



Speech by

Hon. STEVE BREDHAUER

MEMBER FOR COOK

Hansard 14 April 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Brisbane Light Rail Project

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (9.53 a.m.), by leave: I would like to draw members' attention to an open day held yesterday by the Brisbane Tramways Museum at Ferny Grove to mark the 30th anniversary of the closure of Brisbane's one-time vital transportation system—the trams. Yesterday's open day was of interest to both transport enthusiasts and anyone interested in Brisbane's history. The member for Ferny Grove, acting on my behalf, also attended the museum's open day yesterday to confirm a new initiative which will provide our young people with the necessary skills to play a vital role in the Beattie Government's plans for a modern light rail industry in Queensland.

The Brisbane Light Rail Project, at a cost of \$235m, will generate up to 300 jobs during construction and up to 80 jobs on a permanent basis. Over the past few months, Queensland Transport officers involved with the Brisbane Light Rail Project have been working closely with Northpoint TAFE and the Brisbane Tramways Museum at Ferny Grove to develop a scheme to train apprentices in various fields in the light rail industry, including metal, upholstery, electrical and timberwork. Under the agreement, the Brisbane Light Rail Project will spend \$2.4m to construct an annexe at the museum's Ferny Grove complex and to fund training related activities associated with light rail. I should say that the initiative has been strongly supported by the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations, the member for Ferny Grove and the Brisbane Tramways Museum President, Peter Hyde. It is fair to say that their ongoing commitment ensured the training project went ahead and that we were in the position to start the scheme as quickly as possible. Members would appreciate the significance of this agreement. It is about strategic labour force planning. It reflects the Beattie Government's commitment not only to creating individual jobs but also to developing industries which will provide generations of Queenslanders with very real job opportunities well into the future.

As members would know, the Brisbane Light Rail Project will provide a light rail service linking the Royal Brisbane Hospital, Fortitude Valley, Teneriffe, South Bank, West End, the Queensland University of Technology and the city centre. It is a clean and reliable solution to Brisbane's growing transport problems, and is being developed in such a way that it will integrate with other transport modes and be a significant contributor to Brisbane's public transport services. For example, the South East Busway, currently under construction between the CBD and Springwood, is being built in such a way that it can accommodate a light rail service.

Queensland is currently enjoying significant growth in the rail industry, with the introduction of the tilt and heritage trains and the success of the extensions to the Gold Coast rail line. If this growing industry is to continue to prosper, it is only natural that we build a work force with the skills to service it. This is what the agreement between the Brisbane Light Rail Project, Northpoint TAFE and the Brisbane Tramways Museum is about—strategically building a work force to match a growing industry. Under the agreement, a \$2.4m annexe will be built and subsequently used by TAFE to train 56 apprentices. This training will count towards one year of the trainees' apprenticeships. They will then be able to choose the industry or type of work in which to continue their vocational training.

Once again, our thanks must go to the Brisbane Tramways Museum for making its vehicles available to TAFE for training purposes. This agreement is also a welcome boost for the local community in terms of tourism at the museum and additional employment benefits for the northern Brisbane region. The member for Ferny Grove, in his efforts to secure the agreement for his electorate,

has put in many hours to help smooth the way towards yesterday's announcement. It is hoped that the annexe can be built in the next financial year, which will allow TAFE to get the training scheme up and running as soon as possible. I am advised that TAFE currently operates programs which start at different times during the year. This will provide some flexibility as to when the annexe can open. However, Queensland Transport has advised me that it is possible and preferable that the annexe be completed by mid next year, which would allow Northpoint TAFE use of the new building by the latter half of 2000.

This agreement and the Brisbane Light Rail Project represent a \$235m investment by the Beattie Government in what has the very real potential to develop into a significant industry for Queensland. I am confident that light rail will not only play a vital role in solving our long-term transport concerns; it will become a major financial mainstay for Queensland, providing investment opportunities and jobs for Queenslanders.
