



Speech by

**Hon. Paul Lucas**

**MEMBER FOR LYTTON**

Hansard Tuesday, 6 March 2007

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## **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT**

### **Ipswich Motorway**

**Hon. PT LUCAS** (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (9.58 am): Yesterday the Prime Minister flew into Queensland to announce he would fund construction of a half northern bypass of the Ipswich Motorway, costing at least \$2.3 billion. Mr Howard said he thought this was the biggest road project announcement he had ever made and, given this, will be the most expensive highway per kilometre in Australia. I imagine it is. But the truth is that this is the Ipswich Motorway bypass Mr Howard had to have. Mr Howard was forced to fund a second-best option that no one wants because the state's roads are littered with the evidence of the federal government's decade long neglect and it has only just realised that infrastructure actually matters. It is that irresponsibility and neglect that has left taxpayers with a bill of at least \$2.3 billion for only a partial fix of Mr Howard's Queensland infrastructure blind spot.

The preferred option of the state government, the state opposition, the RACQ and the mayors of Brisbane and Ipswich would have delivered an upgraded road sooner and cost \$1.2 billion less. It would have provided a six-lane highway and service roads between Dinmore and Goodna and opened sooner. But, as I said yesterday, even though this is the second-best option, Canberra will get full cooperation from Main Roads on its construction. It is the wrong decision, but at least it has made one, and it is time to get on with the job. However, there are still some aspects of Mr Howard's announcement that do not quite add up.

Mr Howard probably did not realise it, but the bypass option he announced yesterday does not include a connection to the major feeder roads for traffic south of the motorway in suburbs like Dinmore, Bundamba, Booval and East Ipswich. So locals have every right to ask why Canberra has chosen an Ipswich Motorway bypass that bypasses Ipswich motorists. Both the members for Bundamba and Ipswich have every right to be disgusted with the fact that people cannot get on it from the southern side, and indeed from Brisbane Road in Ipswich people will not be able to get on it without going through River Road without a properly funded connection. The half northern bypass will impact on 100 properties including 60 houses. It is likely that notices of intention to resume would be issued within three months and, depending on objections, property should be acquired by the end of 2007.

As I said, we will cooperate with the federal government in relation to this. The people of south-east Queensland expect us to do it. It is not the right option, though. There are also questions that motorists right across Queensland are asking. Given the federal government chose to spend \$1.2 billion more on an option that no-one wants, people across the state have every right to know. People on the Gold Coast, on the Sunshine Coast, in Brisbane, in central and western Queensland and in the north have a right to know what projects they are missing out on because Canberra chose the multibillion-dollar Ipswich Motorway option. This second-best option is costing \$2.3 billion—more than six times what Canberra is spending on all Queensland roads this year. That should be a lesson to the federal government. The lesson is simple: if it delays decisions on vital upgrades like the Ipswich Motorway, the Pacific Motorway and the upgrading of the Bruce Highway, costs will skyrocket and planning will become more difficult. Queenslanders have

every right to know why, when they pay \$2.7 billion in fuel tax to Canberra each year, they only get around 17c in the dollar back in roads funding.

The state government will continue to invest billions of dollars in road projects—it is \$1.98 billion for us this year, \$1.5 billion for New South Wales and \$1.14 billion for Victoria. The state government will continue to invest these billions of dollars in road projects and will continue to press the federal government to fund the much-needed road projects on the National Highway around the state in whatever area—whether they be along the coast, in the south or inland, central, western and far-northern Queensland.