



Speech by

Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard 16 March & 11 April 2000

TRANSPORT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (5.49 p.m.): I rise to speak on the Transport Legislation Amendment Bill and to take the opportunity to address a number of issues of concern in my electorate whilst the Minister is present in the House. My colleague, the member for Mooloolah, Mr Laming, has already mentioned the need to upgrade the Sunshine Motorway. This is an issue which also affects my electorate.

The intersection of Buderim Avenue and the Mooloolaba link on the Sunshine Motorway is very congested. Anyone who lives locally knows that the intersection has reached its capacity and major work needs to be undertaken to redefine the intersection.

The most pressing issue is the construction of four lanes on the Sunshine Motorway, particularly the section of the motorway between Buderim Avenue and Maroochydore Road. A number of deaths have occurred on this section of the road. It seems that every couple of years another person is wiped out. It is a two-lane, straight road, but unfortunately a large number of people seem to have been wiped out on this section of the Sunshine Motorway.

I urge the Government to reconsider the time frames for the upgrade of this section of the road not only because of the increased traffic volumes but also because of the tragic accidents that have occurred on this road. I know that the current Government has a lot of antipathy to upgrading the Sunshine Motorway on the basis of the removal of the tolls. That may be a political issue for the Government. However, I would ask the Government to step aside from its opposition to that issue in the past and recognise that this major arterial road links up the Sunshine Coast. A large section of the road that requires upgrading was once, prior to the toll debacle, a local road that provided local access for local people. Owing to the increased number of people using that road, we simply cannot wait years for that upgrade. Unless that road is upgraded, I fear that there will be further tragedies, with more people being wiped out. All too often it seems that those people who die in road accidents are not always those who were at the wheel or caused the accident. Whether or not a person caused the accident, their death is still a tragedy. Unfortunately, people's valuable lives have been lost on this section of road. I would have to say that this is a black spot on Queensland's roads.

The upgrade to the interchange will be complex. It will most likely involve the need for a staged, full upgrade of the interchange with possibly in the future partial access ramps to the proposed southern access. The Maroochy Shire Council proposed to build that road. I have seen the council minutes which state that it will be built by developers. Unfortunately, in recent times that process has become bogged down because of the uncertainty of development in that area. At this stage the council has not moved on that project.

However, the southern access will go ahead regardless of whether there are initially direct access ramps onto the Sunshine Motorway. It stands to reason that eventually there will be a full interchange, or a staggered interchange with partial ramps onto the Sunshine Motorway from the southern access and ramps at the other intersection. However, as I have said to local people, these things have to be done in complete consultation with the local community. Once we talk about the possibility of altering or deleting the current access points and shifting them to somewhere else, the possible impacts on the community must be fully understood. People deserve to be part of a full

consultation process to make sure that the future road design is of the greatest benefit to the greatest number of people. I certainly support a major upgrade of that intersection.

Once again, I reiterate that the upgrading of the Sunshine Motorway and the four-laning of the Sunshine Motorway is critical to address the black spot problem on that road, the tragedies of lost lives, and the seemingly endless number of accidents that occur on what is otherwise a straight piece of road. The history of accidents on that road is known. People are dying. The congestion on that section of the road concerns me greatly.

I acknowledge that this Minister and this Government have continued the former coalition Government's commitment to undertake a traffic study and consultation on the Maroochy North Shore, and I welcome that. It is very important to ensure that we have the best plans in place for when the roadways are built in the future. Many communities on the Sunshine Coast have grown around major arterial roadways. That causes local traffic problems and local safety problems, as evidenced by the communities of Pacific Paradise and Maroocha, which is located further north along the David Low Way. There is major traffic along this section of road. Once the toll was removed from the Sunshine Motorway bridge, the traffic volumes in these communities dropped and have remained considerably less than they were when the toll was in place. So some traffic has been diverted to the Sunshine Motorway away from these communities.

However, the reality is that there is still a very strong growth of traffic numbers on that North Shore area. There is a conflict between through traffic and local traffic in that area. The communities are divided by a major arterial road. Children must try to cross a winding and lengthy section of that major arterial road to get to bus stops in order to get to school or to walk to the local primary school. Once again, I believe that the best way to plan and then put the roadworks in place is for a proper traffic study to be undertaken with full consultation.

On the Sunshine Motorway at Pacific Paradise, there is a partial interchange. At the time the toll was put in place, the configuration of the road was such that there were no northern access ramps to the Sunshine Motorway. There was also no southern exit ramp to the Sunshine Motorway at the Maroochy River on the North Shore. After the tolls came off, a temporary solution to that problem was for a half roundabout to allow traffic travelling to the south to be able to do a U-turn to then come back up to the north and exit off the motorway that way. It is a less than ideal situation. Although it met the immediate needs of the community, ultimately a full interchange is necessary.

One of the possibilities for that road would be to have a split interchange with possible access to the airport. Another possibility that will be studied is the option of a bypass to the north of Pacific Paradise with other secondary link roads that try to divert that through traffic away from those communities. Ultimately, I believe that these things must be studied to make sure that there are no unintended consequences, that we get best road network with the best safety outcomes, and that through traffic no longer generates a lot of conflicts in the community.

I also wish to acknowledge the quite outstanding work that was done by the contractors and the Main Roads Department in the recently completed section of Maroochy Road. They have done a really outstanding job. I believe that they have consulted well with the community. I have found personally that when people approached them with particular issues of concern, they responded very quickly to them. I can only say that if that standard of responding to community concerns was applied to other Government departments, it would be a very positive step for the Queensland bureaucracy. It has been an outstanding project, and well undertaken.

