



Speech by

Mr SANTO SANTORO

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

Hansard 20 July 1999

CITY/VALLEY BYPASS

Mr SANTORO (Clayfield—LP) (11.50 a.m.): Today, I wish to address the issue of the City/Valley bypass, an issue which has a certain political smell about it that is not at all appealing not only to my constituents who are affected by the issue but to all decent, thinking Queenslanders who support transparent decision-making processes by their State Government.

There are several issues relating to the City/Valley bypass which are of great concern. The first is the issue of consultation—or lack of consultation—and the effect of this lack of consultation on the residential amenity of thousands of Queenslanders who will have to live with the aftermath and the side effects of the City/Valley bypass. Secondly, there is the issue of the devastating effect which the construction of the City/Valley bypass will have on certain key sections of the business community within my electorate. Thirdly, there is the all-important issue of the deceitful and flawed process leading up to the approval and the funding by the Brisbane City Council and the State Government of the City/Valley bypass project.

At the outset, I wish to restate what I have said previously in this place—that the majority of my constituents are of the belief that the traffic problems associated with the passage of heavy traffic throughout the city and the Valley need to be resolved. A sensible solution clearly needs to be found. Unless this happens, the potential for major and nasty traffic accidents in the city and the Valley will remain high.

However, what north side residents—particularly those living within the suburbs of Ascot, Hamilton, Clayfield and Albion—do not appreciate is the fact that consideration of the impact which the construction of the City/Valley bypass will have on their residential amenity has been totally ignored. It is

a fact that the Brisbane City Council and the consultants for the Brisbane City Council have not consulted the vast majority of residents and businesses who will be affected by the additional traffic which will be spewed onto Kingsford Smith Drive at the end of the City/Valley bypass proper.

The concerns are quite simple, namely, that the extra traffic which will be generated by the construction of the City/Valley bypass and which will be directed onto Kingsford Smith Drive is estimated as a minimum at 19% and by many expert traffic engineers at as high as 50%. In fact, Kingsford Smith Drive is very much the forgotten aspect of the whole City/Valley bypass project and no provision has been made within the planning or the budgeting for the City/Valley bypass project for the upgrade and/or the improvement of Kingsford Smith Drive. Clearly an upgrade and an improvement are necessary if this already very congested road is going to cope with the extra traffic that will be generated by the City/Valley bypass once it is completed.

As a result of this, both residents and traffic experts expect a dramatic increase in rat-running from Kingsford Smith Drive into the residential suburbs which abut Kingsford Smith Drive. Honourable members can come to their own conclusions as to what impact this massive increase in rat-running will have on the residential amenity of my constituents.

Additionally, the construction of the City/Valley bypass and its effects will have a very detrimental impact on the value of properties within the affected suburbs. Again there has been no consideration within the planning of the City/Valley bypass project of this undeniable consequence, let alone the provision of compensation for those people who will be directly affected by falling property values.

It would seem to me that, because we are dealing with suburbs which on the surface are not, in the majority, Labor voting suburbs, both the Beattie Labor Government and the Soorley Labor City Council have ignored and continue to ignore the legitimate concerns of people who deserve much better from their legislators. There is a clear need for the whole City/Valley bypass project to be put on hold until the hitherto neglected issues of the obvious increase in traffic and its consequences on the already congested traffic flows on Kingsford Smith Drive are seriously addressed. In particular, there is a very real need to involve in a more formal and meaningful way those residents who will be most drastically affected by a State Government and Brisbane City Council decision which does not consider in any meaningful way the impact of the project on their lifestyle and residential investment.

In a letter to an affected resident, Councillor Maureen Hayes, the Chairperson of the Transport and Major Projects Department of the Brisbane City Council, stated—

"You have raised a number of issues concerning the inner city bypass and I am disappointed that the intense consultation program undertaken as part of this project has not answered your concerns. We are also aware of the independent expert advice and their suggestions."

That particular point is made time and again by Councillor Hayes. I again go on the record as stating on behalf of concerned and affected residents that there was nothing like the "intense consultation program" which is claimed by Councillor Maureen Hayes. The first that the vast majority of affected people knew about the inner city bypass was when they read it in the local and major newspapers of this city or when they were circulated with the information directly in their letterboxes by me as their local State representative.

