



Speech by

**Andrew Powell**

**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

Hansard Tuesday, 10 November 2009

---

## **TRANSPORT AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (3.46 pm): I rise to address the Transport and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. I want to focus in particular on the proposed amendments to the Transport Infrastructure Act 1994 and particularly some of the clauses that look to insert a new definition and some elements of what are regarded as beneficial assets. These additions identify the potential negative environmental impacts of transport infrastructure but clearly offset these against the benefits of such assets. It is interesting to note that the government now says that, although the operational use of transport infrastructure may have significantly adverse environmental impacts, its operational use is necessary for the community's environmental, social and economic wellbeing.

I also note that this morning the Premier stated quite clearly that her government stands for better transport infrastructure which is why, given this and given the proposed amendments that will enshrine the benefits of such assets, I want to focus on two glaring omissions. Firstly, I want to look at the lack of continued funding for the north coast rail duplication. As the minister would well be aware, this is the main freight and passenger route servicing all points north of Caboolture, and at this stage we have a rail duplication that is finished at Beerburrum. For as long as this infrastructure is overlooked, freight and passenger patronage will continue to put increasing pressure on our road system, increasing the maintenance costs on such Main Roads infrastructure as the Bruce Highway. While this infrastructure is overlooked, we need to invest heavily in such road infrastructure.

I was privileged to be present at the recent opening of the Bruce Highway upgrade to Caboolture, but we already need to look north of Caboolture and at the impacts that increased freight will have as we truck oil and various other commodities north to places such as Bundaberg, Gladstone and beyond. That can only continue to be a drain on the government's purse and, therefore, surely a cost-benefit analysis would show that investing in that rail duplication needs to happen sooner rather than later. I would add that, if the government was serious about the environmental benefits of public transport and was intent on reducing emissions from vehicle usage, it would be looking to invest in rail projects such as that north coast duplication as soon as possible.

The other omission that I would like to spend a bit of time focusing on is the CAMCOS study. A time line of how this CAMCOS project has developed would show that it also is well and truly delayed and needs to be built sooner rather than later. The 2000 Arup report showed that stage 1 should have been operational by 2005, stage 2 by 2015 and stage 3 by 2015 plus. It is in that 2015-plus time line that the rail will be developed progressively from Beerwah north to Maroochydore. Back in 2001, a three-stage study had already been completed. It identified environmental and social constraints and opportunities. It identified the preferred transport mode as heavy passenger rail. To be honest, I am really neither here nor there on that. I would happily accept a light passenger rail service as much as a heavy passenger rail service. That study also examined alternative options, benefits, environmental impacts and proposed strategies.

The completion of the rail line to Beerwah to facilitate the CAMCOS initiative was scheduled to be finished by 2012 but, as I just said, that time line has already been delayed and there really is no end time

in any of the plans now. The latest is that the full duplication all the way through to Nambour will occur before 2025, which gives little comfort to those along that corridor and those along the CAMCOS corridor.

Studies have also shown that the Maroochydore area presently experiences significant congestion in peak periods, particularly at the Buderim-Mooloolaba intersection and at the northern end of Nicklin Way. Those areas are expected to increase in congestion if measures are not taken to improve that network. The demand on the rail link from the Buderim-Mooloolaba intersection to Maroochydore approaches some 4,000 passengers a day in 2011. The rail corridor from Caloundra to Beerwah approaches 1,000 passengers per day. There will be increased revenue of about \$2.3 million per year, increased public transport travel time savings of \$2.9 million per year, increased accident savings of \$0.8 million per year and increased environmental benefits of \$0.5 million per year. I suspect, given the latest focus on climate change, that environmental benefit would be vastly more significant than the estimated half a million dollars a year.

So when we consider modelling such as that, which has been included in various reports on the CAMCOS study, and when we consider the fact that it is easier and far more beneficial to build transport infrastructure before we put in place new residential developments—and I think particularly of the Caloundra South development that the government is pushing the Sunshine Coast Regional Council to develop sooner rather than later—it is necessary that we look at building CAMCOS far sooner than originally planned for two reasons. Firstly, it reduces the potential for nimby reactions to a subsequent rail corridor being implemented even if the land for it has been purchased and there have been plenty of studies done on it and, secondly, it will reduce car dependency. If a project such as Caloundra South goes ahead without the rail and infrastructure in place, people will rely heavily on their vehicles and on the roads to get into Caloundra, to get to points further north and to access the Bruce Highway to travel south. This infrastructure is overdue. If the government wants to fast-track development such as Caloundra South then it needs to fast-track its investment in public transport infrastructure on the coast. I think those projects are two prime examples.

Again, as I said, this clause looks to enshrine in the legislation the environmental, social and economic benefits of public transport. Given that, I therefore seek the minister's consideration of these two projects.