



Speech by

Hon. Rachel Nolan

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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APPROPRIATION BILLS: ESTIMATES COMMITTEE F

Hon. RG NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (Minister for Transport) (12.52 pm): I welcome the opportunity today to speak on the report by Estimates Committee F into the budget of the Department of Transport and Main Roads for 2009-10. As I told the committee just a few weeks ago, transport plays an integral role in the daily life of most Queenslanders. That is why in the year ahead the Bligh government is investing \$6.3 billion in transport infrastructure and operations. That \$6.3 billion comprises: \$3.6 billion capital funding for infrastructure; more than \$1½ billion to operate public buses, trains, ferries and planes across the state; more than \$500 million for other subsidies, such as funding for QR to maintain non-commercial track; and \$635 million for direct departmental functions such as licensing, road and maritime safety.

This multibillion dollar commitment is an investment in jobs, an investment in the economy, an investment in our sustainable future and an investment in Queensland. In total, the Bligh government is investing a massive \$18.2 billion in capital works this year, an investment that not only builds a better Queensland but also supports 127,000 jobs. There is no better example of how important a role transport projects will play than what we have seen in the last week. Work will shortly start on the new 1.05 kilometre stage 2 of the Eastern Busway, which is expected to create more than 2,800 jobs.

Our existing investment in busways is already delivering results. On Sunday, the Premier and I attended an open day for the new Eastern and Boggo Road busways. This was a chance to thank locals for their patience during construction and give the public a chance to walk the busway on foot. I am pleased to inform the House that since services began on these busways and the Northern Busway around the Royal Brisbane Hospital on Monday they have already taken 3,600 buses off our roads. In their first three days of operation they have carried well over 100,000 passengers. That is 100,000 trips where passengers have got to their destination faster and more efficiently.

That is just one part of what this year's budget will deliver for Queensland. Up and down the coast and right across Queensland we are providing funds to keep public transport sustainable. We are managing water safety in Cairns and subsidising plane flights to places like Normanton and Cunnamulla. We are issuing licences in Mount Isa and promoting road safety right across the state.

I would also like to address some aspects of the statement of reservation attached to the Estimates Committee F report. The statement of reservation raises issues with information provided on transport infrastructure, coordination and planning, federal government funding, TransLink and taxis. I do not intend to address these issues in detail as they have already been addressed at length, including at the estimates hearing itself, but I do want to address some of the matters raised.

The Minister for Main Roads and I remain committed to making sure Queenslanders get 100 per cent value from the billions of dollars we have invested in transport infrastructure in recent years and the billions we will continue to invest. We will do that in a manner that is sustainable, sensible and economically responsible.

I note the shadow minister's contribution of just a moment ago in which, once again, calls were made for further approaches. Our approach will be to create jobs through a fully funded infrastructure

program and to provide better services, but we need to do that at all times by getting value for money. The shadow minister, in contrast, has made billions and billions of dollars worth of unfunded commitments this year. This year alone we have seen the following: a commitment to not sell Queensland Rail, at \$7 billion; a completely unfunded commitment made to the people of the Redcliffe area during the campaign to build the Petrie to Kippa-Ring railway line, with an asterisk at the end that said 'subject to global financial crisis'; a desperately underfunded commitment for automatic train protection on our rail network, which would actually cost about \$300 million to \$500 million; a commitment to subsidise air services in the Torres Strait, which was again completely unfunded and worth about \$40 million a year; and opposition from the other side to reform the north-west railway line, which would save about \$10 million a year.

We will continue to build infrastructure and continue to provide services, but we will do it in a way that is not breathless and desperate. We will do it in a way that is sensible, economically responsible and funded every step of the way.