



Speech by

Hon. STEVE BREDHAUER

MEMBER FOR COOK

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Departments of Transport and Main Roads

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (10.09 a.m.), by leave: I want to place on record how under the Beattie Government the Departments of Transport and Main Roads are creating jobs, improving job security, supporting growth in the regions and contributing to a better environment. Transport and Main Roads infrastructure programs are driving Queensland's economic growth, particularly in regional Queensland. The Beattie Government has driven a series of major infrastructure projects to improve Queensland's transport and road system, create jobs and deliver better services for all Queenslanders. In addition, we have made significant progress in improving public transport infrastructure and services in south-east Queensland. This will help us reach our Integrated Regional Transport Plan targets and contribute to improvements in air quality and greenhouse gas emissions.

Major programs under way or scheduled for the near future include the \$5.3 billion roads implementation program. In October 1998, the Beattie Government brought down a record \$5.3 billion five-year roads infrastructure program. This will deliver 17,500 jobs each year over the life of the program, and I am particularly pleased that more than half of the \$5.3 billion will be spent outside south-east Queensland. This proves our commitment to building Queensland's regions.

The \$750m Pacific Motorway project is proof of our commitment to jobs. This project has generated 1,750 direct jobs and up to 4,000 indirect jobs. This Government fixed the coalition's \$120m funding black hole for the motorway and has ensured the project could proceed. In fact, under this Government, the completion date of the motorway has been brought forward.

The Beattie Government secured Commonwealth funding of \$33m to upgrade the Barkly Highway between Cloncurry and Mount Isa. Commonwealth funding has been significantly cut in recent years. We will continue to press Canberra for funding to further improve the safety and quality of our roads in regional areas.

In rail, the tilt train between Rockhampton and Brisbane has been an overwhelming success and the train has recently carried its 100,000th passenger. Two more tilt trains are now under construction at Walkers Limited in Maryborough to run from Brisbane to Cairns. The Cairns tilt train project will generate 600 jobs. The Rockhampton tilt train recently became the fastest operating narrow gauge train anywhere in the world. It set a new Australian land speed record for trains when it was clocked at 210 kilometres an hour outside Bundaberg.

Launched in May, the \$35m Great South Pacific Express, described by overseas visitors as one of the world's most luxurious train services, will act as a major catalyst for tourism in Queensland and usher in the renaissance and romance of rail travel in the State. It was built by hand by workers in Queensland Rail's Townsville workshops.

The Beattie Government's commitment to rail is backed by the largest rail track upgrade under way in Australia with \$240m to be spent on an upgrade to the line between Rockhampton and Townsville. This upgrade alone will create 1,200 jobs in regional Queensland. Roads will also benefit from this project. The heavier track being used will allow heavier loads to be carried on the railway. The work will also allow QR to average speeds of about 100 kilometres an hour from Rockhampton to Townsville, enabling rail to compete with heavy truck freight services. I anticipate QR will attract freight away from road haulage, reducing the number of trucks on the road and improving road safety.

The Brisbane Airport rail link will connect Brisbane and the Gold Coast with the domestic and international airport terminals. This project will create up to 500 jobs during construction. Recently, I announced the financial closure on the project, which will ensure the project proceeds.

Yesterday I announced that four groups of companies had been short-listed for the Brisbane Light Rail Project. The \$235m project will create up to 300 jobs during construction and 80 positions when the system is up and running by 2001.

Integration is the key to the Government's public transport infrastructure program. This includes the new \$520m South East Transit Project, which will connect Springwood to Brisbane along a dedicated busway. The busway will reduce travelling time for commuters. And here again, this project will create as many as 1,500 jobs. The inner northern busway to the north of Brisbane will carry passengers from the Royal Brisbane Hospital to the CBD. Cabinet has approved \$135m towards this project.

In addition, Queensland has recorded Australia's lowest road toll. The Beattie Government is delivering on quality of life issues. The approach to road safety has also allowed Queensland to lead the rest of the country in reducing deaths on the road. Queensland's road toll last year was 279, which per capita was the lowest in the country and the State's lowest road toll for 43 years. Our road safety action plan includes new engineering projects, education campaigns and the introduction of innovative law enforcement systems. This successful program is set to continue under this Government and preparations are under way to produce uniform road rules and heavy vehicle reforms to crack down on truck operators.

These are just some of the highlights of the achievements of the Beattie Government in Transport and Main Roads. We are delivering on election commitments, delivering on jobs, delivering on a better quality of life, delivering to Queensland's regions and delivering on a better environment for Queensland.
