



Speech by

Mr T. SULLIVAN

MEMBER FOR CHERMSIDE

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TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2)

Mr SULLIVAN (ChermSIDE—ALP) (12.32 p.m.): I rise in support of amendments to the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994, and particularly those amendments which are of strategic significance to Queensland and which will attract major development projects across the State. Before I refer to the amendments that are proposed to Chapter 8 of the Act, I turn to an issue that was raised by the shadow Minister. I find myself agreeing with almost everything that he said.

The shadow Minister gave an example from Sydney of flats that were bulldozed a short time after being built because the land was needed for a transport corridor. There needs to be planning. If we set aside planning routes, people can find out whether anything is planned for the land and, therefore, can decide whether to purchase on a short-term basis or not to purchase at all.

Another thing that the shadow Minister said that I agree with is that we cannot play politics with the IRTF and that it is too big a problem. I ask him to speak to one of his colleagues—and he knows to whom I am referring—who is playing local partisan politics with the IRTF and with corridors that have been set aside. If we are to get a solution to help solve a problem for one million Queenslanders in the south-east corner, we have to take some hard decisions.

The previous Minister said that he told his engineers that we have to put the big picture in place, find out what is needed, do the planning and then get on with the project, and I agree with that approach. I am pleased that the current Minister and his department are getting on with the job. I am also pleased at the attitude of the current Minister towards public consultation. That approach worked under previous Labor Ministers and it worked under the former Minister, Mr Johnson, with projects such as the Nundah bottleneck. Indeed, after consultation with the community, the final solution to the Nundah bottleneck has been accepted by the vast majority of people.

As the shadow Minister said, we do not want to see the situation where a young couple purchases a house only to find that it will be needed for a corridor. The current practice within the departments is difficult. Take the case of someone who writes to the department and says, "I intend to purchase number 37 White Street. Is that property going to be affected?" and the answer comes back, "No." That answer means that the property will not be affected, but a six-lane transport corridor could be planned to incorporate the property next door. In such cases, people feel betrayed because they do not get the full information.

Just last week, I learned of a person who has bought a unit at Nundah. Before he bought the unit, he asked whether it was going to be affected by the Nundah bottleneck project. The answer was: no. However, of the seven units in his block, six are going to be demolished and his is the only one that will remain. To have been told that his unit will not be affected is absolutely wrong, because he will be massively affected.

The departments have followed that practice for some decades and it needs to change. If people were able to access the maps, they could see where the property that they are interested in is in relation to any proposed changes. However, at the moment when prospective purchasers or their solicitors write to the department, they are not provided with the maps. Perhaps the department could provide photocopies of maps to people who write in with these queries, because under the current system members of the public feel that they are being betrayed.

The shadow Minister also referred to the northern busways project, which is very important for the north side of Brisbane. I hope that the consultation process on the IRTP will receive bipartisan support. Difficulties will be involved in the project, but if we do not face those difficulties now, all we will be doing is transferring a bigger difficulty to our children.

Chapter 8 of the Act contains provisions relevant to the Miscellaneous Transport Infrastructure Corridors process. The MTIC 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, this 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 the 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, the gas pipeline to Mount Isa and Century Zinc. The development of those two projects was vital to the realisation of billions of dollars of investments in the Carpentaria/Mount Isa minerals province.

The legislative provisions that are relevant to MTICs are contained in Chapter 8 of the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994. In their present form, those provisions do not adequately deal with some of the critical issues that affect the MTIC process. The definition of "miscellaneous transport infrastructure" under the current TIA was drafted so that it would incorporate all forms of transportation infrastructure except roads, rail and port transport infrastructure.

In this way, the true strategic nature of the corridors could be recognised and the State could, if it so desired, create so-called infrastructure highways. In following a strategic approach to development in areas where it is perceived that there will be a demand for future corridors, such as in Gladstone, the Government would therefore be able to ensure that the impact of acquisition and development on land-holders, the community and the environment is minimised by ensuring that water, electricity, gas and slurry pipelines 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 the specific requirements for their project. Consequently, financiers of major projects are not comfortable with the process, and the Government is forced to make regulations or project-specific legislation—we saw this, for example, in relation to the Century Zinc Project Act 1997—which gives a proponent and its financiers sufficient comfort to go ahead with the project.

The proposed amendments that we are referring to in this Bill remove this problem by encompassing a subparagraph which narrows the definition to refer specifically to all potential transport infrastructure demands for the present day, while maintaining the broadness 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 amendment makes the MTIC process an attractive, 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. All of this will help Queensland develop and help create jobs, jobs, jobs, which is the focus of the Beattie Labor Government.

I agree with previous speakers who have emphasised the need for the development of public transport corridors. Until we have in place a full network, or close to a full network, people will not use public transport because they feel that it cannot serve their needs. With the quadruplication of the rail network, which will allow for the express train services as well as for the all-stop services, we will see an improvement in the rail network. It is a massive investment. I congratulate past and present Ministers from both sides of the House on their work. I thank the Treasurer for the commitment that he has given to that project. Hundreds of millions of dollars have been invested, and still need to be invested, before that quadruplication is completed. Once it has been completed, we will see dramatic changes to the frequency of services, particularly from outlying areas. For example, the tilt train now provides a viable transport option, cost wise and time wise, for people to travel from places such as Rockhampton to Brisbane.

Until that network is in place with respect to the busways in Brisbane and until there is a comfortable, viable option to cars, we will see the growing use of private motor vehicles and growing gridlock. At the moment, the option is either sitting in one's airconditioned car, listening to the radio station of one's choice, and taking 45 minutes to get to work, or standing or sitting in a crowded bus

and taking 45 minutes to get to work. When the option becomes spending either 20 minutes in a bus or 50 minutes in a car, public transport will be a real option and people will start to use it.

I commend the Minister for his ongoing commitment to public transport and for his commitment to transport infrastructure in Queensland. I support the Bill.
