



Speech by

Hon. STEVE BREDHAUER

MEMBER FOR COOK

Hansard 18 November 1998

TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (3.54 p.m.), in reply: I thank all members who contributed to the debate. I will take some time to respond to some of the specific issues that were raised. The Opposition has indicated its support for the Bill before the House and that is appreciated. The generally constructive contributions that were made by most members on both sides of the House were also appreciated. It has been a fairly wide-ranging debate and not confined always to the specifics of the Bill. That is the nature of second-reading debates. I am not going to try to cover all the issues that members have raised, but I will discuss most of them if I possibly can in the time available to me.

I will begin with the contribution of the member for Gregory. He began by discussing the Brisbane light rail project. As he rightly pointed out, it is an important project that is part of the Integrated Regional Transport Plan. We identified a number of failings in the former Government's Briztram proposal—which I do not intend to reiterate at this time—that led to our cancelling of that project. In its place, we are proceeding with planning for the Brisbane light rail project. I reassure the member for Gregory that it is an important element of our plans for the future of public transport in south-east Queensland. The critical issue is, as he has identified, the \$65m that was promised by the Federal Government under the Heritage Fund. To date we have not been successful in securing a recommitment of those funds. The Premier has written to Prime Minister John Howard on two occasions. We have had discussions at an officer level. Officers from both the Prime Minister's Department and the Department of Transport recognise that we still have a commitment to a light rail project for south-east Queensland similar to that to which they made a commitment for funds. We are receiving supportive noises at an officer level, but until such time as we receive a sign-off from the Prime Minister we cannot be certain. That \$65m is critical, but I can assure the member Gregory that we are leaving no stone unturned in our endeavours to pursue that \$65m. I use this opportunity to entreat the Prime Minister to give positive consideration to the letter that he was handed last Thursday at the COAG meeting by the Queensland Premier, which asked him for a firm commitment to that \$65m.

I note the member's comments in respect of the inner-city bypass. I thank him for his offer of bipartisan support on the City/Valley bypass. I suggest to him that he might talk to some of his colleagues on his side of the House, notably the member sitting beside him, the member for Clayfield, because if the coalition is genuine in its attempts to offer bipartisan support on the issue of the inner-city bypass, there is nothing to be gained from people such as the member Clayfield taking cheap political pot shots at me, Jim Soorley or anybody else. If he wants to play the games that Councillor June O'Connell would like him to play so that Liberal councillors can beat this up as an issue which, heaven knows, the Liberal Party at the city council administration has sadly lacked and is looking for—

Ms Spence interjected.

Mr BREDHAUER: It is a desperate attempt; that is right. If he wants to do that, then so be it. However, I do not think he can have it both ways and offer bipartisan support on that important issue. The member identified that that bypass is part of the IRTP. It is also part of the Brisbane City Council's transport plan. I believe that it is an important element in terms of relieving congestion in the inner-city area, which, in part, will serve to improve air quality in the inner-city area and, in part, serve to improve the potential efficiency of our public transport modes, including our busways and the Brisbane light rail service. It is an important issue, but it is a Brisbane City Council project. In our discussions with the Lord

Mayor and the Transport spokesperson for the Brisbane City Council, Maureen Hayes, we have made it quite clear that it is a council project. Having finalised the impact assessment statement, they are moving ahead with the rest of it.

I take on board the member's positive and constructive comments in the House today in relation to the bypass issue, and I look forward to taking a bipartisan approach to it. However, although I believe a bipartisan approach is the constructive way to go, I suggest that the member talks to other coalition members, because they cannot have it both ways.

I would also like to talk about the issue that the member raised in relation to Sunshine C & Bs. I will talk about Sunshine C & Bs a little later on in terms of the contribution of the member for Barron River. However, the member mentioned public transport operators in Cairns other than taxis. He would be aware that a review of the limousine service has been under way. We had a bit of a hiccup with it because the Limousine Association of Queensland had an almost complete change, or a complete change, of its executive. So there was an interruption in the communications between us and them. We have determined that we have to press ahead and now those links have been reopened. So the limousine service review is again under way.

