




Speech By
Hon. Tim Nicholls

MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Toowoomba Second Range Crossing

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (2.17 pm): This government came to office promising better planning and better infrastructure. I say to the Deputy Premier that we are doing just that, even without the Strong Choices program. Imagine how much more we would be able to do.

Today we have taken another step in delivering on those promises. This government is intent on delivering the infrastructure that will help to grow Queensland's economy and open up more of the opportunities that our great state has to offer. One of our top priority infrastructure projects, the Toowoomba second range crossing, took another leap forward today. This morning, along with the Deputy Premier, the agriculture minister and the members for Toowoomba North and Lockyer, I released the names of the short-listed proponents for this vital \$1.6 billion project. I also do, of course, acknowledge the role of the federal government in providing some funding for this project.

Three consortia will move to the next stage of providing binding bids for the Toowoomba second range crossing. They are RangeLink, RangeConnect and Nexus. Nexus consists of the Plenary Group, Acciona out of Italy and Samsung C&T. RangeConnect consists of Leighton Contractors, Thiess, Macquarie Capital and Aberdeen Infrastructure providers. RangeLink includes the French construction company Bouygues; Fulton Hogan Construction; local firm Wagners Quarries, based in Toowoomba, and supported by subcontractors like Ostwald Brothers and FK Gardner and Sons as well as Meridiam RangeLink, providing financing opportunities.

These groups are made up of a mix of international, Australian and Queensland companies and were chosen because they have the demonstrated capability to deliver a project of this magnitude. It is an outstanding field of proponents that will ensure a healthy level of competition, reinforce innovation and ensure value for money in all aspects of the project. In coming weeks the three consortia will be provided with request for proposal documents, officially kicking off the formal tendering process. Final bids are due to be submitted by early 2015 and a successful tenderer will be selected by June 2015. In the meantime, preparatory works and geotechnical assessments are getting underway.

This project is exactly the sort of job-creating infrastructure project that Queensland needs to grow the economy. The Toowoomba Second Range Crossing project is expected to create more than 1,800 full-time equivalent jobs over the three-year construction phase. The road is expected to be operational from mid to late 2018. It will open up the Darling Downs and the Surat Basin for further development while at the same time removing thousands of trucks a year from the Toowoomba CBD.

This project has been talked about for 20 years, but it has taken this LNP government to make this project a reality. It is yet another example of a project where Labor was all talk but no action. Since this government established Projects Queensland to manage major projects we stopped just

talking and started acting to make projects like the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing a reality. Projects Queensland has been equally successful in progressing the Government Wireless Network that was talked about by Labor for a decade but never delivered; the Queensland Schools Project, delivering 10 new schools in the fastest growing areas of our state, with the first one set to open in January 2015; and the New Generation Rollingstock, providing 75 new six-car train sets for our suburban rail network, effectively double the number for the same price that Labor was able to deliver. What is clear today is that only the LNP has a strong plan to deliver the job-creating infrastructure that will help grow our economy and ensure Queensland has a bright future.