



Speech by

Mike Horan

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

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APPROPRIATION BILLS; ESTIMATES COMMITTEE D

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (12.51 p.m.): I want to speak initially about the TransLink system, and I thank the minister for his response to the letter I wrote to him. The TransLink system extends throughout south-east Queensland and west to Helidon station. I wrote about the need to extend that to Toowoomba. What happens is a bus will leave from Toowoomba and go down to Rosewood, then there is a rail-bus link that goes down to Helidon, and then there is a rail-bus link which goes from Helidon to Rosewood. The integrated ticketing system is an excellent system that allows people to use ferries, trains and other modes of public transport with the one ticket. For many people from Toowoomba who want to travel to Brisbane to see relations or for medical services, it gives them that wonderful opportunity. I know the minister has left an option open to examine that in the future, and I thank him for that.

Secondly, I want to talk about plane services to Toowoomba. I commend the Toowoomba City Council for the efforts it has made to obtain plane services from Toowoomba directly to Brisbane airport to link up with interstate services and also for a service that flies from western Queensland, from Roma, over the top of Toowoomba to be able to land in Toowoomba on its way to Brisbane and return.

Most people from out west do business in one shape or form with Toowoomba. It is the capital city of the south-west. Many have children at the eight boarding schools in Toowoomba or children at the University of Southern Queensland. Many of them are dealing with lawyers, accountants, bankers and agribusinesses in the city so it is important for them to be able to do business with the convenience of a plane service. It seems so silly to have planes flying over the top of Toowoomba and not be able to land there. Even if we had a plane service a couple of days of the week—maybe Mondays and Fridays.

The other important thing about a plane link to Toowoomba is in the attraction of business. The economic development department of the Toowoomba City Council has worked hard to attract businesses to our city. When people come from interstate and look at establishing a factory or a manufacturing business or some type of business in our city or near our city, they want to know that they have the convenience of going to the Brisbane airport and being able to get onto a commuter plane or some service so they can come directly here.

Mr Lucas: One of the problems with Toowoomba airport, though, is it is constrained in size.

Mr HORAN: The council is prepared to work in, particularly with regards to the terminal. It is prepared to make that comfortable and a very pleasant place to stop over. I understand the concern about particular planes due to the size of the airport runway, but they are prepared to look at the width of the strip as well. There is full cooperation from the council. I would certainly urge the minister to give every consideration to that. It would make an enormous difference. I know there are companies looking at the possibility of a service from Sydney to Toowoomba.

Finally, I want to speak about the second range crossing. This has been mooted for so long. Originally the federal government said that it would start building it in the year 2007. I know approximately \$30 million—maybe one or two million more than that—has been apportioned by the federal government and I understand most of that has been provided. About \$2 million has been used to complete the final

design details of the second range crossing, and the balance has been used to purchase properties in the corridor which were identified some time ago.

The role of the state government is to establish priorities. What concerns us in Toowoomba is the massive growth that is occurring in south-east Queensland. Our road is very important to us and to the economy of the state because it is the heaviest freight carrying road in Australia. As the highway comes through Toowoomba on James Street, the trucks have to traverse some 16 sets of traffic lights. There is of the order of 3,000 or more trucks out of the 20,000-plus vehicles that go up the range every day, and most of those trucks are B-doubles. It has done enormous damage to the amenity of our city but, more importantly, to the economy of Australia and south-east Queensland.

It should be a priority road, and it is important that priority is pushed for by the state government. There are two partners in this—the state government in the area of priority and the state government who is responsible for its construction when the funds come through. The other task is for us to keep pushing the federal government to get these funds through. It may have to be a special project because of the urgent needs of other roads like the Ipswich Motorway, which we certainly recognise. I would call on the minister to give us support in getting the priority of this road right up to the top so this most important national road can become a second range highway for the convenience of our city.

Time expired.