The operator and driver accreditation processes are also under review. That was started by the previous Minister. The delineations, or definitions, between taxis, charter bus operators, courtesy coaches and regular bus operators are difficult issues and there are always grey areas at the borders. In my view, the amendments that we have made in relation to Sunshine C & Bs was necessary because it was operating as a taxi operator when, in effect, it did not have to comply with either the service requirements or the licence requirements, which is why we moved in the way we did.

The member also talked about IRTPs. As he would know, the IRTP process is not confined to south-east Queensland but is happening throughout other parts of Queensland. We are proceeding with integrated regional transport planning in far-north Queensland in relation to the far-north Queensland 2010 process.

I want to draw the member's attention to an article that appeared today in the Cairns Post. It suggested that we were going to close off Anderson Road and that that would cause problems for the residents of White Rock and Bayview Heights. The matter is also editorialised in the Cairns Post. I want to canvass briefly a couple of issues. One of those is that we are looking at upgrading the southern access into Cairns, that is, the existing Bruce Highway access. We are looking at six-laning the area between Sheehy Road and Portsmith Road. There are no immediate plans to cut off access for residents at Anderson Street or anywhere else. That is something that may be contemplated significantly in the future—in 10 years or 15 years' time—but under all circumstances we would guarantee access by some other means, for example, service roads or something like that, for residents who were looking to get from one area to another.

It is important to appreciate that, in the process of doing this planning, we are trying to go out there and consult openly and honestly. Although I understand that some people have concerns, people need to be clear that currently what we are trying to do is lay the groundwork for the six-laning of that section between Sheehy Road and Portsmith Road and nothing more. We are not talking about closing off people's access in the short term. I think that the article in the Cairns Post says that it might be a long way off, perhaps when we have another corridor.

The other issue is the southern Cairns integrated land use and transport study, which was initiated by me as the Minister. A consultant has been employed to run that process. I might say that in another article in today's Cairns Post the National Party candidate for Mulgrave, Naomi Wilson, talks about the southern Cairns integrated land use and transport study. People need to appreciate that, once again, this is a long-term view. Essentially, we are looking for ways to provide another corridor into Cairns from about Gordonvale. That may not be needed for another 20 years but, in terms of sensible transport planning, we have to get on with the process now.

I have to say that it was the Labor Government that actually initiated this process of the southern corridor study. I was the one who announced that the corridor was starting on 16 October. On 12 and 16 November we held key stakeholder meetings. Other meetings are planned for 19, 24 and 25 November. We have opened an office in an arcade in Cairns so that people can get access. We have provided consultation material, including newsletters, posters, a free-call number and ads in the paper. Over 100 stakeholders have received letters and we have had mobile displays that have appeared at Edmonton, Stockland, Gordonvale and Cairns central. So it is the Labor Government that is getting on with the job of long-term planning for the transport needs, particularly the southern access needs, of far-north Queensland and Cairns.

I also want to say that it is the Labor Government that will see this study to a conclusion and make a decision, just as it will in respect of the Kuranda Range corridor study, of which the member for Barron River is aware and with which she is closely involved. We will see this process through to a conclusion. We are looking at the long-term interests of Cairns residents and people who rely on that

southern corridor for access to Cairns. The member made a number of other comments in relation to Campaign 300 and a few other things, which I will not go into at this point.

The member for Lytton raised a number of issues. I appreciated his contribution. Obviously, he talked about matters relating to the Bill, but he also raised a couple of other issues. Essentially, the issue of truck parking in residential streets is a matter for which local government has the responsibility. Local government has the capacity to regulate truck parking in residential streets and has had that under the Traffic Act, effectively since 1965. In 1994, changes were made to the legislation to clarify council powers to control such parking because of a conflict involving parking by time. The Traffic Act enables councils to make local laws about such matters. I have to say to the honourable member and all other members of the House that it is not an easy issue. In some respects, councils have a lot of trouble in trying to make local laws to deal with that issue and to enforce them. In relation to that matter, local government has to contend with a range of issues, some of which the member for Lytton identified.

