



Speech by

Hon. STEVE BREDHAUER

MEMBER FOR COOK

Hansard 15 March 2000

TRANSPORT (BUSWAY AND LIGHT RAIL) AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads)
(11.41 a.m.): I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

The objective of this Bill is to provide for a range of amendments to Acts administered by the Department of Transport. Specifically, this Bill provides for the facilitation of infrastructure development for two new major transport modes in Queensland—busway and light rail systems. The initial focus of the operation of the legislation will be the development of a light rail system for Brisbane, and the ongoing development of Brisbane's system of busways. However, the legislation will be generic and can be utilised throughout urbanised areas of Queensland where circumstances may warrant these modes of infrastructure.

The Integrated Regional Transport Plan for south-east Queensland was released in April 1997. The IRTP proposes an increase in the number of public transport trips by over 150% by the year 2011 to support significant population growth and maintain quality of life in south-east Queensland by improving accessibility and increase the 490,000 daily trips to 1.2 million daily trips.

Light rail for Brisbane will assist in meeting the Government's Integrated Regional Transport Plan targets. The momentum for a light rail network has arisen from increased inner-city living, urban renewal and the need for an integrated land use transport vision for Brisbane. It will alleviate congestion while enhancing the overall image and accessibility of Brisbane. The light rail provides significant benefits to residents of south-east Queensland in terms of improved public transport facilities.

In the past few years, Brisbane's inner suburbs have grown significantly as people have realised the benefits of inner-city living. The resultant demand on retail, commercial, cultural and entertainment facilities is being catered for by the Government's Integrated Regional Transport Plan, which has recognised the changing patterns of transport use.

Improving public transport so as to provide a realistic alternative to private car travel is the most important transport issue facing south-east Queensland. If people can count on high-quality, safe, reliable, secure, affordable and frequent public transport, they will be able to rely less on cars, freeing up valuable road space and avoiding the need to construct major new roads to accommodate peak private vehicle demands.

Trips in and around Brisbane City are expected to increase by 60% to over one million trips daily by 2011. Preliminary studies have indicated that a light rail network has the potential to move over 45,000 passengers per day by the year 2002 and 50,000 by the year 2011, and would reduce the environmental impacts of transport demands in the city centre. The light rail network will provide an inner-city distribution function, linking nearby residential, commercial and industrial centres. A light rail network will benefit tourists travelling in the city and promote business growth through the improved access to the central business district's retail core provided by the network.

The key modal interchanges with the busway, ferry and rail systems and the use of integrated ticketing recently announced by this Government mean seamless transfers between public transport modes, with one ticket to be used on all modes of transport. Light rail systems have the potential to reduce air and noise emission levels in the inner city, as well as reduce traffic volumes and congestion with an increased public transport usage. A range of travel markets will be served, including commuter,

recreational, tourist, shopping, students and other trips to the inner suburbs. Although these are features of a light rail system for Brisbane, this legislation will amend the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 to facilitate the development of light rail wherever there is a public transport demand. I will give a brief outline of the key features addressed by the legislation for light rail systems.

Tenure

The light rail tenure arrangements are based on the heavy rail model in the Transport Infrastructure Act. The process begins, however, with a declaration of light rail land which is also unallocated State land. There is then a lease of the unallocated State land from the Governor in Council to the State on behalf of the Department of Transport. There is provision for a sublease of the leased light rail land from the Department of Transport to a light rail manager.

Public Utility Interaction

The legislation provides for the chief executive and a light rail manager to control access to light rail land where a utility owner may request entry to light rail land to undertake activities in relation to their utilities.

Compensation Entitlements

Compensation is a feature of some of the provisions in the legislation. In particular, compensation is available to land-holders or occupier who as a consequence of light rail establishment have a clear diminution of their physical access arrangements to and from the road network. In the legislation, compensation is not provided in relation to a number of matters, for example, for a loss of amenity or any interference with an activity of a business, commercial, industrial or residential nature. Clearly, if compensation was available for all matters then the undertaking of major transport infrastructure projects by the State would not be viable.

I am aware that some concerns have been raised by the Property Council regarding the Brisbane Light Rail Project. Queensland Transport has held meetings with the Property Council and a further briefing is scheduled for later this month. There is also a standing offer to all property holders along the route to discuss unresolved concerns with the project team. I am confident that we can work together to resolve all outstanding issues.

Accreditation of Light Rail Managers and Operators

A framework for an accreditation scheme for light rail managers and operators will operate in a similar fashion to the legislative scheme for accreditation of heavy rail managers and operators such as Queensland Rail and will be administered by Queensland Transport.