We have a Brisbane City Council, and Labor councillors within it, that constantly mouths the mantra of consultation but in reality does everything but consult residents about Brisbane City Council decisions which affect them in a very direct and dramatic manner. This lamentable experience is common to residents not just in Hamilton, Clayfield, Albion and Hendra, but right across Brisbane, be it in Paddington, Milton, Ashgrove, The Gap, the south side of Brisbane or, indeed, any of the many other suburbs which have been affected by insensitive and non-consultative decisions by Mr Soorley and his sycophants within Brisbane City Hall.

Mr Beanland: That includes Indooroopilly and Toowong, and this will make it worse, of course.

Mr SANTORO: I take the interjection from the honourable member for Indooroopilly. I know that he shares many of the concerns regarding the

lack of consultation and the detrimental effects on the residential amenities of his constituents.

Mr Beanland: An arrogant administration.

Mr SANTORO: It is a very arrogant administration. I now wish to turn to the other issue which is of growing concern. I refer to the secret and cynical manner in which the State Government has gone about assisting the Brisbane City Council with the funding of the City/Valley bypass project. The Minister has come into this place and constantly stated that the City/Valley bypass project is a Brisbane City Council project and that it is wholly funded by the Brisbane City Council. This claim is at best misleading and at worst the uttering of a deliberate untruth within this Parliament. My respect for Parliament and the parliamentary rules prevents me from using a more direct three-letter word to describe the statements made by the Minister.

The fact is that a very substantial level of hidden funding has been provided by the State Government to the Brisbane City Council via a \$470m financial transport package which was announced by the Transport Minister in Parliament last year. It is important to put on the record again what Mr Bredhauer told Parliament on 17 November last year when he provided the \$470m worth of funding.

There were three components of the State Government package, which involved: the inner northern busway at \$135m, comprising \$120m State Government funding and \$15m in a Brisbane City Council contribution; the Brisbane light rail project at \$235m; and a contribution of \$100m, including \$60m in direct funding and \$40m worth of land, to the Brisbane City Council transport plan. One of the key measures of that plan is the construction of the City/Valley bypass.

What Mr Bredhauer did not tell Parliament was that a large part of the \$100m financial package is earmarked for the construction of the City/Valley bypass. I made this assertion as early as February this year. The Minister has been denying it ever since, and most particularly during the past few days when this issue has been picked up in a very forceful manner by the Courier-Mail. However, the Minister's denials are undermined—indeed destroyed—by documents which have been obtained by me and the Opposition Liberal team within the Brisbane City Council. The documents clearly outline what the thinking of the Beattie Labor Government, the Treasurer and the Minister for Transport has been since very early in their term.

In fact, a memorandum to John Gralton, the Divisional Manager, City Governance, from Bill Upton, the Manager, Transport and Traffic within the Brisbane City Council, dated 13 July makes very interesting reading and I quote very directly from it—

"John Gralton, Queensland Transport mentioned to me this morning that the Treasurer, David Hamill, has reservations about shadow tolling inter alia because of the additional cost involved.

Gralton confirmed a package along the following lines would be acceptable to treasury.

Council contributes \$30m over the next two years

State contributes \$10m in kind (land)

Council borrows the balance (i.e. \$126m)

State, through Main Roads, contributes \$7.1m to Council each year, representing 80% of debt repayment.

Council funds the balance of debt (1.8mpa)

The internal issue for the State Government will be the debate between Treasury and Main Roads on whether the payment to council would be new funding or funding from existing programs.

The opinion is worth pursuing in parallel with further work on a shadow toll to ensure the best deal for council."

I table a copy of this memorandum which clearly shows that a deal has been made. I believe that the deal involves the Premier, wanting to help his Brisbane City Council mates, providing funding through stealth because he does not want to put his fingers on the sticky paper. He is expecting a return favour from the Lord Mayor in the form of an agreement to locate the super stadium at Lang Park, which is the favoured location of senior Ministers within the Labor Government. At the same time, the Premier runs away from his own electors. We can see that 4.5 kilometres of the bypass goes through the Premier's electorate. He has betrayed the trust, the living standards and the residential amenity of people in his electorate. In doing so, he has portrayed himself as a Premier leading a Government which is going down the same way as the previous Goss Government.

Time expired.
