



Speech By  
**Bart Mellish**


**MEMBER FOR ASPLEY**

---

Record of Proceedings, 13 June 2018

## MOTION

### Toll Roads

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (5.40 pm): I rise to speak in support of the amendment moved by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. There are few better examples of the Palaszczuk government's support for Queensland motorists than yesterday's budget. We have a \$21.7 billion program of works delivering roads and transport infrastructure across the state over four years that will also directly support over 19,000 jobs.

In my electorate of Aspley alone we saw some key announcements delivering on important election commitments for my local community. That includes a feasibility study into an overpass at Beams Road as well as delivery of our election promise to fund the Northern Transitway, investing \$53 million into this much needed project. This project will reduce congestion for buses travelling from Kedron to Chermshire without impacting on existing car lanes. Geebung park-and-ride is also set for an upgrade, with money allocated in the budget to build 70 new car parks to get more people on public transport and alleviate congestion on local roads.

South-East Queensland is growing, and the Palaszczuk government is rising to the challenge—improving public transport, getting more cars off the road and making the trip to and from work easier. We are committed to public transport. These are yet more congestion-busting projects to directly benefit commuters wanting to spend less time on the road and more time at home with family.

As we often see when the opposition moves a motion in this place, it is high on rhetoric but very light on history. As the minister touched on, it is important to look at the record of the LNP when it comes to tolling and toll roads more broadly. The first and second paragraphs of the motion could clearly be read as the LNP dipping its toe in the water when it comes to wanting to toll existing roads. The motion states –

In undertaking this inquiry, the committee should consider—

- (a) opportunities to bust congestion on South-East Queensland roads using the existing road network;

Last year, when I was a candidate for the electorate of Aspley, there was in fact a candidate from the No Tolls party. I was very pleased to inform him that there were no toll roads in Aspley and that his job was probably already done. Good on Neil: he was a most energetic candidate. Maybe I was wrong. Maybe the No Tolls candidate had the foresight to realise that the LNP want to toll existing roads in Aspley. Maybe they want to toll Gympie Road. They certainly have not ruled it out because, as their motion states, they want to look into 'opportunities to bust congestion on South-East Queensland roads using the existing road network'. There are no bigger untolled existing roads in the north of Brisbane than Gympie Arterial Road. The LNP need to come clean and say what this motion is actually about.

Sadly, I suspect that this motion is about the state LNP stealing the homework of their federal LNP colleagues. This is about the LNP trying to fund infrastructure through some miraculous, unheard-of funding sources. You can only cut the cake so many ways. At the end of the day, someone has to pay for new transport infrastructure, be it the government or the end user.

The LNP is living in the same fantasy land as the federal government in this regard. The Turnbull government has two go-to 'magic pudding' methods of funding infrastructure. The first method is to do nothing and then demand the state fund it. This is the method of choice on Cross River Rail—and the less said about the BaT tunnel the better. The second method the Turnbull government uses to pretend it is funding infrastructure is to give the appearance of funding but have it in the form of a loan or an equity payment arrangement. We see this in the Inland Rail project, the pet project of former deputy prime minister Barnaby Joyce, which has received an off-balance \$8.6 billion in equity, which the Australian Rail Track Corporation itself says it does not believe will be enough to fund the project. You cannot just walk into a room, say 'PPP' three times and magically have all of your infrastructure needs met.

In another example, over three years ago the Turnbull government created the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility. Some three years later, not a single cent has been spent in Queensland or on any major project in Australia. More locally, recently the Brisbane City Council announced an upgrade to the Inner City Bypass, funded by increasing tolls elsewhere on the network. Now the state LNP seemingly want to follow suit.

The LNP need to clearly state what this motion is about. Do they want to toll existing roads? Do they want to toll Sandgate Road? Do they want to toll Beckett Road? Do they want to toll Gympie Road? Those are the real questions brought up by this motion. I support the amendment moved by the minister.