



Speech by

Hon. Paul Lucas

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

Hansard Wednesday, 16 June 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

AusLink

Hon. P.T. LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.02 a.m.) I wish to inform the House of how Queensland's National Highway system has been duded as a result of the federal government's announcement. AusLink will provide Queensland with just \$22 million extra to upgrade our national highways—the same roads that John Anderson has admitted in the past are the worst in Australia. In December last year, the Queensland government provided the Commonwealth government with its *National Highway System Forward Strategy Report*. This document contained funding requests for our national highways at a level of \$3.2 billion over the next five years. However, under AusLink, Queensland will get just \$1.46 billion over five years and, what is worse, most of that funding will not be available until 2008-09. In fact, all we get in additional federal funding next year is a paltry \$22 million, with \$50 million less the year after that. That is not enough, and what money we get is too far down the track. It is a case of too little, too late.

A number of critical projects have not been properly addressed under AusLink, such as the six-laning of the Ipswich Motorway and \$200 million worth of improvements to the Brisbane urban corridor to make it liveable for residents. Instead, we have a \$400 million unfunded half northern bypass foisted on us, which no-one wants—not me, not this government, not the people of Ipswich, not the state opposition, not the federal opposition and not the RACQ. There is the need for floodproofing and upgrading of the Bruce Highway, particularly in north and far-north Queensland. In fact, the federal government will spend just \$10 million on the 1,650 kilometres of the Bruce Highway north of Caboolture. There will be \$10 million next year and the year after that it is \$5 million. That is what the people of regional Queensland get from the federal government. What did the Queensland government ask for? What were our priorities? Seven hundred and twenty million dollars over the next five years. They have given us \$15 million.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr LUCAS: Yes, the member for Gregory is correct. Eighteen per cent of the fuel tax comes back to the states in road funding. The member for Gregory is quite right to be concerned about the terrible rip-off that the federal government is making to the people of Queensland. That is right. The member is dead right. It is about time that the federal government returned more of the fuel excise when it returns only 18 per cent to the people of Queensland. The Gateway Motorway upgrade—

Mr JOHNSON: I rise to a point of order. I find what the Minister for Transport said about me and fuel funding totally untrue and I ask him to withdraw it, because I made no mention of it.

Mr SPEAKER: The member has asked the minister to withdraw.

Mr LUCAS: I will withdraw that. Certainly, the whole lot of them are concerned about trying to defend the federal government. I just warn that I do not mind who is in federal government. I do not mind whether it is John Howard or Mark Latham. I will defend the interests of this state, and it is about time that people on the other side of the House did as well.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! We will continue with the statement.

Mr LUCAS: There is the need for an upgrade to the Gateway Motorway—the six-laning of the Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road and the airport extension on the north side. There is also the need for stage 1 of the Townsville port access road—the Stuart bypass. We put up the \$8 million—

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: The member for Gregory! Order!

Mr LUCAS: Mark Latham has guaranteed the \$8 million if he is elected and we need funding for stage 2 detailed planning design and corridor acquisition. Apparently there is no money whatsoever for the interstate rail line in Queensland despite the Acacia Ridge rail crossing, despite the Queensland government putting up half the amount needed—\$25 million—for it. Under AusLink, \$450 million was put up in rail funding. How much do we get? I think about \$7 million for some telecommunications work on the track. We have the best rail system in Australia. We get ripped off.

Last Friday I heard the Opposition Leader on ABC Radio say that he had been caught up in congestion that morning on the Ipswich Motorway. I wonder if he took the time to ring John Anderson. Of course, the last time that he was in Canberra, John Anderson wanted him to hurry up and leave. I should remind the member that the Ipswich Motorway is a National Highway, which means that the federal government is responsible for its funding. Neither the federal budget nor AusLink—

Mr Springborg: How much did they put in for your Tugun bypass, which is a state road?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! This is a ministerial statement. If you want to ask a question, you can ask that question later.

Mr LUCAS: It is a road of national importance, in case the Leader of the Opposition does not know what it is.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! This is not a debate.

Mr LUCAS: Neither the federal budget nor AusLink have provided the money to six-lane the Ipswich Motorway, which is the preferred choice of the state government, the member for Moggill, the federal opposition and the RACQ. Is the Leader of the Opposition saying that the Queensland government should go—

An honourable member: This is all budget stuff.

Mr LUCAS: It is certainly not the budget. I am talking about the federal budget and AusLink. Is the Leader of the Opposition saying that the Queensland government should go easy on the federal government for not funding this roadway or indeed others because he wants to protect his federal mates? Regardless of whether it is John Howard or Mark Latham, Peter Garrett or Bronwyn Bishop, I will lobby just as hard for the motorists of Queensland no matter who is in power, and so should the Leader of the Opposition. It makes the choice very clear. It is very simple: if people want the Ipswich Motorway six-laned with the service roads, they should vote for Mark Latham's candidates in the federal election. If people want a promise of a half-funded, half northern bypass, then they should vote for Cameron Thompson, the Howard-Costello candidate in the federal election.