



Speech by
Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

Hansard Thursday, 6 August 2009

NORTHERN BUSWAY

Ms GRACE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (6.03 pm): On 23 July I had the pleasure of joining the Premier, Anna Bligh, and the Minister for Transport, Rachel Nolan, for an inspection of the \$198 million, stage 1 Northern Busway. The new 1.2-kilometre section, I am proud to say, is now open for business. This section was finished two months ahead of schedule and on budget, and is a vital link in a chain which will drastically reduce bus travel time between the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital precinct and the city.

Stage 1 of the Northern Busway combined with the Inner Northern Busway means peak-hour travel times between the RBWH and the city have been reduced by more than half, from up to 25 minutes to less than 10 minutes. The new section alone cuts out four sets of lights and can save up to five minutes in peak traffic conditions and provides a vital link to the next section of the busway to Kedron, which is now being built in tandem with the \$4.8 billion Airport Link project.

This section of the Northern Busway will remove more than 5,000 buses a week from traffic and carry more than 32,000 passengers a day who might otherwise be driving cars. That will immediately take pressure off the junction of Herston Road with Bowen Bridge Road and make the journey to the hospital easier for patients and health workers using public transport and for motorists alike. We want as many people as possible to switch to public transport, and for that to happen we know we need to provide a world-class service.

The first stage of the Northern Busway consists of an elevated structure connecting it at an intersection with Gilchrist Avenue and a new busway station at the RBWH. It is environmentally friendly. We have solar panels for all electrical needs, water harvesting for toilets, cleaning and watering, and natural light and ventilation. It will also include a 750, \$8 million cycle centre where joggers, staff and pedestrians can use spaces for their bikes, showers, lockers and security. It is a fantastic facility that will be open in October 2009.

Thousands of people work at and visit the health precinct each day, and by 2016 more than 13,000 people per day are expected to be getting on and off at the new RBWH busway station. The official launch, which I was very happy to attend, was held at a community open day on the new Northern Busway on Sunday, 26 July at which the Minister for Transport and I officially opened the new busway. People were given the opportunity to catch free public transport on the TransLink services, to take a walk through the Northern Busway and to see firsthand what a great project is all about. The community open day gave the public, the project team and all the wonderful people who work in the health precinct a chance to see how their cooperation has helped to improve access to the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and reduce trip times across Brisbane's north side. It is a wonderful facility and it was great to be there for the opening.