



Speech by

Hon. STEVE BREDHAUER

MEMBER FOR COOK

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APPROPRIATION BILL, ESTIMATES COMMITTEE C

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (3.52 p.m.): I rise to speak about the Estimates for the Departments of Transport and Main Roads. I will respond to some of the criticisms that have been made today. I put on record that this year's budget is another record budget in the areas of Transport and Main Roads. It demonstrates the Beattie Government's commitment to jobs and job security and also, importantly, to issues of regional development.

There are probably no more important ways in which we can support the establishment of new industries and the continuation and expansion of existing industries in rural and regional parts of Queensland than through providing appropriate transport and roads infrastructure. My portfolio plays a critical role in our Government's efforts to expand regional economies, to help develop regional economies and to provide Government leadership in those areas, particularly in the areas of jobs and job creation. A very important part of that effort is the Main Roads budget, including over \$1 billion for the roadworks program this year. Also, this year we are spending \$656m on capital in relation to Queensland Rail. A critical issue in regional areas is Queensland's coastal ports.

The criticisms from members opposite during the debate today included a suggestion by the member for Gregory that there have been cost overruns on projects undertaken by my department. That is true. A number of the projects have come in higher than their original budget estimate. The member for Gregory should know about the Pacific Motorway project. He actually re-scoped the project two or three times while he was the Minister.

Mr Johnson: It made it a better project.

Mr BREDHAUER: He left me in the situation where we were \$120m shy of the funding required. He had written to the then Treasurer and he had received no response to the request for \$120m.

Another example is the SET project, being constructed on the other side of the river. I know that the member for Gregory did not agree with the decision, but the decision to support the South Bank Corporation and change the alignment of the busway, from Grey Street to the other side of the railway line, added an estimated additional cost of \$120m to the project.

There is an issue in my department—right across the portfolio, I have to say—with projects costing more than they are initially budgeted at. That is an issue I have talked to my department about often. We are working to improve our estimation. Often when we go through the public consultation phase the project is changed—as a result of consultation with the community and other stakeholders to meet particular requirements. In the process of doing that, more money has to be spent to make it a better project, as the member for Gregory said himself with respect to the Pacific Motorway.

Another issue raised was the tilt train. The member for Gregory has raised the issue of the tilt train at each of the three Estimates committee hearings we have had. The budget for that was well known last year. I do not know why the member continues to harp on this issue. We did say initially that it would cost \$120m. When we went out to the tender process—

Mr Johnson: You never went out to tender.

Mr BREDHAUER: Sorry, you are right. When we went out to the alliance contract process it came in at \$137m and we agreed that we would fund that. The issues basically are as they have been known for some time.

I mention the member for Beaudesert and some comments he made in respect of school buses, particularly the suggestion that the coalition had a policy that it would stop standees and install seatbelts on school buses. It is absolute nonsense. I remember—the member for Merrimac will remember this—when the member for Beaudesert said that the coalition was going to build a high school at Jimboomba. He promised it in February 1997. There was going to be an accelerated capital works program so that high school could be built at Jimboomba. Later that year at the Estimates committee hearing what did the member for Merrimac, the then Education Minister, tell me? He said, "I don't know anything about that promise. I suggest you go and ask the member for Beaudesert."

I say to the people of Beaudesert: I would not believe a word the member for Beaudesert tells you. If he says it is a promise, I would want to see it in writing, but not from the member for Beaudesert. I would want to see it from somebody who is actually responsible in terms of making those kinds of commitments, because he has a track record across his electorate and across the State of Queensland of making promises and commitments and not delivering on them. His comments in respect of the school bus issue will be treated with the scant regard they deserve.

Time expired.
