



Speech By  
**Andrew Powell**


**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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Record of Proceedings, 13 June 2018

**MOTION**

**Toll Roads**

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (5.16 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the member for Chatsworth and applaud his leadership on this issue. Unlike those opposite, the LNP, led by the shadow minister for transport and main roads, has listened carefully to the people of Queensland who have raised concerns not only about toll prices and the paying of fines but also about the use of the toll road infrastructure around the city of Brisbane.

I need to declare that I am a big fan of toll roads. I am a huge fan. I live in the Sunshine Coast hinterland and we do not really do congestion well in the hinterland of the Sunshine Coast. In fact, we do not do traffic lights well either. Coming down to Brisbane and getting stuck in congestion is the last thing I want to do. To be blunt, my wife is even worse than I am. She cannot stand traffic lights. She has worked out that she can get from our home in the Sunshine Coast hinterland to parliament by going through only six sets of traffic lights, and four of those are coming off the Riverside Expressway and coming around George Street and into the parliamentary precinct. She can get from the Sunshine Coast hinterland to parliament through six sets of traffic lights, and four of those are just in this local precinct, because of the tollways. We are big fans of them because they do allow that freedom of movement.

Our issue on the LNP side of the fence is that they are not being utilised as effectively as they could be. The tolling framework does not allow the operator, Transurban, to offer incentives, bonuses or variable pricing to make sure that they are being used at times when they are most needed, that their capacity is being reached, that we are getting people through the city quickly, that we are busting congestion around our suburbs in Brisbane and that we are getting people to their workplace or their destination quickly and, more importantly, home to their family to spend precious time with them.

I will use another example. When I travel down to parliament, I often come late at night and I get to Gympie Road and the toll road tunnel through to the Inner City Bypass and I wonder whether it is worth it to use the tunnel. For \$5 at 10 o'clock at night, no, it is not. However, if Transurban were given the capacity to offer it for \$1, I would be in the tunnel straightaway and they would be getting \$1 out of me whereas at the moment they are getting zero. This parliamentary inquiry allows us to explore those kinds of opportunities, and I certainly welcome it for that reason. I also pick up on what the Minister for Transport and Main Roads was talking about. Yes, there is a huge issue around unpaid fines. I will acknowledge that Transurban in particular has done a lot of work in trying to clean up that aspect, but a lot of the problem still sits with SPER, the State Penalties Enforcement Registry.

**Mr Minnikin:** \$1.2 billion.

**Mr POWELL:** I take the interjection from the member for Chatsworth, \$1.2 billion—

**Mr SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. The member for Chatsworth is not entitled to make any interjections when he is not in his seat. I ask him to return to his seat if he wishes to make interjections, even if it is a friendly interjection.

**Mr POWELL:** It is interesting that the Queensland Audit Office undertook an investigation into unpaid fines and produced a report in February of this year, report No. 10 of 2017-18 titled *Finalising unpaid fines*. They had a look at this whole situation. A lot of people know that, if they fail to pay a toll, initially Transurban are the ones chasing them up but eventually they refer it to DTMR and then onto SPER. Did honourable members know that it takes an average of 229 days from the time a person drives through a toll point to the time SPER receives the referral of the unpaid infringement?

The Audit Office identify that some work has been done, and some of the individuals mentioned in the amendment moved by the minister have sat down together. That review by Transurban Queensland, SPER and the Brisbane City Council identified opportunities to improve customer communication and process improvements, but did not address the delay in referring unpaid tolling infringements.

It is ironic that the Queensland Audit Office made a recommendation that the Department of Transport and Main Roads review the tolling framework in collaboration with Transurban Queensland and the State Penalties Enforcement Registry to better manage toll debt. That could include improving information sharing to enable Transurban Queensland to better communicate with customers to recover tolls and avoid referring them to DTMR to issue infringements and/or earlier referral by Transurban Queensland to DTMR of those alleged offenders who have failed to comply with their demand notice.

The Queensland Audit Office thought our motion was a great idea. We thought our motion was a great idea. The people of Queensland thought our motion was a great idea. It is great to see a tactical retreat, as the member for Scenic Rim said. The members of the Labor Party have seen that our motion is a great idea. We applaud the fact that there will be a parliamentary inquiry into these matters.

*(Time expired)*