Incident Management

The framework for incident management has been referenced from provisions for the management of heavy rail incidents. Under these provisions, as Minister, where I consider a serious incident has occurred I will be able to establish or re-establish a board of inquiry about an incident that has happened on or involving a light rail system. As Minister, I will be given a report of the board's findings, which contain the recommendations the board considers appropriate and other relevant matters.

The Granting of Authorities for Persons to Conduct Preliminary Investigatory Works

Once again, the heavy rail legislative model has been a source of reference for the purposes of the light rail legislation. The legislation provides for the chief executive to issue an authority to a person seeking to enter land to investigate the land's potential for the development of light rail transport infrastructure. Among other matters, the person must be able to show that entry to the land could not be successfully negotiated with the affected persons for the land. These preliminary investigatory powers are also applicable to persons seeking an appropriate authority to enter land and to investigate the land's potential for busway transport infrastructure development.

Many people have seen the light rail systems that operate in Europe and the United States. This modern electric rail technology operates either on street or in a dedicated right of way. A common feature of successful light rail projects is their integration with an urban development strategy to concentrate passenger demands along the route. The environmentally friendly form of public transport is cleaner, quieter and beneficial to the health of the people in high-density urbanised areas. Electric power means that the light rail vehicles do not release pollutants into the atmosphere. Features common to light rail systems include rolling stock which is fully accessible and airconditioned, and a sophisticated suspension system ensures a smooth, comfortable ride.

Public transport also has major social benefits in providing transport for those who, for whatever reason, do not drive a car. For those that do, an aim of busway and light rail systems is to provide public transport of such a standard that no household in the region has to run two or more cars in order to meet the household's travel needs. It is estimated that running a small second car can cost up to \$7,000 per year, or \$135 per week, when all costs are considered. By facilitating busway and light rail infrastructure this legislation will be an important platform in encouraging people not to purchase a second vehicle or to leave their vehicles at home.

There are other important reforms with respect to busway transport infrastructure. It can be said that in many respects the busway legislation mirrors the provisions of the light rail legislation. With regard to tenure, a declaration of busway land which is also unallocated State land sees a lease of the unallocated State land from the Governor in Council to the State on behalf of the Department of Transport. For now, it is envisaged that the chief executive will be primarily responsible for the construction, management and operation functions for busways. Other than in this respect the features of the busway legislation are comparable to the light rail legislation, with similar provisions for public utility interaction and compensation entitlements.

The busway is a dedicated transport infrastructure system, featuring passenger stations for buses only. As opposed to rail modes, a bus will have the flexibility to travel on a road after exiting the busway. Busway routes will be able to be extended to meet urban growth. As passenger demand or congestion on a particular road increases, a busway can be extended. The system of busways that is being developed will assist with this plan by ensuring that buses travelling along a dedicated busway corridor will be more efficient than is currently the case where buses are mingled with general traffic.

Often, buses running in mixed traffic are unable to gain a sufficient advantage to attract the number of passengers needed to meet the targets for increased public transport use. Buses face increasing congestion and are unable to offer a service good enough to compete with the car. The development of the busway will enhance bus operations. The dedicated busway corridors with properly dedicated, landscaped stopping bays will be able to run consistently to timetables, ensuring commuters of a smooth, efficient trip without the need to drive themselves. Buses will not have to compete with general traffic.

The Brisbane Busway Plan, initially conceived by the Brisbane City Council, has been broadened into the SEQ Regional Busway Network. This system can build on the already strong role of buses in the regional transport system and provide the necessary improvements to system capacity and travel times in a cost effective way. The links in the busway network have been chosen for corridors not served by rail. Feeder bus services will serve both busway and rail stations. Again, although these are features of busways for Brisbane, the amendments to the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 will provide for this infrastructure to be facilitated throughout the State wherever there is a public transport demand.

One of the key platforms of the Beattie Labor Government has been the importance of job creation, and this Bill is again evidence of this Government getting on with the job. Estimates in the Brisbane Busway Strategy report included the creation of 21,000 person years of employment from busway construction. Generally, the South East Transit Project has 800 people employed, and this is expected to grow to 1,400 by mid 2000. Contractors used must adhere to the 10% training policy.

The Brisbane Light Rail project estimated total generated employment as 1,200 person years of employment during infrastructure construction, with 80 permanent jobs during operation and 300 person years of employment in rolling stock manufacture. Apprenticeship training for heritage tram restoration at North Point TAFE is included, as the 10% apprenticeship training policy will be required of the contractor. The Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 and the Transport Planning and Coordination Act 1994 will be amended to ensure that Queensland Transport is sufficiently empowered to facilitate and manage these two very important reforms which will be of huge benefit to Queensland. I commend this Bill to the House.
