



Speech by

## Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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### TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.05 pm): I rise to support the coalition's motion. Managing for growth is about building timely and cost-effective infrastructure. Public transport must be a core part of ensuring the livability of Queensland and, in particular, south-east Queensland. We are being choked to death by gridlock and poor public transport. However, having listened to the new Premier it seems that she would have Queenslanders believe that she is ahead of the pack and that there is not a problem.

Growth in Queensland has been predictable. Growth in Queensland is not something that has happened suddenly. In fact, when one looks at charts of the increase in population in south-east Queensland and the whole of Queensland, one will see a consistent upward trend. In fact, there have been higher spikes in percentage terms in years before now. Therefore, it should not be an extraordinary event for good government to plan for growth. However, in the past few years the government has failed to deliver any major infrastructure in Queensland. For nine years it did nothing. For nine years it was about spin. We may have a new Premier, but it is the same old spin.

The government now points to the budget papers and says that a record amount of spending is still to come. However, it fails to explain why projects are blowing out by up to double their estimated cost and why completion dates for a number of projects are pushing out further and further. The Premier also fails to explain why the government did nothing for nine years. Why did the government fail to see that the predictable high growth in the population required it to undertake some forward action? In fact, today the government's budgeted capital statement reads a bit like a fairytale. No-one can believe the figures because the cost estimates are escalating faster than the rise in construction costs due to poor planning. The statement reads more like a wish list than a serious program of scheduled works with credible figures and credible timing.

I am receiving feedback from small to medium sized construction firms that are worried about the unpredictability of the construction time frame of this government because projects that have not been funded properly are escalating and are eating into other programs. It is making it harder for industry to plan because the plan released by the government is not truthful.

Labor has been out of practice when it comes to delivering infrastructure because of its self-imposed, nine-year infrastructure drought. When asked about the major infrastructure that they have presided over, Premier Bligh and her predecessor listed footbridges among their major achievements. That is terribly nice, but it is not terribly effective in preventing the escalating congestion on south-east Queensland roads and public transport congestion.

The new Premier must ensure that cost blowouts and critical public transport infrastructure do not blow a hole in time frames that have been set to deliver for residents caught in gridlock. If she is serious about managing for growth, then she needs to get serious about delivering these projects on budget and in a timely way.

We have already heard from my colleague the member for Clayfield that the time frames for the smart-ticketing system have blown out. In fact, the new Premier did not even know how long that project had been going, and it is now running years late. That critical piece of servicing is required for easy transition across a number of modes of public transport.

But let us look at the Sunshine Coast. My colleagues have outlined some of the Gold Coast issues. The Sunshine Coast quality bus corridor has risen from a \$168 million estimated cost in 2005-06 to \$307 million in 2007-08 and the figure will only go higher. The interim upgrade of the bus station for Maroochydore is running behind schedule and we are still yet to see a decision about the other piece of major infrastructure that must be put in place which is a fully integrated transit centre that links between bus and rail. CAMCOS, the long awaited rail line into Maroochydore, also sits so far out in the capital program that it is failing to address current growth and choices of people who are moving to the Sunshine Coast. Catch-up infrastructure which is occurring too late is not good enough. There must be infrastructure to meet current demand and forward infrastructure to drive new choices—choices about where people live and housing affordability, and also the choice about whether they buy a second car because they have good alternative public transport. All we have seen to date from this government has been promises with very, very long lead times. As the costs escalate there has been no explanation as to how the government is going to be able to fund these costs. Meanwhile, critically needed infrastructure continues to slip behind.