




Speech By
Colin Boyce

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 15 November 2018

TRANSPORT AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (3.58 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the toll roads inquiry undertaken by the Transport and Public Works Committee. I take the opportunity to acknowledge my fellow committee members and once again thank the committee secretariat for their work preparing our papers and reports. The committee made five recommendations which are stated in the report.

There are some points I would like to raise in relation to toll roads. The tolling of roads was originally put in place by governments to recover the cost of infrastructure and, in this case, motorways. The Labor government sold Queensland Motorways in 2011 for \$3 billion—for the information of the member for Kurwongbah. Transurban has since invested in further road infrastructure to the tune of approximately \$8 billion. The government has now recovered that original cost by selling the asset.

Transurban is a publicly listed company and has an obligation to return a profit to shareholders. The government sets the maximum toll road fee payable. Given this, it is unlikely that Transurban will charge users less due to its obligations to shareholders. Transurban is also responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of toll roads. The toll road system works well for the vast majority of users. The problems lie with people who will not pay, cannot pay or have a dispute of some kind.

Ongoing administration fees are the major factor in accumulating a large toll debt. With regard to toll debt, if Transurban hands debt recovery to the government—in this case SPER—it effectively writes off that debt. All debt then recovered by SPER goes to the government, to general revenue. Transurban could offer user packages—the more people use it, the less they pay—to encourage greater use and, therefore, earn more money. This is outlined in our statement of reservation at the end of the report.

The toll road ombudsman based in Melbourne needs to be disbanded in favour of a Queensland based ombudsman to resolve disputes. Customer service phone and email numbers could be further advertised and made easily accessible so people can have better one-on-one experiences in resolving issues and accessing information. This is also outlined in our statement of reservation. I would again point out that the Labor government sold this state owned asset when the honourable Premier was the then transport minister.

In closing, I would like to take the opportunity to make a comment on my observations as a first-year parliamentarian. It has been a learning curve for me. One thing that has struck me that I continually hear from those opposite is consternation about the LNP selling state assets. This is not the case. The fact is Labor governments have continually sold state assets, including Queensland Motorways. I would like to table a document listing those sales for the information of the House.