The member also mentioned the issue of cycles on footpaths. As he pointed out, on the Gold Coast the council has erected signs in places that indicate where cyclists should not be on the footpath. Basically, the law says that cycles can be on the footpath but that they should have due regard of the safety of other footpath users, notably pedestrians. However, councils have the capacity to sign areas where cycling is not permitted on the footpath. Judging by the comments made by the member for Lytton, if cycles on footpaths is a problem in other areas, I would encourage other local governments to react in a way similar to the actions of the Gold Coast City Council. In that regard, the other issue that has emerged more recently is toy vehicles, as they are called, including skateboards. That is a matter that is under consideration for possible regulation in a similar way.

The member also mentioned wheelchair accessible taxis in Wynnum. I alert the member to the fact that Wynnum is part of the Brisbane taxi service area. Currently in Brisbane there are 68 wheelchair accessible taxis. They are all operated by Yellow Cabs. That is an arrangement that will soon end. Yellow Cabs will not have a monopoly on accessible taxis in the near future but, at the same time, will introduce a further 30 wheelchair accessible taxis. I suggest to the member for Lytton that if his constituents are having trouble accessing taxis, at this stage they should contact Yellow Cabs and notify them of their concerns.

The next contribution came from the member for Albert. Existing section 183 of the Transport Infrastructure Act is sufficient to deal with access for investigations for the purpose of miscellaneous transport infrastructure, because it allows for the temporary use and occupation of land for miscellaneous transport infrastructure works. The term "works" is sufficient to cover access for investigations. The member was concerned about limiting it to rail, but it is not limited to rail. It is a specific power that rail was precluded from and it has now been included. The member also talked about compensation that is payable by an investigator. The Bill provides a number of safeguards to protect the interests of owners and occupiers of land that is affected by entry. This includes that compensation is payable for loss or damage arising from the entry, consistent with sections of the Transport Infrastructure Act. The member also had a problem with the definition of "within reasonable time". Ultimately, that term gives a little flexibility but, if necessary, a court would determine whether it had occurred within a reasonable time.

I commend the member for Chermside for the constructive approach that he takes to resolving and working through transport issues, not only those in his own electorate but those in the area of Brisbane in which he lives. It is all too easy for some to cast aspersions at people, and to carp, criticise, call meetings and misrepresent comments that others have made. On the other hand, one can follow the example of the member for Chermside, who takes a constructive approach and tries to understand the issues that are likely to affect his constituents. The Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations knows of the good work that the honourable member does, because those issues also impact on the Minister's electorate. The member for Chermside has taken the opportunity to understand the issues. The member for Clayfield might be interested to know that the member for Chermside takes a wider and longer-term view than some in the Parliament. The member for Chermside has looked at the Integrated Regional Transport Plan and how it might assist in resolving south-east Queensland's current and emerging traffic congestion problems and associated problems. He does not go around taking pot shots.

Mr Santoro: Like building a motorway.

Mr BREDHAUER: The member for Clayfield has deliberately misrepresented the circumstances. He continues to imply that my decision to agree to transfer some properties to the Minister for Public Works and Housing in some way means that this Government has an agenda to build the east-west motorway. That is not true. The member's suggestions to that effect are deliberately misleading and are scaremongering amongst his constituents and others.

Mr SANTORO: I rise to a point of order under Standing Order 119. I find those comments offensive because they do not reflect what I have said at public meetings. I ask that the Minister withdraw.

