




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

Record of Proceedings, 13 June 2018

MOTION

Toll Roads

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (5.01 pm): I move the following amendment—

That all words after 'consider' be deleted and the following words be inserted—

- (a) the operation of existing toll roads in South-East Queensland;
- (b) toll pricing and incentive options to deliver better outcomes for Queenslanders;
- (c) the operation of the existing complaint process and current statistics;
- (d) possible measures to continue to improve customer service standards; and
- (e) the existing relationship between the Tolling Customer Ombudsman and the Queensland Ombudsman.

And that the Transport and Public Works Committee requests the attendance of Transurban, the Tolling Customer Ombudsman, the Queensland Ombudsman, the Department of Transport and Main Roads and the Brisbane City Council.

It is the Palaszczuk government that is always on the side of Queensland commuters and drivers. Yesterday's budget is the latest example of that—a \$21.7 billion record four-year program of road and transport projects that will help bus congestion and improve productivity not just across South-East Queensland but across the state. We cannot talk about busting congestion unless we talk about rail and other forms of moving people.

Under the Palaszczuk government since April 2016 the Department of Transport and Main Roads has worked with SPER and Transurban to implement a framework for a new tolling enforcement and compliance regime. We wanted to see better outcomes through more targeted processes in order to reduce the volume of debt being referred to SPER and improve payment rates for outstanding debt, and it has worked.

Since implementation of the payment framework, tolling debt referred to SPER has reduced by 85 per cent—that is right, 85 per cent. It is a bit rich to be lectured by members of the opposition about toll roads when we look at their record. At the 2004 election Campbell Newman came to office as Lord Mayor promising a series of toll roads known as TransApex. This network included what would become Clem7, AirportlinkM7, Go Between Bridge, Northern Link and Legacy Way. The company managing Clem7 went into receivership less than 12 months after it opened. RiverCity Motorway reportedly lost \$8 million per month over its first nine months in operation.

The operator of the AirportlinkM7, BrisConnections, went into voluntary administration in 2013, less than seven months after the opening of the tunnel. BrisConnections was described as 'possibly the worst transport public-private partnership in Australian history' by Dr Matthew Burke of Griffith University. Patronage for all tunnels was severely and consistently below the council's initial estimates under then Lord Mayor Campbell Newman.

Then Campbell Newman moved from local government to state government and things got predictably worse in the tolling space. Under the Newman government in 2014 the Queensland Investment Corporation sold the expanded Queensland Motorways franchise which included the BCC toll roads to a consortium. Out of public ownership and into the private sector—isn't that a familiar story with the LNP? Not only that; they made systematic changes to the operation of the system itself that saw dramatic and unwelcome impacts for tolling customers.

Following the election of the Newman government, there were more than 153,000 penalty infringement notices issued with nearly 138,000 of those referred to SPER for action. By 2014-15 under the LNP this had ballooned to more than 700,000 PINs issued of which nearly 620,000 were referred to SPER. When it comes to mismanaging our tollways, the LNP gets the gold medal because those numbers are absolutely mammoth. That is why the Palaszczuk government acted. We got Transport and Main Roads, SPER and Transurban in a room together and we delivered improvements that have had real outcomes for Queensland motorists. Fewer referrals to SPER mean fewer debts. Hand in hand with that we have delivered a record QTRIP in this budget.

Some of these improvements that have happened include, for instance, changes to the enforcement process that has helped customers avoid more than \$100 million in state enforcement penalties in the last financial year. We have seen demand notice aggregation that will result in 1.7 million fewer demand notices being issued to customers and a reduction of \$36½ million per year in fees. We have seen proactive and targeted customer communications. We have seen implementation of a first time forgiveness program, a Transurban hardship policy and a range of other reforms. The Palaszczuk government will always stand up for Queenslanders. I support this motion as amended by me at the start of my speech.