



Speech by

Hon. PETER BEATTIE

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Inner Northern Busway

Hon. PD BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.42 am): I am pleased to report to the House that Brisbane is a step closer to moving hundreds of buses off inner-city streets and onto their own purpose built world-class busway. It was announced in March that the \$333 million Inner Northern Busway extension is six months ahead of schedule. The construction alliance has continued at the same ferocious pace and this month broke through the Albert Street tunnel to the site of the King George Square busway station—opening up the entire length of the tunnel from the Queen Street bus station to the Roma Street forum.

Innovation in design and construction has helped push works months ahead of schedule. We originally planned to deliver the busway at the end of next year, but it is on track for a mid-2008 finish. This is good news for Brisbane commuters who will benefit from savings in travel time of between nine and 20 minutes and seamless bus travel from one side of the city to the other.

We have also reached other milestones in the last two months. Albert Street paving between the Queen Street Mall and Burnett Lane has been completed, and the interstate rail line from Sydney has been transferred to platform three to enable the team to start construction of the Roma Street busway station and platforms. We expect even more milestones will be met in coming months, including handing back the new and improved Albert Street Mall to traders and shoppers in mid-June. This means no more buses on Albert Street, improved pedestrian access and a fully refurbished and paved streetscape, creating a new and improved area of mall.

The INB alliance is continuing to push the boundaries in construction to provide a dedicated busway from Queen Street to Upper Roma Street which will become the heart of a new busway network for Brisbane. The government is delivering this project ahead of time and on budget. I want to make it absolutely clear—because I know a number of honourable members are committed to busways, particularly those on the south side and we are now getting one on the north side and in the eastern suburbs as well—that this is a long-term public transport commitment.