



Speech by

Liz Cunningham

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL (ESTIMATES COMMITTEE C)

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM (Gladstone—Ind) (12.10 pm): I rise to speak to this estimates committee report and in particular to raise a couple of matters in relation to transport. We have an ongoing problem with funding for the extension of Kirkwood Road to Benaraby Road. This would keep a lot of the large transportation out of the city of Gladstone.

I have already raised, and I thank the minister for his response today, the relocation of boom gates from Callemondah Overpass to Mercury Street. The minister said that he has put an urgent inquiry into his department to see where that issue is and will get back to us as soon as possible. Those gates would add a measure of safety to that crossing, which is used particularly by urban commuters and more particularly by students accessing Kin Kora School. Boom gates were put on a parallel street, Whitney Street, some time ago by the Gladstone City Council. However, Mercury Street really is the responsibility of the Department of Transport.

There is an urgent need in Gladstone for the Department of Transport office to be extended. The wait time is around 22 minutes and on one occasion, Thursday at the end of July, about 15 people waited 50 minutes to be served. We need some more customer outlet sites and that can only occur if the building is extended. The location is excellent because it is very central and there is room within the precincts of the current building for an extension to occur. However, it has to be a built extension. I look forward to consideration of that matter.

I think there continues to be a high level of concern in the community about the federal industrial relations laws. More particularly, in relation to certain aspects of it—that is, the unfair dismissal laws applying to businesses of 100 employees or more, which are not considered to be a small business, and also concerns about the loss of the no-disadvantage test. These are matters that remain in people's minds as far as their continuing job security is concerned.

Transportation corridors in my electorate are of continuing concern given the growth that we are experiencing. I look forward to continued investment in Gladstone. The duplication of the Moura line will affect a small number of people, and I look forward to thoughtful consideration of these matters. The issue of resumption of railway land for the duplication of the Moura line affects three or four families in particular. Their houses are either going to be completely resumed or relocated. That will have a significant effect on them. There are one or two people who are directly affected who have a diminished ability to communicate. I put on the record my appreciation of the Queensland Rail representative who appears to have a very sympathetic view towards these people. At this point in time he has given an undertaking to ensure that whenever he has a meeting with these affected people they have associates with them who will be able to guide them through the process.

In relation to the extension to the Department of Transport, I re-emphasise the need for that building to be expanded. Many people go to the Department of Transport during their lunch hour and the wait times they are experiencing at the moment mean that for many the ability to pay their accounts in time is

diminished. With the state government putting penalties on late payment for registrations, et cetera, it means that the ability for a lot of families to meet their obligations on time is undermined, and not because of anything that they do.

I reiterate the issue of the boom gates on Mercury Street and I look forward to the relocation of the redundant boom gates at Callemondah to the Mercury Street crossing to enhance safety.