



Speech by

**Mr N. ROBERTS**

**MEMBER FOR NUDGE**

---

Hansard 18 November 1998

**TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)**

**Mr ROBERTS** (Nudgee—ALP) (3.03 p.m.): I will raise a couple of local issues before making some specific comments about the Bill. My first point relates to a Queensland Rail proposal to upgrade the railway track between Northgate and Zillmere and further north. I refer particularly to the part that directly impacts upon my electorate. The project to install the additional track will cost \$115m. Some welcome additional infrastructure will be built at railway stations and crossings in my electorate as a part of that project. However, I have some concerns that I want to draw to the attention of the Minister, and in due course I will be forwarding to him formal correspondence on these matters.

The key issue that I want to put on the agenda is that of an overpass at the Geebung Railway Station. That issue has been talked about in the community for at least the past 30 or 40 years. However, I believe that an opportunity now presents itself to look more closely at this issue. The Geebung level crossing on Newman Road experiences significant levels of traffic difficulties. In the past 12 months the Brisbane City Council provided quite a significant upgrade to the local shopping centre and installed traffic signals at the level crossing, predominantly to address safety concerns. However, the fact remains that traffic delays at that particular crossing still occur and, to some degree, have increased significantly since the installation of the traffic signals. With the addition of a third road there is a significant potential to increase dramatically delays for motorists crossing the level crossing, particularly during peak hour.

On Friday, 13 November I received a briefing from Mr Bob Stuart of Queensland Transport. I asked him whether Queensland Rail should be addressing the provision of an overpass at that crossing. I am advised that the cost would be in the vicinity of \$10m. Although that is a significant amount of money, this is a \$115m project. In light of the fact that a solution now will be a long-term solution and will probably cost less, I formally place that issue on the agenda. Through a formal letter that I will give to the Minister, I ask for further discussions on that matter.

I place on the record a couple of matters that arise as a result of the upgrade, because my constituents have raised concerns about them. There is a proposal to install more disabled access to stations along this particular route. The Virginia station could not be considered a high-usage station, but Queensland Rail is proposing to install lifts and a new footbridge there. While I welcome improvements in access to stations in my electorate, I question the priority that has been given to Virginia station as opposed to Geebung station, which is a short way down the road and which has a much higher patronage level. The proposal for Geebung is to remove the existing footbridge and install a grade-level crossing. The proposal that I have put back to Queensland Rail, through Mr Stuart, is that the priority be changed and the lifts be installed at Geebung rather than Virginia. Geebung has significantly higher patronage levels. That matter deserves further discussion.

I welcome QR's decision to install lifts at Zillmere Railway Station. The resolution of that issue is long overdue. The lifts will improve the access to and amenity of that station for residents. That issue has been of concern to that community for some time.

Sandgate Road is currently being upgraded with the addition of an additional inbound lane that will significantly improve traffic flow from Boondall through to Virginia. The Department of Main Roads has installed traffic signals at Pritchard Road. I welcome that move and commend Main Roads on its efforts in that regard. The intersection of Pritchard Road and Sandgate Road was probably the most

dangerous intersection in my electorate. The proposal was to install the lights before Christmas. They are well ahead of schedule and the lights are now operating. My constituents and I are eternally grateful to Main Roads for that, because I believe that those lights will save lives and, as I said, they have been installed ahead of schedule.

Another issue that raises its head from time to time is the intersection of Sandgate Road and Zillmere Road. A number of my constituents who live along Zillmere Road suffer flooding problems. They believe that the culvert bridge that currently exists on Sandgate Road contributes to that problem. The Brisbane City Council has undertaken extensive studies in that regard. I have raised that matter with Main Roads on previous occasions and have been advised that at this stage financing does not permit the construction of a new bridge. However, at some stage a new bridge will need to be built to replace the existing culvert bridge on the outbound lanes of Sandgate Road. I encourage Main Roads to give that matter a higher priority.

Another issue of importance to my constituents in the Boondall area is the speed limit outside the Boondall State School. I have raised this matter on several occasions, both with the previous Minister, the member for Gregory, and the current Minister and the department. The response that I have received on a number of occasions is that it is not suitable to install a school zone sign on a busy arterial road outside the Boondall State School. The school community and I have not accepted that proposition, and we will continue to raise it.

