



Speech by

Hon. STEVE BREDHAUER

MEMBER FOR COOK

Hansard 15 May 2001

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

South East Transit Project

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (9.53 a.m.), by leave: The Beattie government's \$350 million South East Busway between Eight Mile Plains and the city opened to scheduled services on Monday, 30 April 2001 with overwhelming community support. More than 10,000 new passengers used the core busway routes in the first week of operation—an additional 2,185 commuters a day. At 50 passengers a bus, that translates to 44 extra buses a day for Brisbane Transport alone, and I understand the member for Mansfield has been out on the busway again this morning.

This strong patronage increase was evident from the first morning of operation. On the Labour Day long weekend, an average of 30 passengers took advantage of the TransLink 111 service, which operates every 15 minutes between 9 a.m. and 6 p.m. These patronage levels for Sundays and public holidays are unprecedented in Brisbane. At times over the long weekend, the 111 service was carrying 50 passengers. Early figures from other bus operators show that patronage has increased on all services using the busway, and that patronage on some Logan City Sunday services has trebled now that they can service the South Bank precinct. We will review these figures again after three months of operation to confirm this trend.

The bus industry is pleased with the public response to the new system, as is the state government. The early figures are extremely positive, and I look forward to continued success. The corridor will be servicing the needs of south-east Queensland commuters well into the next century. In 10 and 20 years time, travel demand in the corridor will be significantly higher.

The Beattie government is making solid progress to encourage more people to consider alternatives to the private car. Figures from Queensland Transport show that south-east Queensland has experienced significant increases in patronage on public transport over the past two financial years. In the 1999-2000 financial year, patronage on urban bus services in south-east Queensland jumped by 8.1 per cent, compared with 2.5 per cent in 1998-99. Over the past two years, patronage of services in Cleveland and Redland Bay has increased by 43 per cent. On the Sunshine Coast and in Toowoomba, patronage has increased by 24 per cent. On the Gold Coast an increase of 10 per cent has been achieved over the last financial year. The increase for Deception Bay services was 14 per cent.

The Beattie government believes that the South East Transit Project will lead to more improvements in the efficiency of bus services and make more people consider using public transport. This week saw the opening of another key part of this government's strategy to enhance the region's transport system. Six kilometres of T2 transit lanes on the Pacific Motorway between the Gateway Motorway and Mains Road will allow cars with two or more occupants, taxis and motorcycles to bypass congestion. The T2 transit lanes are a part of the Beattie government's ongoing efforts to improve the transport system.

The T2 lanes allow travel in both directions in the median lanes of the Pacific Motorway 24 hours a day. They provide a clear path, even in congested periods, for vehicles carrying more than just the driver. The transit lanes will also enable a faster response to accidents and other emergencies by allowing emergency vehicles priority. Providing priority passage for vehicles with more than one occupant allows for the more efficient use of valuable road space, and encourages people to offer lifts to others or to enter into car pooling arrangements with friends and neighbours.

Early indications show that people are responding well to the new lanes. The transit lanes and busway form part of the Beattie government's \$599 million South East Transit Project. The SET project is designed to improve public transport options and reduce car dependency and, at the same time, increase travel options for commuters in the south-east transport corridor. These initiatives open up tremendous opportunities for commuters in south-east Queensland. They are the beneficiaries of a public transport system that is second to none.
