



Speech by

Hon. STEVE BREDHAUER

MEMBER FOR COOK

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Caboolture-Maroochydore Corridor Study

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (9.55 a.m.), by leave: The Caboolture-Maroochydore Corridor Study—CAMCOS—is a major planning initiative for the Sunshine Coast. CAMCOS is investigating a future public transport system, and in particular opportunities for a passenger rail service in this fast-growing area of the State. The study is looking at preserving a public transport corridor now to allow infrastructure to be effectively developed in the future with minimal disruption to communities.

Contrary to claims made by the member for Caloundra in the House last week, it was the previous Labor Government in 1996 that actually fast-tracked planning for a rail line by starting CAMCOS. Our commitment to the project now continues. The proposed route, which branches off the main north line at Beerwah, would go past Caloundra, Mooloolaba, Maroochydore, and possibly on to the Maroochydore Airport. Development of such significant transport infrastructure to link these centres would generate local employment opportunities as well as provide better access for job seekers to other employment nodes.

CAMCOS is a three-stage project, with Stages 1 and 2 already completed. Although most of the route has now been defined between Beerwah and Maroochydore, there are still three corridor options under consideration for the Caloundra area. Stage 3 involves the selection of a single preferred corridor in the Caloundra area and the conduct of a detailed impact assessment study on the preferred corridor from Beerwah to the Maroochydore Airport.

I note that there has been some criticism of the consultation process and claims that people were unaware of the study. Wide consultation on CAMCOS has occurred throughout the study and will continue throughout Stage 3. A detailed CAMCOS history has been prepared which demonstrates this point. The history shows that Queensland Transport now, and under the previous Government, has used local media, advertisements, working groups, newsletters, working papers and many briefings with local elected representatives to provide the community with information on the study.

One might have hoped that, in addition to all the study activities, local members, particularly when in Government, would have kept their constituents informed about study progress and the corridor options. Just so that the House understands the extent to which the member for Caloundra was kept informed, I have a detailed list of 20 occasions where she was either briefed or sent study material since December 1996. Many of these briefings involved the former Minister for Transport and Main Roads. All corridor options, including the Aroona option, were discussed at most briefings. For the information of the House, I table a list of consultation activities with the member for Caloundra.

Recently, there have been significant additional consultation activities, which have provided opportunities for people to have their say. A six-page information package was distributed to 3,000 people on 1 March, containing answers to commonly asked questions. Queensland Transport has also been meeting with key stakeholders and community groups. Last Saturday Queensland Transport held a community open day at which more than 200 people attended. The feedback from last weekend and throughout the study shows that there is strong support overall for improving public transport and developing a rail facility. Despite these activities, I have extended the consultation period on the three Caloundra options in response to a request for additional time for submissions.

Consultation on the Caloundra corridor options now closes on 21 March. I should stress that the original study program required the corridor in Caloundra to be selected during Stage 2, but further time has been allowed for consultation and technical work to carry over into Stage 3. I expect to receive a recommendation shortly after 21 March, and be in a position to announce the preferred corridor for Caloundra by the end of March.

There have been some claims that, if I make a decision too soon after March 21, that would indicate that I had already made up my mind. I stress that I do not have a preference for any of the Caloundra corridor options, which all remain under active investigation. But submissions are being progressively evaluated. One does not wait until the final submission has been received before starting to assess them.

It is important that enough time is allowed for these investigations. However, it is also important that we decide on a preferred corridor to provide certainty for all affected communities. I find it ironic that the local members on the coast are divided on the timing issue. The member for Maroochydore—

Miss Simpson: \$1.5m and no feasibility study.

Mr BREDHAUER: I advise the member for Maroochydore, who has been canning the rail option lately, that our research shows that a total of 7% of people on the Sunshine Coast prefer buses—the Opposition's preferred option—to the rail option, which is preferred by over 50% of people. The member for Maroochydore believes the study has gone on too long. The member for Caloundra says that it is too rushed and should be extended.

It is essential that the process run its course and Queensland Transport and Ove Arup be given the chance to manage the study independently. The planning and evaluation work must be done objectively and the community given the chance to have its say without being subject to bias or undue influence.

The member for Caloundra has clearly come out strongly advocating one of the options and does not seem to appreciate the importance of allowing the technical and consultation work to be completed to ensure that we select the best option. The member claimed in the House last week that there was little opposition to the Corbould Park option. Her constituents obviously do not agree. Feedback from consultation clearly shows a mix of views about the corridor options and local residents seem split on which option is best for Caloundra.

While the anti-Aroona group has generated a lot of interest, particularly in the media, others in the community support the Aroona option and object to the Corbould Park option. As agreed at a recent meeting, I table a petition from the Aroona action group against the Aroona option. Both corridor options have their supporters and detractors. All of these views are being taken into consideration and ultimately will be part of my decision on the preferred Caloundra option. What we do know is that the local people do want a better public transport system and they do support rail.

There has been much misinformation spread in the community and it is worth taking a moment to clarify some key elements of the proposal. Firstly, the rail line will not carry freight. Secondly, the line would have several local stations to serve local trips in addition to providing fast and convenient services to Brisbane. CAMCOS is a vital planning process for the future livability of the Sunshine Coast, and I hope that all parties work together to develop an integrated public transport system to preserve this livability.