I note that during the construction work on Sandgate Road the speed limit has been reduced from 70 km/h to 60 km/h for the safety of the workers. I support that. I believe that when workers are working on busy main roads it is appropriate to reduce the speed limit to improve their safety while undertaking their daily work. However, the question I put to Main Roads—and I have written to it again within the past week or so—is that if it is good enough to drop the speed limit for the workers, which I support, it is also good enough to drop the speed limit to at least 60 km/h for the schoolchildren who cross Sandgate Road adjacent to the Boondall State School.

Noise barriers are being installed by Queensland Rail as a result of the project that I referred to earlier, and I welcome that. That initiative will be well received by my constituents in the vicinity of the station at Northgate. However, I have put another issue on the agenda in terms of noise barriers. I have constituents in the vicinity of the Bindha Railway Station, near the Northgate cannery, who are exposed to significant levels of noise from shunting operations. Through an officer of Queensland Rail, I have requested that that matter be considered. If they are going to spend a lot of money installing noise barriers at Northgate, I would ask them to find an extra few thousand dollars for my constituents at Bindha, because that would not go astray. I hope that they are giving that matter serious consideration.

I turn to one of the specific aspects of the Bill, and that is the proposed amendments to Chapter 8, which contains provisions relevant to the miscellaneous transport infrastructure corridors process, or the MTIC process. That process is a strategy that ensures that infrastructure corridors are facilitated across Queensland so as to allow for the most efficient transportation of commodities, such as gas, mineral slurries, fly ash, water, electricity and telecommunications. Importantly, the facilitation process has been devised by the Government to balance, as far as possible, the interests of all stakeholders affected by the provision of infrastructure corridors, including pastoralists, shire councils, Aboriginal people and the users of the MTIC.

The strategic importance of the MTIC process as a tool for State development has been displayed on two of Queensland's largest and most significant projects—gas to Mount Isa and the Century Zinc project. The development of that project was vital to the realisation of billions of dollars of investment in the Carpentaria/Mount Isa minerals province.

As I have mentioned, the legislative provisions that are relevant to MTICs are contained in Chapter 8 of the Transport Infrastructure Act. In their present form, these provisions do not adequately deal with some critical issues that affect the MTIC process. The definition of "miscellaneous transport infrastructure" under the current Act was drafted so that it would encompass all forms of transport infrastructure except road, rail and port infrastructure.

In this way, the true strategic nature of the corridors could be recognised and the State could, if it so desired, create infrastructure highways. In following a strategic approach to development in areas where it is perceived that there will be a demand for future corridors—for example, Gladstone—the Government would therefore be able to ensure that the impact of acquisition and development on landholders, the community and the environment is minimised by ensuring that water, electricity, gas, slurry pipelines and so on are housed, where possible, in the one corridor as opposed to having many different project-specific corridors.

However, at present proponents are unwilling to utilise the MTIC concept on the basis that the definition is so broad that it may be too broad to encompass their specific requirement. Consequently, financiers are not comfortable with the process, and the Government is forced, in some instances, to make a regulation or project-specific legislation—for example, in relation to the Century Zinc Project Act

1997—to give the proponent and its financiers sufficient comfort. The proposed amendment removes this problem by incorporating a subparagraph which narrows the definition to refer specifically to all potential transport infrastructure demands for the present day, while maintaining the broad nature of the original definition to allow for future purposes. In addition, the amendments address issues of uncertainty for proponents in relation to the granting of a licence to house miscellaneous transport infrastructure.

In creating certainty where developers had previously had concerns, these amendments will provide comfort to proponents in relation to MTIC facilitation and give statutory effect to the corridor licence. Therefore, it can be seen that the amendments are essential to the future development of infrastructure in Queensland. Importantly, the amendments make the MTIC process an attractive and workable development tool that benefits not just developers but all stakeholders who may be affected by infrastructure development, and removes the necessity for corridor duplication by allowing for the creation of infrastructure highways.

---