



Speech by

Hon. STEVE BREDHAUER

MEMBER FOR COOK

Hansard 26 August 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Rail Freight Haulage

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (9.57 a.m.), by leave: Our capacity to move freight efficiently is central to the ongoing success of the Queensland economy. Under the Beattie Government, there has been a significant increase in the freight traffic on our rail system and through our ports. Queensland Rail hauled more than 120 million tonnes of freight in 1998-99, a record for an Australian railway operator. This is a great result, confirming yet again that Queensland Rail is one of the world's leading heavy haul railways. Queensland Rail carried 110.4 million tonnes of freight in 1997-98. Growth has been broad based with record coal, other minerals and Q-Link traffic and strong gains in livestock and intermodal business.

As I indicated in an earlier ministerial statement, Queensland Rail carried a total of 104.2 million tonnes of coal in 1998-99, a single commodity record for a rail network in Australia. This compares with 96 million tonnes the previous year. Coal exports alone increased by almost 8 million tonnes to 94 million tonnes. Most of the growth came from substantial increases in coal haulage from the central Queensland mines of Moranbah North, South Walker Creek, Burton and Newlands and the new mine of Coppabella. Queensland Rail also carried more coal to the Gladstone and Stanwell power stations in central Queensland.

Railings of other minerals jumped from 4.8 million tonnes to 7.4 million tonnes. This was achieved largely through the increase in the haulage of lead and zinc concentrate to Townsville from the Cannington mine and of limestone from East End to Fisherman's Landing near Gladstone. Q-Link, Queensland Rail's small freight business, again performed strongly. Small freight growth is up by nearly 12%, with significant contributions from interstate traffic and whitegoods. Regional freight categories to record increases included livestock, grain and fruit and vegetables.

Haulage of livestock again increased—up 11% to 750,000 head of cattle. The export of grain in containers grew by more than 30%, with bulk grain up by more than 4%. The fast container service between north Queensland and southern capitals boosted haulage of fruit and vegetables. With major capital works programs, such as the \$240m track upgrade between Rockhampton and Townsville and continued strong growth in productivity, Queensland Rail is well placed to build its freight haulage.

Queensland is host to 14 modern and efficient trading ports, two community ports and a number of non-trading ports located at regular intervals from Brisbane in the south-east to Karumba in the north-west. The Queensland port system's total throughput in 1998-99 was approximately 154 million tonnes. This represents an approximate growth of 6% over the previous financial year. Exports were up 7.6 million tonnes, a growth of 6.4%, and imports were up one million tonnes, representing a growth rate of 3.8%. The increase in trade throughput occurred despite the decline in primary products such as sugar and grain due to unseasonal climatic conditions experienced throughout Queensland during 1998-99.

The largest volume increase of any commodity was coal. Coal exports rose approximately seven million tonnes, or 8.2%, over the previous financial year. The largest areas of growth were recorded at the port of Gladstone and at the Ports Corporation of Queensland ports of Abbot Point and Hay Point. The increases at these ports were due largely to the continuation of capital investment programs and additional tonnages from new mines.

I will now focus on some of the excellent trade results being achieved by the Ports Corporation of Queensland and the ports of Brisbane, Gladstone and Townsville. The Port of Brisbane Corporation's total throughput in 1998-99 was approximately 20.7 million tonnes, a rise of 1.7%. Total container trade was up 13% on the 1997-98 financial year's figures. The Gladstone Port Authority's total throughput for 1998-99 was nearly 43 million tonnes. This represents a 7.2% increase in trade throughput for the financial year.

As I mentioned earlier, much of the growth was due to a rise in coal exports. Coal exports which Gladstone Port Authority handles through its RG Tanna and Barney Point coal terminals for 1998-99 totalled 27.3 million tonnes. Gladstone's growth in exports is also attributed to a rise in cement and cement clinker exports as a result of Queensland Cement Ltd's recent \$200m expansion. QCL exported approximately 1.2 million tonnes of cement and cement clinker during the 1998-99 financial year—an increase of approximately 640,000, or 98% on the 1997-98 total.

The Townsville Port Authority's 1998-99 financial year saw it celebrate its twelfth consecutive year of record trade. Total trade throughput for 1998-99 came to 8.1 million tonnes, representing an increase of 5% over 1997-98 figures. The largest areas of growth came from the mining and minerals industries.

The Ports Corporation of Queensland has estimated that growth in throughput at its controlled ports in the 1998-99 financial year will be approximately 7% greater than the previous year. Most of this increase is attributed to coal exports.

These growth figures are good news for Queensland. The increases in freight being hauled on our rail system and traded through our ports are signs of a Government getting on with the job of ensuring a growth economy and growth in jobs.
