



Speech by

KERRY SHINE

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

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TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE AND ANOTHER ACT AMENDMENT BILL

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (9.25 p.m.): I rise to speak to the Transport Infrastructure and Another Act Amendment Bill. The introduction of electronic tolling is a positive and inevitable step. Melbourne's City Link demonstrates the concept of user pays roadways through its use of electronic tolling technology. The Melbourne experience indicates that the project just could not have gone ahead without electronic tolling. It avoids the queues, the waiting and the digging for loose change that holds up traffic on traditional roadways. Interestingly, Melbourne City Link is using an electronic tolling system based on military technology developed in Sweden by Saab.

In Melbourne, before driving onto the City Link drivers prepay perhaps \$100 into a special account at a variety of locations. As their vehicle travels on the City Link, instruments mounted on overhead gantries at three points on the 22-kilometre route read the tags electronically and the appropriate fee is deducted. For those who may be tempted to run the gauntlet of the advanced tagging technology, I mention that I read of a trial system in operation on a stretch of freeway in Austria which has already successfully read the tag of one vehicle travelling at 297 kilometres per hour. The idea is that vehicles without a tag or without credit on their tag will be photographed.

Prior to its introduction in Melbourne, the proponents of City Link argued that it would provide easier, cheaper, safer and greener travel. All of these claims are based around the advantage of the electronic management of tolls and vehicles not having to stop to pay them. Electronic tolling will ease congestion and time pressure. It was claimed by these proponents that, because stop-start driving is overcome, fuel consumption will be reduced by 30 per cent for the same distance of road travelled and will save Victorian business over 20,000 tonnes of fuel each year. Also, because of proposed smoother traffic flow there is allegedly less risk entailed in being on an electronically controlled toll road. Finally, there is less pollution because vehicles will not be slowing to inefficient speeds at which the distance to emission ratio becomes higher.

We in Queensland are fortunate to have been able to see the pros and cons of the Melbourne City Link experience. It has enabled proper consideration to be given, in the light of that valuable experience, and no doubt has also provided for ample time to study other alternatives, such as video tolling, e-cash and season tickets.

The common objective of governments, toll road operators and motorists includes the implementation of toll road products, including toll road usage by infrequent customers. The requirement implies satisfactory solutions to user convenience, the economy, privacy and safety. For the road operator it requires economy of operation, including high probability of toll payment.

I congratulate the minister for the introduction of this legislation. There is a common move for large industrialised and developing countries, especially those with large congested cities, to move from traditionally manned or unmanned tolls to electronic tolling. The most obvious advantage of electronic tolling is the greater free flow of vehicles per hour, which provides particular benefit during peak travel times.

In conclusion and in summary—electronic toll roads avoid queues which erode travel time savings and avoid a reduction in safety and vehicle emission benefits which result from stop-start motoring. I commend the bill to the House.