The next section of Maroochy Road that needs to be upgraded is the Kunda Park section. That upgrade has been delayed. However, I think that it is imperative that the link between Nambour and Maroochy is as flood free as possible. That is certainly something that I will continue to pursue, because that link is necessary to provide the best route between those two major regional centres.

I would also like to put on record the process of CAMCOS, which is the public transport corridor study that is looking at the introduction of a staged implementation busway and a railway corridor. I believe that we need better public transport. There is going to be a need for an integrated approach to implementing that public transport system. We need not only the physical infrastructure of bus lanes and other dedicated lanes and traffic lights but also we need to know that a coordinating central authority can make sure that we have some integration of the services.

We also need seed funding to make sure that there is a very strong campaign to encourage people to use that public transport. I certainly support better access to public transport on the Sunshine Coast. It will take seed funding to really attract people to use public transport, to make routes viable by showing people that they can have coordinated and dedicated busways or, in the interim, busways that help people access points in a way that is more convenient than using their cars.

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochy—NPA) (12.30 p.m.), continuing: In concluding my contribution to this debate, I would again like to raise an issue that I have taken up with the Transport Minister and the Education Minister, and that is the road acquisition affecting the Maroochy State High School. I

fought very hard for the Maroochydore Road upgrade. There is strong community support for this upgrade. It is necessary to have four-laning through this section of road which, currently, is carrying the equivalent of highway volumes of traffic. It is pleasing to see that contract proceeding.

That road upgrade will take the road very close to the school and in parts will require the acquisition of land. My understanding is that the compensation that will be paid from one department to another for the over 500 square metres of land that will be acquired for the widening of the road is \$17,000. However, under the rules of Government, compensation moneys for land acquired flows back into consolidated revenue. I urge the Minister, in consultation with the Education Minister, to support that small amount of money—which would really be a large amount of money for the school—going back to the school for the school's benefit, given that the people involved with that school have concerns about noise and dust and the locking up of some of the buildings during construction.

While construction is under way, staff at the school have to try to provide the best services that they can to the school. A network of computers are located in a building that will have to be locked up while construction takes place to prevent noise and dust getting into it. Obviously, in our climate—even in winter—one cannot close all the windows of a building without supplying airconditioning. I believe that that compensation money would more than adequately address the concerns that have been raised about that particular building. That is something that the school community is very keen to see happen. As I said, it is a small amount for consolidated revenue, but it would make a large difference in terms of ameliorating the impact of that road on the school.

Private land owners who are directly impacted have a choice as to how they use their compensation packages. I believe that it is an anomaly that the system that does not allow discretion at a local level as to how those compensation packages are used. Where a school community is affected, currently there is no provision within the law for that compensation to flow back to the school. Once again, I seek the Minister's assistance, in consultation with the Education Minister and the Cabinet, to make allowance for those funds not to flow back into consolidated revenue but to be used to ameliorate the impact that this road will have upon the property which, in this case, is a major State high school in the Maroochydore area.

I want to also reiterate my concerns about the delay in the upgrade of the Sunshine Motorway to four-lane status. Once again, in relation to the volumes that this road is carrying and its accident record, I am most concerned about the Minister's reply to a question on notice in which I asked him about the need to upgrade the time frame for work on this road. His reply was that he disagreed with the coalition's decision to take the toll off this road. He outlined very clearly in his—

Mr BREDHAUER: That is untrue. I did not indicate that in my letter. I ask for it to be withdrawn.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Mickel): Order! The Minister has asked for a withdrawal.

Miss SIMPSON: If the Minister finds it offensive, I will withdraw it. I refer the Minister to his answer where, very clearly—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minister asked for a withdrawal. Is the member withdrawing?

Miss SIMPSON: I did withdraw it, but on the basis that it is not actually untrue. I refer the House to the Minister's answer in which he made reference to the fact that the coalition took the toll off the Sunshine Motorway. That is in the answer that was provided to the House.

Mr Bredhauer: I didn't say I disagreed with the decision; what I said was that your decision to take the toll off had affected the Budget and our ability to provide funding.

Miss SIMPSON: I am most concerned that future decisions about the necessary upgrading of this road may be tainted by the Government's opposition to the coalition taking the toll off this road. It was an extremely necessary piece of infrastructure for the Sunshine Coast. The public made that view known. It was a commitment that the coalition followed through on in removing the toll. I am most concerned that, because the Government made it known most vocally that it was opposed to the toll coming off the Sunshine Motorway, it is tainting their consideration of this road being upgraded. In that regard, I really urge the Minister to rethink the Government's position.

The road needs to be included in an implementation program for upgrading. As members would find, under the current plan the road does not figure significantly. It is off in the far-distant future. That is simply unacceptable. It is a two-lane road that in part carries over 23,000 vehicles. It has high congestion. The upgrade of this road is extremely necessary for the commercial sector as well as for the residents and the domestic traffic that use the road. I urge the Government to revisit its priorities in regard to the Sunshine Motorway.

As I said, I am delighted that the Maroochydore Road upgrade is proceeding. It is a \$28m upgrade that includes the section that has just been completed. I give full marks to the department and the contractors who delivered on that first section. I trust that the quality of the community consultation will continue with the second stage of the upgrade of this road.
