




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 6 March 2018

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Toowoomba Second Range Crossing

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (10.35 am): The Toowoomba Second Range Crossing is one of the most important infrastructure projects in Queensland. It represents a \$1.6 billion investment to build a 41-kilometre toll road across challenging terrain and is supporting up to 1,800 direct and indirect jobs during the design and construction phases. It will be one of Queensland's greatest engineering achievements.

On projects like these, health and safety are paramount. This is why the government has become increasingly concerned about ongoing health and safety incidents including 17 plant rollovers and the recent outbreak of E. coli in drinking water at the project. Workplace Health and Safety Queensland inspectors have conducted more than 200 site visits, issued 93 notices and commenced 17 comprehensive investigations resulting in the creation of a recent special Workplace Health and Safety Queensland compliance unit.

In addition, recently the transport and main roads minister and I met with the principal contractor, Nexus, and others to directly express the government's ongoing concerns. Following this meeting we also met with workers and health and safety representatives to inform them of the outcome of the meeting and to hear their issues firsthand. At both meetings our message was clear: the safety of workers is our overriding priority, and immediate improvements and a cultural change towards health and safety were required. They were open and constructive meetings. The company assured the government that it understood its responsibilities and that it will implement a culture of continuous improvement. This included the restructuring of their safety team, increasing the number of health and safety representatives and, importantly, improving consultation and communication. They welcomed the independent safety audit announced by Minister Bailey that commenced on 26 February and agreed to cooperate fully and implement its recommendations.

Workplace Health and Safety Queensland will continue to work with Nexus, contractors, workers, health and safety representatives and their unions to ensure the health and safety of workers at this project. This government believes that every worker has a right to return home safely after a day's work, and we will do all we can to ensure that right.