



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard Wednesday, 10 August 2005

HORNIBROOK HIGHWAY

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (5.55 pm): The previous member was not listening. We have supported the duplication of the bridge in that area. We do not support ripping down the iconic, heritage listed existing bridge that is loved and used by hundreds—in fact thousands—of local community members. The government estimates that ripping down this bridge will cost about \$7.3 million. Yet, according to reports, the estimated cost of maintaining the same bridge over the next 10 years is roughly equivalent to that amount—about \$8 million. One has ask: where are not only the financial considerations but also the social considerations? This bridge is loved by thousands. The government talks about building a fishing platform and leaving about 300 metres of the old bridge. But that is supposed to replace a 2.6 kilometre bridge, the full length of which currently people can fish from. That bridge is also available for people to ride their bicycles and to walk or run along.

I find it amazing that, in this day and age when we are talking about not only the environmental issues of the bridge but also the benefits to foot traffic and alternative transport such as cycling, this government still takes a very narrow view about what defines adequate cycling and pedestrian pathways. To date, we have not seen a recognition that in future footpaths and cycleways need to be far wider and need to be separate. The government needs to recognise that there are not only recreational cyclists but also commuters who cycle. Those cyclists can travel at great speeds and they need to be separated from the walkers on the pathways. Cycleways are still being treated as second-class or even third- or fourth-class thoroughfares when they should be given a higher priority in the construction of new and the maintenance of existing paths which are loved and thoroughly used by communities.

We say that, although the drivers need to be looked after through the provision of a new bridge, we must not take away what has been a very well-loved and very well-used cycleway and footpath through the area. In this day people who love the outdoors like to get out of their cars and use alternative methods of transport and the government has not given fair dinkum recognition of that. To date the government's recommendation has really been only a token attempt to address the genuine concerns of the members of this community and others who come to visit the area and a token recognition of the tourism value of this great local asset. The money should be made available to maintain the heritage value of the old bridge and also to maintain what is a very important public thoroughfare, which should be enjoyed into the future.

What the government has put forward to the House, as I have said, is only a token effort. The government discovered this electorate only after it got into trouble with the previous Speaker as a result of his not looking after his local area. He had failed to address not only public transport needs but also vehicular needs and alternative pathways in this area.

We saw that in the lead-up to the previous Speaker taking leave. It was rumoured that there was going to be a by-election. Suddenly the government started talking about Redcliffe. It is too late, it is not good enough, and what is on the table in regard to the proposal by the government does not adequately address not only the public thoroughfare issues but also the fishing issues as I have explained. To replace the bridge with a fishing platform and hope that the fish will be attracted to that compared to the 2.6 kilometres of available open space that is there now for people to access for fishing still does not recognise just what this bridge means to people. The government can build a new bridge but it should protect the values that are attached to the existing bridge so that it is there not only for today but maintained as a viable and very much appreciated asset into the future.