



Speech by

Hon. Paul Lucas

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

Hansard Wednesday, 19 May 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Ipswich Motorway

Hon. P.T. LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.02 a.m.): Yesterday, residents of Ipswich and outer south-west Brisbane twice had to put up with gridlock on the National Highway, the Ipswich Motorway. An accident in the morning caused several-hour delays for drivers in peak traffic heading to Brisbane while another accident in the afternoon caused traffic delays on their way home. I have had a number of our members of parliament recount stories to me of workers losing a day's pay, students late for university exams, people missing flights and other personal inconvenience as a result of this.

One thing is for sure, people expect our politicians to work together to fix our roads. I am personally sick of the political bickering. Anyone tuning into a Brisbane metropolitan radio station yesterday would have heard at least five different politicians pointing the finger, all with their theories on how to fix this mess. As state Transport Minister, I am paid to fix problems, not create them. That is why in April I had lengthy meetings with the federal Roads Minister, Senator Campbell, to talk about important issues such as the Tugun bypass and the Ipswich Motorway. That is why I have also spoken to the New South Wales Roads Minister, Carl Scully, on a number of occasions about Tugun. Like Tugun, I want to sort out the Ipswich Motorway once and for all. But just like sorting out Tugun means standing up for Queenslanders' rights, so does the solution to the Ipswich Motorway.

It will cost between \$600 million and \$700 million to six-lane the Ipswich Motorway, together with proper service roads, to take off the 25 per cent local traffic. That would cater for traffic demand on the motorway past 2021. Just 20 per cent of the Ipswich Motorway traffic turns off to the Logan Motorway. The remaining 80 per cent continues on the Ipswich Motorway heading to Brisbane and southern districts, or turning off to the Centenary Motorway or the Brisbane urban corridor.

Anyone who thinks that six-laning the Ipswich Motorway is a politically divisive issue in Queensland is dead wrong. Federal Liberal member for Blair, Cameron Thompson, seems to be the only Queensland politician who is saying no to upgrading the Ipswich Motorway when everyone else is saying yes. Let us face it: the Ipswich Motorway is a federally funded road. It is part of the National Highway system. The federal government, therefore, needs to provide the funds to fix it straightaway. But we will play our part to be ready to fast-track design and construction with Queensland's Main Roads to get action as soon as possible.

Main Roads did a great job on upgrading the Pacific Motorway to the Gold Coast while it was still operating and everyone acknowledges its success.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr LUCAS: As the former Minister for Transport acknowledges. The same can be done for the Ipswich Motorway. People often focus on where politicians disagree, but apart from Cameron Thompson there is bipartisan support for upgrading the motorway. Former state Transport Minister, Vaughan Johnson, is reported in today's *Courier-Mail* as having said on 12 June 1997—

We have had to wait for two or three fatalities in recent times to be able to extract dollars from the federal government for the interchange at the Ipswich-Warrego Highway.

State Liberal transport spokesman, Bruce Flegg, is reported in the same paper as saying 'a northern option to the Ipswich Motorway is not acceptable to the community'. Surely if just about all of us, regardless of political party, agree then we can present a united front to Canberra to get them to upgrade the Ipswich Motorway now. I have said before that I want to work with the federal government to get substantial funding for our federal road needs in Queensland, particularly with our extraordinary population growth.

The Queensland government says that the federal government needs to meet its obligation to a National Highway and upgrade the Ipswich Motorway. Today I will be calling the federal Roads Minister, Senator Ian Campbell, to again personally convey to him the urgency of the Ipswich Motorway upgrade. I will also be reinforcing that we are happy to work with him on other federal priorities, but that does not mean dumping the people of Ipswich. I will be writing to all mayors in the Ipswich-Moreton area urging them to quickly take up the opportunity to lobby all federal representatives that we need a commitment to the motorway in AusLink on 7 June.

In the meantime, the Queensland government will continue to work hard to deliver on our road responsibilities in the south-west Brisbane area. We are doing this through projects such as the \$120 million road that will link Springfield and Ripley with Brisbane. This is one of the fastest-growing areas in south-east Queensland. This new direct link will cut commuting time as the residents of that area will no longer need to travel the Ipswich Motorway to access the Centenary Highway. Other projects include \$1.8 million to upgrade sections of the Swanbank Road and \$717,000 to construct noise barriers along the Warrego Highway between Dinmore and the Brisbane Valley Highway.

Sometimes ministers and bureaucrats in Canberra, or even some of our federal local politicians who spend too much time in Canberra, fail to see the importance of local and regional transport issues. AusLink will be brought down in two weeks, but we all need to work harder, whether that be us on this side of the House or the members opposite, to convince the federal government that we need to have the Ipswich Motorway fixed. If Bruce Flegg, Fiona Simpson, Vaughan Johnson or Lawrence Springborg play a role in that, then all the better.

After the last federal budget, it seems that the Howard government is happy to splash around billions of dollars on baby bonuses and election gimmicks. What about some capital for their responsibility on the Ipswich Motorway? It might actually mean that that baby's parents can get to work, the baby turned student can get to school, and then to their first job.