



Speech by

Hon. Paul Lucas

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

Hansard Wednesday, 12 May 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Tugun Bypass

Hon. P.T. LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.00 a.m.): I would like to inform the House of the latest progress to date on the Tugun bypass.

I am delighted to say that today chief executives of the Queensland and New South Wales governments are meeting on the Gold Coast, along with a senior representative from the federal government. This tripartite meeting will attempt to resolve any outstanding issues with New South Wales in relation to building the road west of the airport, or the C4 route as it is known.

Today's meeting was urgently convened after I met with New South Wales Roads Minister, Carl Scully, two weeks ago when we were both in Perth at the Australian Transport Council ministers meeting. I also spoke with the federal transport minister and the federal roads minister.

We agreed to organise this meeting in response to Mr Scully's environmental concerns with the C4 route. The fact is the Beattie government is confident we can resolve these concerns. We have a 5,000-plus page environmental impact statement that is waiting on New South Wales's green light to be released. This will show numerous mitigation measures that we believe will deal with environmental concerns. In addition, we will give the New South Wales government 70 hectares of compensatory habitat in New South Wales in the Cobaki that we purchased years ago for the building of the C4. This is 2.5 times the amount of land that would need to be compensated in New South Wales as a result of building the western route.

Of course, the Premier has also given me \$240 million—which is burning a hole in my pocket—to build this road, as well as \$120 million on the table from the federal government.

A government member interjected.

Mr LUCAS: It was very hard to get it out of his pocket, but it is in my pocket now and it is not going back to him; it is going on the road. I welcome the federal government's support for the western route and providing input at today's meeting.

The Beattie government has always said that the federal government has a role to play in ensuring the Tugun bypass can be built. I have noted media reports that the federal government intends to advise the New South Wales government that additional funding for Pacific Highway upgrading will be contingent on New South Wales agreeing to the C4 route.

I do not propose to comment on how the Commonwealth negotiates with New South Wales, except to say that its involvement demonstrates all along what the Premier and I have been saying about the Tugun bypass: it is a road that goes across state boundaries. The Commonwealth is the government either side. It built an airport across those state boundaries; it clearly has a role with the constitutional and financial powers in resolving the issue.

Mr Springborg: What does Mark Latham think about using those powers?

Mr LUCAS: I am absolutely delighted that the Leader of the Opposition has such a strong interest, because when I spoke at the Australian Transport Council ministers meeting with federal minister Anderson, one thing he did not say to me was, 'Hurry up, Lawrence, you are delaying me, I have only got 10 minutes.' He actually listened to what I had to say about the Tugun bypass, as did the federal roads minister. I am delighted that they are heeding Queensland's call and playing a positive role. Minister Scully and I have agreed to meet soon after today's meeting to discuss the outcomes from it.

I will keep the house informed of the progress, as I know this is an issue that affects about 70,000 motorists per day who use this section of road. Motorists waste \$3.5 million in fuel each year when they are forced to sit in 20-minute delays through this seven-kilometre section. That is without the 11,000 tonnes of CO₂ each year in fumes from idling motors stuck in the Tugun gridlock.

Building the Tugun bypass remains one of the Beattie government's highest priority transport projects. I will continue to negotiate with the Commonwealth and New South Wales governments to convince them that the C4 option is the preferred option of the Queensland government and of the people of the Gold Coast and Tweed.