Mr BREDHAUER: I withdraw. The member for Chermside raised an important point about Main Roads advice that is given to people inquiring about properties. His point is quite correct. We have identified that weakness in the system. Main Roads is currently trying to work on improving that system so that people are told about not only whether the property that they are inquiring about is likely to be affected by future transport plans; they will get a wider perspective on the plans for an area that might affect their decision to purchase or the value of the property that they are looking at. The member's comments in that regard are quite correct and I thank him for bringing that matter to the attention of the House, because it is important.

The member for Logan talked about Julie Street and raised a couple of issues on the demands by residents of the Marsden area that the Julie Street precinct, in particular, be provided with improved cross-regional services between patronage contractors in the Logan contract area and the Park Ridge contract area, and the improvement of service levels. The member for Logan would be interested to know that the Logan service contract is undergoing its mid-term review. Under this review, the various means by which Julie Street may be serviced will be discussed with Clarks bus service to ascertain the most efficient manner of providing such services. Julie Street may be serviced by rerouting an existing service or by providing an alternative route. As I am sure the Deputy Speaker is interested to know, we are looking at that issue that affects the member for Logan.

We have had a couple of problems with the Logan City Council, and the member mentioned the building of a roundabout. We also had a problem when the council installed speed bumps for traffic-calming purposes, which meant that the low-floor wheelchair accessible buses could not negotiate the street. We will now have to pay to remove the speed bumps that were installed as a traffic-calming measure. I ask councils such as the Logan council to consult with Queensland Transport and Main Roads before they make such decisions. In this situation, we have wasted money on installing speed bumps and it has cost us yet more money to remove them so that low-floor wheelchair accessible buses can access the street. The Park Ridge Transit contract was another issue that was raised by the member for Logan. I know that he is aware—and I am sure that he will be happy to know—that we are progressing and are very close to finalising our negotiations for a service contract with Park Ridge Transit. I expect that to be brought to fruition in the not-too-distant future.

The member for Clayfield raised the issue of the Nundah bypass. In fact, the member for Clayfield misled the House: that project has not been delayed. Under the current Road Implementation Program, the Nundah bypass is funded. Construction work will commence by the end of 1999 and it will be completed, as scheduled, by the end of the year 2000. In 1998-99, \$4m has been allocated; for 1999-2000, \$20m has been allocated; and for 2000-01, \$10.573m has been allocated. The assertions by the member for Clayfield that the project has been delayed are wrong, as are most of the assertions that are made by the member for Clayfield.

The member for Mansfield talked about the Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road. Indeed, a number of members are concerned about issues relating to that road. They have made representations to me and I have asked the Department of Transport and the Department of Main Roads, in particular, to work closely with those members, including the member for Mansfield. We are trying to find solutions to some of the traffic issues that affect the Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road.

The member for Mooloolah talked about modes for public transport on the Sunshine Coast. He said that we should make a decision on whether it will be rail, light rail or busways before we finalise the corridor. In fact, it is not sensible to finalise the mode before one gets the corridor. A more sensible approach is to reserve a corridor that has the capability of servicing a variety of modes, because it may not come down to a single mode. It may end up being a multimodal corridor, depending on population growth, where the nodes are and so on. One does not actually make a decision on the basis of a particular mode; one preserves a corridor that will enable one to meet the widest possible range. The member would know of one very good example where we have been quite territorial in protecting our corridor, because we think it is important to protect safety issues in respect of future public transport.

I noted with interest the member's comments about the time frame for the upgrading of the Sunshine Motorway, which he said was in the out years of the RIP and should be brought forward. If it had not been for decisions like the elimination of the tolls on the Sunshine Motorway, which cost the Main Roads budget \$450m, we might be in a better position to look at issues such as that. I am not going to go into the motorway issue all over again, but considerable constraints have been placed on us by those sorts of issues.

