




Speech By
Steve Minnikin

MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

Record of Proceedings, 13 June 2018

MOTION

Toll Roads

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (4.56 pm): I give notice—I rise to speak on the motion I circulated earlier this morning.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Weir): Member for Chatsworth, can you move the motion?

Ms Grace: You don't have to give notice. You gave notice this morning.

Mr MINNIKIN: I know there has been a fair bit of excitement here in the last half an hour. Mr Acting Deputy Speaker, I move—

Ms Grace: Just Deputy Speaker, not Acting Deputy Speaker.

Mr MINNIKIN: I note the interjections continually coming across the chamber from Minister Grace Grace and I welcome them, and I welcome her contribution to this debate in the next 55 minutes. I move—

That the Transport and Public Works Committee inquire into and report to the Legislative Assembly by 13 September 2018 on the operations of toll roads in Queensland. In undertaking this inquiry, the committee should consider—

- (a) opportunities to bust congestion on South-East Queensland roads using the existing road network;
- (b) examination of toll pricing and incentive options designed to bust congestion;
- (c) consumer issues and complaints about toll road operators and their customer service standards; and
- (d) the effectiveness and appropriateness of an industry funded interstate tolling customer ombudsman examining customer complaints.

It is obvious that we are all looking for opportunities to bust congestion on South-East Queensland roads using the existing road network. I listened with interest to the ministerial statements after the budget was handed down just over 24 hours ago, saying things along the lines of record Health spend, record spend on this department, record spend on that department. However, we need to have an inquiry to sweat some of these assets, because we know that we need to have an examination of the tolling network.

At the end of the day we know that it was the Bligh government—and some members had a bit of a holiday for three years—that sold some of the assets including the tollway. We also know over the last few years that what was formerly managed by a few different companies now comes under the purview of one particular company. We urge this inquiry to look at ways to improve the effectiveness and appropriateness of an industry funded interstate tolling customer ombudsman. It is very clear that we need to bust some of this congestion because we simply do not have the money.

The government will say, 'We have the solution. We have the money.' Actually they do not. They have borrowed off the Visa card to borrow against the MasterCard. We want to give Queensland motorists a real voice in busting congestion. We know that Labor corporatised Queensland Motorways. They locked them up for about 40 to 50 years with a road franchise agreement. They sold them off. They do not like to talk about that. They like to airbrush history and say, 'Move along; nothing has ever happened.'

We know that in the last three years Transurban, the operator of many of the bits of kit that we have in South-East Queensland—in fact, the only operator now—has received about 48 per cent of all complaints to the national toll ombudsman. In every reporting period over the last three years Transurban has received more complaints than any other toll operator. Labor's transport minister has received briefing notes showing that in some reporting periods Transurban received more complaints than any other toll operator in Australia. The Labor minister's response has been zip—total silence about these motorists being taken for another ride by Labor. It was only the member for Bundamba who had the intestinal fortitude to stand up and say that we need to get serious in relation to this area of public policy.

The tolling ombudsman is not working for toll users. We know that in 2017 from 435 complaints made to the Ombudsman about Queensland toll roads not one complaint has resulted in an ombudsman recommendation decision. It is for these reasons and many more that we are urging the government to support a parliamentary inquiry through the relevant committee.