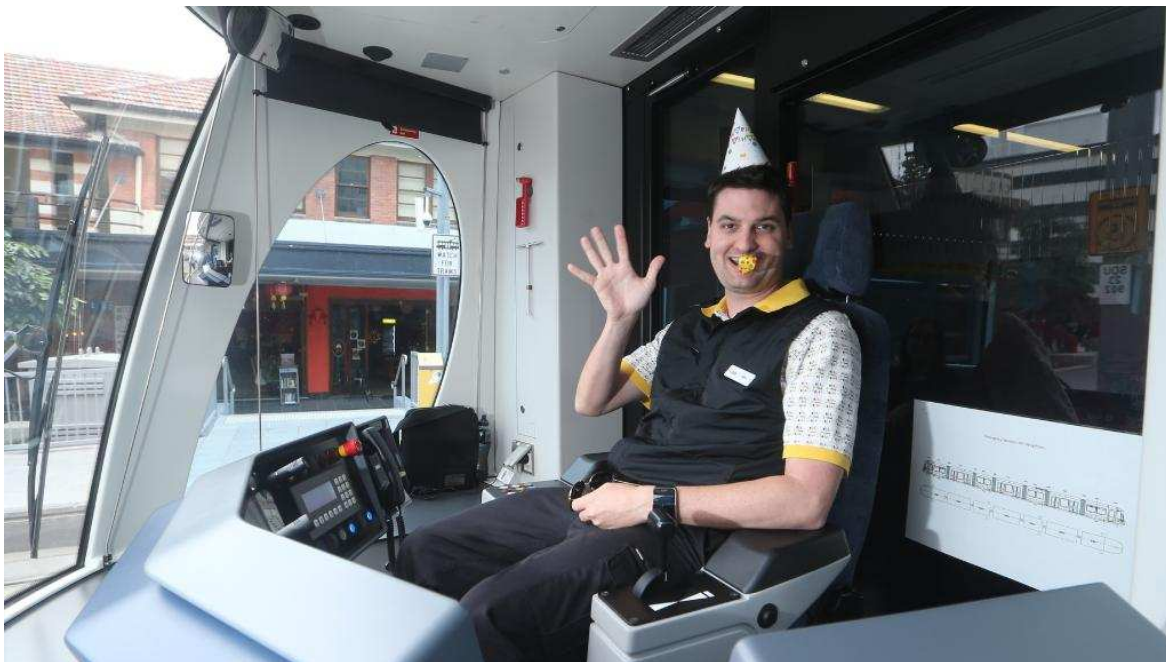
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Gold Coast light rail system celebrates its second anniversary as figures show success



THE Gold Coast light rail has been declared a greater success than ever anticipated, as new figures show more than 14 million people have ridden “the G” in the past two years.

The \$1.2 billion system will hit its second anniversary on Wednesday more popular than ever, with operators celebrating increasing patronage.

Since launching on July 20, 2014, the average number of trips each day rose from 18,200 during its first year to 20,973 during its second for a total of 14 million trips.



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Picture by Scott Fletcher

Prime Minister of Australia Malcolm Turnbull is among the 14 million people to have ridden the G.

In March this year, the 13km route had its best month, with an average of around 22,560 people using it each day.

Transport Minister Stirling Hinchliffe said the system had increased the overall use of public transport on the Coast and “transformed” the city.

“Light rail has become the backbone of the public transport network on the Coast and has provided a new way to experience the city and driven massive patronage growth across the city,” he said.

“After only two years the light rail is carrying the equivalent of the city’s population each and every month which is a fantastic achievement.”



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Original first G tram ride ticket.

Picture: Glenn Hampson

The tram system has also cut the number of cars driving through some of the city's busiest streets. Gold Coast City Council traffic data shows cars on the Gold Coast Highway through Surfers Paradise annually dropped by more than 500 a day between 2011 when construction began and 2015.

GoldLinQ chairman John Witheriff travelled on the system on Thursday and said he was not surprised it had taken cars off the city's roads.

"It is so pleasing to see the trams remain fresh, clean and almost as they were when they first launched just two years ago," he said.

As celebrations begin for stage one, work is starting on stage two and planning has begun for a third stage to Gold Coast Airport and Coolangatta.



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Picture: Mike Batterham

The Gold Coast tram on the Southport Bridge.

Light Rail by the numbers:

Launched: July 20, 2014.

Passenger journeys: 14 million.

Average passenger trips per month: 639,699.

Trips per day: 18,200 during year one, 20,973 in year two.

Busiest month: March 2016 — 22,560 on average rode daily.

Courtesy: Gold Cost Bulletin