



Speech by

Hon. Rachel Nolan

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Cairns Transit Network

Hon. RG NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Transport) (10.20 am): One of my first regional visits as Minister for Transport was to Far North Queensland to announce results of public consultation for the Cairns Transit Network project. The Cairns Transit Network project will be the first of its kind outside South-East Queensland and is set to revolutionise public transport in Cairns with a bus based system of priority lanes or busways.

Public consultation showed overwhelming support for the project, with 95 per cent of people who expressed a view saying they thought the Cairns Transit Network was a good idea. The initial round of public consultation has been invaluable in helping to plan to meet the needs of existing and future residents of and visitors to Cairns.

Buses are the mode of choice as they provide wide service coverage by running on the dedicated bus corridors as well as the existing road network. Local buses will connect to the bus rapid transit network and take passengers where they want to go quickly and reliably.

In the first phase of consultation the project team received more than 370 submissions through feedback forms, telephone inquiries, emails and letters. Over 600 people visited the 11 public displays across Cairns and another 250-plus visited our display at the sitting of regional parliament.

The top three issues commented on included: firstly, requests to increase the frequency and reliability of current bus services; secondly, the best places for station locations—and these locations have now been earmarked in the planning; and, thirdly, the possibility of using either light or heavy rail on the network. The design of the network will be such that light rail may be an option in the future should the necessary density of population and demand on public transport services require it.

Community information sessions will be held during a second round of consultation, due in mid-2009, focusing on preferred corridors and station locations. By planning now we can set aside the land needed for Cairns's future public transport needs. I would like to extend my thanks to the Cairns community for their feedback to date and encourage them to continue participating in this project, which is vital to the future prosperity of Cairns.