



Speech by

Mike Horan

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA SOUTH

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PORT OF BRISBANE

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (11.29 p.m.): One of the most important aspects of business operation to Queensland is the efficient operation of the port of Brisbane. It is a shame that the dysfunctionality occurring in the transfer of containers onto trucks that are bringing the contents of those containers to businesses throughout south-east Queensland is hindering small business and causing unemployment. The Premier knows about the problem. The Port of Brisbane Authority knows about the problem. The Minister for Transport knows about the problem, but still it continues. A small business operator came to me from Toowoomba. He imports about eight or nine containers per year. He spends in the order of \$250,000 per container on imports and he needs those to flow at a constant rate for his business—that is, the sale of certain types of furniture. Imagine his dismay when he found that a major and successful Toowoomba transport company, which has built up a large container carrying business over recent years which operates out of the port of Brisbane, has said that it will no longer operate out of that port because it is hopeless.

In fact, when this company is given a slot to pick up its container, it has to wait for one to three hours. That means that when it delivers those containers it is then far out of sync with deliveries to south-east Queensland or Toowoomba. This company has a responsibility under its chain of responsibility to ensure that its drivers are well looked after in terms of the number of hours that they drive for, but because of this situation the drivers are not able to continue with the job. As a result, this transport company has put off 50 workers, sold off 100 trailers and disposed of some 50 trucks. It is going to concentrate on its core business—that is, serving many of the big firms around Toowoomba, the Lockyer and the Darling Downs. This is a very successful trucking firm and one that we should take notice of, because the export/import operation through the port of Brisbane is very important to this state.

I understand that the flow of containers on the seaside of the port—that is, from the ships to the port—operates at a very efficient rate. But the real problem is the land side—that is, the putting of the containers onto the trucks. Trucking companies pay big money up front to one organisation for a slot at the wharf and pay a certain amount per slot to the stevedoring organisation every time they use it. One would think that at this port after all of the work that the federal government has done to get efficient port operations it would have the land side of the operation working properly. I understand it does in Sydney and Melbourne, and it is about time that the port authority here in Queensland under the umbrella of the Minister for Transport, who is the major shareholder of this government owned corporation, got its act together and made sure that it works efficiently on the land side of the port so that small business operators, trucking firms in Queensland, importers in Queensland and people who rely on it for their work are not put at such a disadvantage.