



Speech by

## Miss FIONA SIMPSON

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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Hansard 1 August 2002

### APPROPRIATION BILLS [ESTIMATES COMMITTEE F]

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (2.58 p.m.): I take pleasure in joining in this debate in regard to Estimates Committee F and particularly with regard to Transport, Main Roads and Public Works and Housing. First of all, I would like to put on the record again how we are still waiting to see plans and capital funding put in place to upgrade the north coast line—the railway line to the Sunshine Coast—to the extent that it needs to be upgraded. I do not think we should be overly grateful that, because we have always had a railway line since the 1890s, that is sufficient. Only in recent years has the Gold Coast been given a hinterland railway service, but it has a service that runs regularly. It is time that the 1890s alignment for the north coast railway line was upgraded.

Currently trains can travel at only about 50 kilometres per hour through certain sections because they are running on an 1880s system. It is time the system is upgraded so we can get benefit from the tilt trains that go to Brisbane. We currently get no benefit from the speeds trains can reach on proper track because of the alignment through the Sunshine Coast. There must be better coordination with bus services and a duplication to enable us to get the services that this major region needs, certainly as a link through to Brisbane.

There are other ongoing issues related to better linkages of public transport with the rail network and the network of buses throughout the Sunshine Coast. The CAMCOS study was started under the coalition government and was continued by this government. There is a plan, but we are still waiting to see dollars attached to its implementation. There is no doubt that much better services than we have seen to date could be provided with buses. If the same level of subsidy applied to public transport in Brisbane was applied to the Sunshine Coast, I am sure we would not have the problems we are facing. This is a social equity issue. There are many people who cannot afford to run a car and a lot of elderly people who are unable to drive their own cars. In fact, access per head of population is getting worse. I draw that matter to the attention of the Transport Minister.

I am concerned when the Beattie Labor government is warning that it will cut up to 2,000 jobs and possibly more. How many of those jobs will be cut from the Sunshine Coast? How many of them will be cut from the departments of Transport and Main Roads and other important departments? We already know that there are not enough transport officers to deal with compliance issues on the road. While there is legislation currently before the House relating to car noise issues and honing, we know that there are not enough transport officers who are highly skilled in the area of compliance. I am concerned that the government is cutting jobs. Is this one of those areas in which we will see more jobs slashed?

In regard to Main Roads, there are a number of key priority areas that need funding. While there is some indicative funding in the future for the Sunshine Motorway—a planning study is under way currently, which I welcome—we want a firm commitment from the state government that there will be funding to upgrade the Sunshine Motorway, particularly a duplication of the area between Buderim-Mooloolaba Avenue and Maroochydore Road, which is carrying far in excess of the traffic it was designed to carry. The interchanges at Buderim-Mooloolaba Avenue and Maroochydore Road, and certainly one back towards Mooloolah River, are beyond their capacity and need desperate upgrading.

We want a firm commitment that that funding will be in the next budget. This particular budget deals only with planning funding.

With regard to housing, I urge the state government to provide assistance to help relocate the youth shelter at Maroochydore. We know that this is also a Families Department issue, but it is inappropriately located. It is a problem in that there are too many young people in a confined space with no play area. That shelter is beyond its use-by date. The shelter people would agree. That shift cannot take place without assistance from Housing. I also raise the issue of aged and disabled housing. I certainly welcome the high-rise at Maroochydore which will assist in that regard, but we still have an ongoing waitlist for those people in need.

Time expired.