



Speech by

Hon. ANNA BLIGH

MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE

Hansard Thursday, 5 June 2008

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Eastern Busway

Hon. AM BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Premier) (9.36 am): Today is World Environment Day and in the fight against climate change one of the biggest challenges facing our community is encouraging people out of their cars and on to public transport. To that end, I am very pleased to announce today the next stage of our congestion busting Eastern Busway from Buranda to Main Avenue at Coorparoo. I can also announce that the Queensland government has approved the Eastern Busway concept design and impact management plan. Under this plan, the entire 18 kilometre Eastern Busway route from Buranda to Capalaba is now confirmed and residents and businesses will be formally advised from today. This means the busway can be built and opened in progressive stages along this corridor over the next 20 years.

Construction of the first stage of the Eastern Busway between the Princess Alexandra Hospital and the South East Busway at Buranda is well underway and is due for completion by late 2009. Today we commit to \$465.8 million in investment in the next 2.7 kilometres of the Eastern Busway route. Of that, \$123 million is for property resumptions along the route and the remainder is for the construction of the 1.05 kilometre surface and cut and cover tunnel section between Buranda and Main Avenue. A state-of-the-art bus station will be constructed at a revitalised Stones Corner and a high-quality covered bus terminal will be constructed at Langlands Park.

Construction on this new section will begin in mid-2009 and is expected to be completed by early 2011. In the latest edition of SEQIPP we identified a significant additional spend for the Eastern Busway. The blueprint for this next stage outlines an improved project that goes far and beyond the original proposals. The Buranda to Main Avenue section will connect the existing South East Busway at Buranda with Coorparoo via Stones Corner and 560 metres of tunnel and 490 metres of surface busway. This busway will be a real congestion buster that will carry massive advantages for the people of the eastern suburbs. It will bypass four sets of traffic lights and the heavily congested Logan Road, Ipswich Road and O'Keefe Street roundabout at Buranda. It will shave up to eight minutes off bus trips through the most congested section of Old Cleveland Road and will save regular commuters from Coorparoo to the city nearly 1½ hours in travel time every week.

By 2016, this section of the busway is expected to carry up to 7,000 passengers in the morning peak. To carry the same number of passengers by car, you would have to build two extra traffic lanes along Old Cleveland Road.

Detailed plans of the exact route of this exciting public transport infrastructure will be released today. These plans will provide certainty for the residents who have waited patiently to learn how this next vital link in our city-wide busway network will affect them. It will also provide certainty about the future of Coorparoo junction as a local commercial centre. The design is a significant improvement on the original busway, which would have caused more resumptions and more disruption to residents in the area.

But sadly, as with all gains of this nature, there will be some pain for local residents. My advice is that a total of 96 properties, including 21 partial and 16 volumetric resumptions, are required for the

Buranda to Main Avenue section, with resumptions due to begin in July. Of these, 21 property owners have already taken up the state's offer to buy their land early and a further eight are currently under negotiation. Nine of the required properties are owner occupied and all are within the original proposal. I recognise that resumptions cause a lot of pain, and my government is committed to being as sensitive as possible in acquiring the properties needed to create this essential piece of public transport infrastructure. My advice is that a further 256 properties are impacted by the confirmation of the entire busway route. TransLink will contact all affected property owners between Buranda and Capalaba today and in the coming days to advise them of the impacts.

This announcement is about my government making firm plans for the future of this state while getting on with the business of building congestion-busting infrastructure today. The new certainty of the busway corridor provides a unique opportunity for the government to partner with the private sector to deliver transit orientated developments along the route. The recent changes to the Transport Planning and Coordination Act makes it easier for us to develop these residential and commercial hubs.

Proposals for a transit oriented development at the site of the old Megamart centre—or some who are older might remember it as the old Myer centre—at Coorparoo, which has been dormant now for 16 months, are one step closer because of today's announcement. We will now move to begin resumptions of the property and associated areas with a view to putting that to market for a substantial redevelopment for commercial and residential purposes with a major bus station sitting below it. It will be a significant revitalisation of that very important part of our city. We will now be able to start acquiring properties and go to market with a view to building that site as soon as possible.

My government is building tomorrow's Queensland today and laying firm foundations for the future of this state. The next stage of the Eastern Busway is a concrete example of that.