



Speech by

PHIL REEVES

MEMBER FOR MANSFIELD

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MT GRAVATT-CAPALABA ROAD

Mr REEVES (Mansfield—ALP) (11.40 a.m.): Today I will make the House aware of the No. 1 issue in my electorate. I, along with the members for Mount Gravatt, Sunnybank and Archerfield, have great concerns regarding the increasing number of trucks using Kessels Road, McCullough Street and Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road.

The introduction of the southern bypass a couple of years ago sought to reduce the level of truck usage of Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road, but obviously this has not been achieved. As I have my electorate office on Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road and live close by, I know what the residents are going through and I know about the number of trucks using this route to get to the Gateway Motorway. Not only is the traffic build-up a major problem but also the noise is causing heartache for the residents. While the problem is not new, it has been escalating slowly over the past few years and now is at a critical point.

Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road was never really a busy road prior to the construction of the Gateway Motorway some 13 years ago. Not only does it now carry more traffic from the Cleveland and Redlands areas as a result of the development that has occurred there, but it is also carrying the extra traffic generated by the Gateway Motorway. Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road was never designed to take the traffic that it carries currently. To see that, one has only to look at the gradients of the road and at its many declines and bends.

I am extremely concerned about the current action by the Federal Government, aided and abetted by the member for Moreton, Gary Hardgrave. It is my understanding that the Federal Government is trying to get the road declassified as a federally funded road. Mr Hardgrave has said at great length that that will stop trucks using the road, but all declassification will mean is that the State is left to fund Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road—the problem the Federal Government has created. This will do nothing to reduce truck usage on this road. Declassification will be used by the member for Moreton only as a political selling point; it will do nothing to improve the quality of life of the residents who live close by.

I am sure that my parliamentary colleagues will go to great lengths to ensure that the people of the Moreton electorate know that Mr Hardgrave is passing the buck politically. What the people of Moreton want, particularly those who live on Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road and close by, is some long-term planning that will see their quality of life improve.

I have been working with the other three State representatives of the area to try to come up with some options. The options we have been discussing are all for a long-term solution—not a short-term remedy just to make it politically saleable. I and the other relevant State members of Parliament have not been developing these options in isolation. I have met with the community on this matter. I have had very fruitful discussions with members of the QRTA, particularly those who have many trucks that use Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road. I thank the QRTA and its members for being so constructive in their discussions regarding Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road and Kessels Road.

The No. 1 disincentive for trucks in using the southern bypass is the toll. I think we need to get a bit smarter in encouraging trucks and others to use the southern bypass because, let us face it, the function of a bypass is to have people bypass major residential areas. Encouragement such as incentive-based tolls could have a major impact.

The problem at present is that when the major truck companies get their bills at the end of each month, they see large amounts for the southern bypass toll and nearly have heart failure. While using the southern bypass might have advantages in terms of truck maintenance, the maintenance bills do not look as horrific as does the monthly toll bill.

The other major problem is that probably 50% of the users of Kessels Road and Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road are owner/operators coming from Toowoomba and Ipswich. These owner/operators work on percentages, not on time, so there is no incentive for the owner/operators to use the southern bypass if it is going to cost them \$7, or \$14 for a round trip, compared with no cost to use Kessels Road and Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road.

I am reliably informed that trucks using the southern bypass take about 35 minutes to travel from Redbank to the Gateway Motorway at Mansfield. Those using Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road and Kessels Road in non-peak times take about 40 minutes. The difference in kilometres is minimal. The big difference is the toll of \$7, or \$14 for a return trip. It is quite obvious that we must come up with an incentive for the truck owners and operators to use the southern bypass.

To simply say that the trucks should not use Kessels Road and Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road does not recognise the reality of the situation. Many of the major truck companies are based around Rocklea, Fairfield, Archerfield and Acacia Ridge. To say to them that they have to go backwards to go forwards would be farcical. To think that they would do that is ridiculous.

It has become apparent from conversations that I have had with truck owners that many use Ipswich Road and the Story Bridge to get to the Sunshine Coast, particularly early in the morning. If any ban is placed on trucks using this route by the city council or by us the ramifications for Kessels Road and Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road will be horrific. The increase in usage by trucks would be almost doubled, particularly in the morning, and the quality of life of those who live along those roads will be further diminished. Another major disadvantage of Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road compared with other roads on the route is that people live on both sides of the road, and large housing estates at Upper Mount Gravatt and Wishart are very close to it.

Another option that warrants further investigation is a truck restriction lane, which would allow trucks to travel in only one of the three lanes on Kessels Road or Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road. It is my understanding that this system works very effectively in Perth.

Another problem spot that needs to be reviewed is the intersection of Mains and Kessels Roads. It is quite obvious, because of not only truck use but also car use of the intersection of Mains and Kessels Roads, that a grade separation must be undertaken. The longer we leave it, the more the problem will escalate and the higher the costs will be. I believe it is essential that this review occurs sooner rather than later.

Another option that requires examination is a truck turning lane from Kessels Road onto the freeway and onto the Gateway Motorway. This would ensure that the problems at the intersection of Logan, Kessels and Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Roads would be improved dramatically. The golf links estate in Upper Mount Gravatt, in the electorate of Mount Gravatt, would have greatly improved access. This action would have the greatest single effect on the usage by trucks of Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road. The quality of life for all those who live along and close by the road, especially in the suburbs of Upper Mount Gravatt and Wishart, would improve dramatically. Unless those options are implemented, the problems of Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road and their effect on people's lifestyles will not go away. In fact, they will increase.

I have informed the Transport Minister that I believe those options must be keenly investigated. I believe that an incentive in relation to the toll on the southern bypass should be introduced immediately. Prior to doing that, a movement study should be undertaken to calculate how many trucks coming from Ipswich and Toowoomba are using Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road and how many are using Ipswich Road. After the introduction of an incentive, a study could be done to determine its effect. An educational and promotional package must be developed to encourage truck drivers, particularly owner/operators, to accept the proposed incentive. Once it is put in place, consultation about the other three options should start immediately.

My greatest concern regarding those options relates to funding. I firmly believe that the longer we leave it, the higher the price will be, so action must be taken now. However, the actions of the member for Moreton in trying to get this road declassified will have a major bearing on this issue. If Mr Hardgrave has his way in passing the buck, we will be left holding the bunny. What Mr Hardgrave is up to is ensuring that the blame can be placed on the State Government, when in fact it was the Federal Government that created the mess. Mr Hardgrave is in the papers, week in and week out, complaining about the trucks using Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road, yet now he is trying to wash his hands of the whole affair, not willing to put his money where his mouth is.

I put it to the member for Moreton that the people who live in Wishart and Upper Mount Gravatt are not as silly as he thinks. Both levels of Government must be responsible for the long-term future of these areas. We must quickly review those options and come up with the funding packages to implement a solution to the problem. The quality of the life of people who live in Upper Mount Gravatt, Wishart and Mansfield depend on it. I will go to any lengths to ensure that this issue does not just get swept under the carpet by the Federal Minister or in fact by our own department.
