




Speech by

Ian Rickuss

MEMBER FOR LOCKYER

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TOOWOOMBA, SECOND RANGE CROSSING

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (3.43 pm): I rise to make a few comments about the Toowoomba range crossing. Unfortunately, the Toowoomba range crossing—and I am sure my colleagues from Toowoomba North and Toowoomba South will support me in this—has created an enormous amount of chaos, particularly over the last few years as the volume of traffic up and down the range increases. It is an important thoroughfare to get to not only the gas fields and the mining enterprises but also the agricultural enterprises in the Darling Downs, one of the great agricultural areas of Queensland. They are going to have a bumper crop this year, with grains and cotton growing extremely well, and most of it will have to come down the Toowoomba range.

It is important that we work with all levels of government. I have been speaking to the federal member for Wright, Scott Buchholz, who also represents the area of Lockyer that I represent, to encourage him to talk to his counterparts in the federal government to get the process right for the Toowoomba second range crossing.

The cost-benefit analysis is starting to come down. We are starting to improve the cost-benefit analysis with negotiations through the department. I was fortunate to have the Department of Transport and Main Roads brief me during the last parliamentary sittings on the cost-benefit analysis and how this project can be progressed further with federal government assistance. It is a major project. I call on the federal government to be responsible and fund some of its major projects. That is what we really need. We do not need any cash splashes or pink batts programs; we need funding for major projects such as the Warrego Highway, the Bruce Highway and the Cunningham Highway. These are integral connectors for business and for the state, and we need them to work and to work well. That is what has been missing from the previous federal government's criteria. It is all about spin and how to win votes. That is what the Beattie-Bligh Labor government did and look where it ended up, with seven members in parliament.

We need the appropriate infrastructure put in place. I realise that the appropriate infrastructure is about compromise, but the federal government has to come up with some of the money needed to be spent on this infrastructure. These are big projects. I think we are talking about \$1.5 billion or maybe a bit more for the Toowoomba second range crossing, more than half of which is in my area. This is the sort of money that needs to be stumped up by the federal government so that progress can continue, so that business can continue, so that the people of Queensland and Australia benefit from these large projects and stop having their lives interfered with by the poor maintenance of these areas.