



Speech by

Hon. Paul Lucas

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

Hansard Wednesday, 10 November 2004

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Roads, Funding

Hon. P.T. LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (10.12 a.m.): Yesterday I met with federal Minister for Local Government, Territories and Roads, Jim Lloyd, to discuss a range of challenging road transport issues facing Queensland. I am delighted to inform the House that he confirmed his commitment to working with me on an eight- to 10-year strategy that will see major improvements on key network links in Queensland over coming years under federal funding and AusLink. We discussed a joint media statement about that, which I now table.

Discussions at our landmark meeting focused on a number of issues, including the state's draft regional plan for south-east Queensland and how to best deal with the traffic issues facing freight and commuter traffic in south-west Brisbane. I gave him a copy of this important draft plan. I am confident that we can significantly build on the agreements that emerged from my meetings earlier in the year with former federal roads minister Senator Ian Campbell.

I have always maintained that Queensland has a strong record of increased road funding. The Beattie government is providing an extra \$1.06 billion for roads in the next five years, a massive 20 per cent over normal funding. The Engineers Australia infrastructure report card released on Monday acknowledges Queensland's increased funding, saying—

Queensland has consistently invested a higher percentage of Gross State Product (GSP) in roads, highways and subdivisions infrastructure than any other State in Australia.

During my meeting with Minister Lloyd, I took the opportunity to state Queensland's case for more federal road funding. But I want to make it clear: the purpose of my meeting was not lecturing or hectoring but to sit down with the minister and his department officials to brief them on current federal and state projects, to highlight any issues and to answer any queries that he might have.

I briefed the minister on many issues including the Tugun bypass; the Pacific Motorway; the Gateway upgrade project; the Brisbane City Council's tunnel proposals; the future western bypass; the Barkly Highway; the Townsville ring road and access road; Tully flood proofing; and the Bruce Highway. I also advised him of the state government's significant per capita investment in roads—which is 2.5 times more than Victoria and one-third more than New South Wales—and how our projects interface with federal roads such as the Ripley Road extension of the Centenary Highway and the Caboolture bypass and connection with the Bruce Highway upgrade. I rolled out the maps and personally briefed Minister Lloyd on these issues. I found Minister Lloyd to be extremely interested in our issues and I am confident that we will have a good, productive working relationship for the benefit of Queenslanders. I appreciate Minister Lloyd making time to see me so soon after the federal election.

Of course, the Ipswich Motorway was high on the agenda for both of us. We hope to make the announcement next week of the joint appointment of a consultant for the northern corridor study. I made clear the absolute importance of the bipartisan nature of the feasibility study appointment process because I do not want individuals with vested interests criticising the ultimate outcome of the state and federally

appointed independent consultants if they do not like the results. Whilst the Queensland government's position was, and still is, that upgrading the Ipswich Motorway should be the first priority before any half northern bypass, I fully accept that the half northern bypass is a Commonwealth proposed and funded project and we will cooperate fully with the Commonwealth on the feasibility study. However, I have indicated to Minister Lloyd that, regardless of whether the half northern bypass proceeds or not, upgrading the Ipswich Motorway remains the top roads priority for the Queensland government.

Mr Johnson: What about the Barkly Highway? Are you making that a priority?

Mr LUCAS: I spoke to him about the Barkly Highway. I thank Minister Lloyd for his courtesy and interest and look forward to continuing to work with him on getting the best possible road outcomes for Queenslanders. We also spoke about the second range crossing in Toowoomba.