



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Thursday, 30 November 2006

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Road Funding

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.42 am): Queensland drivers have a right to expect that a significant proportion of the taxes they pay for using our roads will be reinvested in road construction. Queensland does that. Every cent of the estimated \$846 million we will collect in registration fees this financial year is earmarked to be reinvested in roads.

Mr Lucas: And more.

Mr BEATTIE: And more, of course. We plan to spend \$1.5 billion on Queensland roads this year—a figure that represents 177 per cent of the actual revenue collected. Compare this to the Australian government's piddling efforts. In 2006-07 the Commonwealth is expected to collect almost \$3 billion in petrol and diesel excise from Queensland and of this a miserly \$560 million will be spent on Queensland roads. That represents just 19 per cent of the expected revenue the Australian government will collect.

So Queensland is investing an amount equal to 177 per cent of the revenue we collect from road users in Queensland on our roads but the Commonwealth is investing just 19 per cent. The failure to make a link between revenue raised and expenditure by the Australian government is one of the glaring flaws in a discussion draft report recently released by the Productivity Commission on its inquiry into road and rail freight infrastructure pricing.

This is a major oversight that Queensland has highlighted in its submission to the Productivity Commission. Not only do the Australian government's efforts stand in stark contrast to our approach in Queensland, it is in stark contrast to the funding situation across the Tasman. New Zealand has recently decided to dedicate 100 per cent of its fuel excise to fund transport investments.

Mr Lucas: 100 per cent!

Mr BEATTIE: That is right, as the minister knows, since he briefed me. The New Zealand package guarantees funding for five years of state highway construction and other land transport activity including local road construction, public transport services and maintenance of the road network. A similar commitment here would reduce congestion in south-east Queensland and improve road safety across the state.

Right now there is a \$5.3 billion shortfall in the Australian government's commitment to what was formerly the National Highway proportion of the AusLink network roads in south-east Queensland. It has committed just \$940 million of the \$6.2 billion needed over the next eight to 10 years. The Australian government is not even meeting the costs of maintaining the AusLink network let alone building new infrastructure. It is committing just \$66 million a year when \$100 million is needed. Frankly, it is just not good enough.