The member also mentioned six-laning the Gateway Arterial to Caboolture. He should be aware that prior to the Federal election his own Liberal Prime Minister announced the provision of \$25m to upgrade the road to six lanes between Pine Rivers and Caboolture. Unfortunately, we have not seen any commitment of that money, other than the election promise. The \$25m that was promised over

three years, from memory—it may have been five—is one fifth of the cost of the project. The project will cost \$125m and the grand election announcement was that we were going to get \$25m over three years. We are not popping the champagne corks yet in respect of that project. Even under the previous Government the traffic flow on that section of road was between 60,000 and 80,000 vehicles a day. That was at the same time the Prime Minister announced that \$34m would be spent on a road in northern New South Wales that carries 92 vehicles a day. I am not entirely sure what the Federal Government's logic was.

The member for Nudgee raised a number of significant issues in respect of his electorate. I will be happy to speak to him about those issues, in particular the rail infrastructure issues.

The member for Gladstone also raised a number of issues. Proposed section 182N of the Bill before the Parliament gives a statutory right to a responsible entity, which includes local government, to recover any costs, damages, liabilities or loss it suffers due to the existence, construction and so on of miscellaneous transport infrastructure. Essentially, the issue that she raised in that respect has been looked at in the Bill. In respect of the member's concerns about judicial review—I urge her to go back and have a look at the comments that I made in the second-reading speech about that. Private property holders are not affected by the changes that we have made in respect of the exemption from judicial review of the final granting of approval by the Minister for State Development.

The member for Gladstone also mentioned the Monto Road and asked me to come and visit. I can honestly say to the member for Gladstone that I will not have a chance to get to Gladstone between now and Christmas. My diary is basically booked up. However, some time in the new year, if she would like to drop me a line, I would be happy to go up to Gladstone. I need to visit the port authority. There are a couple of issues in relation to roads to the port authority in Gladstone that I would like to have some opportunity to investigate personally. If I can make the time, I would also be happy to have a look at Monto Road for her. If the member could drop me a line early in the new year, I will try to find time in my diary to do that.

The member for Sandgate raised the issue of speed cameras. Yes, there was considerable debate at the time that speed cameras were introduced about the operational guidelines for speed cameras. There is an expectation by this Government, as I am sure there was by the former Ministers, that those operational guidelines would be adhered to by the police. I suggest that the issues he has raised should be brought to the attention of the Minister for Police. If there are genuine concerns about operational matters, I am sure that the Minister for Police will attend to those. The member mentioned the revenue raised. Section 44T(1), to which he referred, states that "all money in excess of the administrative costs of collection must be used for the following purposes". The point that was being made by way of interjection by the member for Gregory is that the revenues have not realised the potential that we expected. Substantially, that is for a good reason: people have slowed down. That has been a big factor in helping us to reduce the road toll. So the revenue is not there in excess of the administrative costs of collection and expanding the scheme. We are buying more speed cameras and so on. That is why we have not been able to put the money into those other three issues identified in the Act.

The member for Sandgate also spoke about road reviews. There has been a comprehensive road review of the Brisbane City Council area. I suggest that Sandgate Road has probably been part of that. However, I could stand corrected. The member mentioned other issues in relation to having speed cameras on roadworks sites and so on. For example, the Pacific Motorway is a place where we are using speed detection devices to try to encourage people to slow down.

Finally, the member for Barron River spoke about the Sunshine C & Bs. That has been a hot issue for me, as it has been for the member for Barron River, as local members. A couple of weeks ago when we were progressing these amendments, someone in the department told me that the value of a taxi licence in Cairns had fallen by \$50,000 since the Sunshine C & Bs came into operation. That is the type of loss of investment that we are seeking to prevent. A lot of those people are just small businesspeople trying to make a buck. They have gone to a lot of expense to buy their taxi licence and to comply with the regulations. I think it is reasonable that charter bus operators operate as charter bus operators and that taxi services operate as taxi services.

I thank all honourable members. I thank my departmental officers from both departments for their support in relation to this Bill. I thank also members of my staff, who have put a lot of work into this Bill. I commend it to the House.
