



Speech By  
**Steve Minnikin**


**MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH**

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Record of Proceedings, 26 March 2019

**MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Transport Infrastructure**

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (2.15 pm): I rise to speak of a matter of public interest that should be of concern to everyone in this chamber. I refer to the Queensland Audit Office report No. 4 of 2017-18, which deals with integrated transport planning in this great state. I am sure all members recognise the independence and the value of the work of the Queensland Audit Office. It conducts financial and performance audits across the entire public sector as well as identifies improvements in service efficiency and effectiveness. This important role enables the Auditor-General to develop unique insights into the financial sustainability of the Queensland government. It is one of these insights that is contained in report No. 4 that I will be highlighting today.

The report relates to integrated planning for the transport system and notes that the responsible government agencies do not have in place comprehensive frameworks for monitoring progress on all elements against transport outcomes. Although that is worrying enough, of particular concern is the conclusion drawn in the report that the renewal of the existing transport network has been and continues to be underfunded. In effect, the maintenance that is needed to keep our transport networks safe and functioning properly is falling further and further behind under this do-nothing Labor government.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr MINNIKIN:** I will not take offence because some of us have broad shoulders. Indeed, the responsible agency—DTMR—forecast that the renewal backlog on the state controlled road network will exceed \$9 billion over the next decade. The Auditor-General's report goes on to state—

The underfunding has resulted in risks to the sustainability of the transport network. The overall condition of the transport network falls well short—

I repeat, 'well short'—

of DTMR's target standards.

That is absolutely unacceptable. Although we know that a generation of Labor governments has bestowed on Queenslanders a mountain of debt with no solution in sight—which is why some of them had a little holiday for a few years a few years ago—their so-called legacy also extends to chronic underfunding of the existing road network.

As honourable members know, our transport network connects our regions. It helps foster economic growth and it provides jobs for many Queenslanders. The implications of this ongoing financial neglect of the maintenance of our transport network are severe. I refer to some roads in the regions that are already suffering from neglect, which will impact freight operators, tourist operators, mining operations and everyday users. In the North Burnett, there is the Eidsvold-Theodore Road and the Mundubbera-Durong Road. In the Banana shire, there is the Westwood turnoff. In the South Burnett, there is the road from Mundubbera to Dalby. In the Western Downs, there is the Jandowae Connection

Road and the Dawson Highway. In the Central Highlands Regional Council area, there is the road from Clermont to Rolleston, which is the Gregory Highway and the Dawson Highway. In the Isaac Regional Council area, there is the Gregory Highway and, in the Toowoomba Regional Council area, there is the Bowenville-Moola Road.

Unfortunately these regions can expect their backlog maintenance in relation to our highways to take longer and longer before they see the light of day. The many bridges that are already in poor condition are long overdue for remediation and will be awaiting longer periods before they are finally repaired. Even the rest stops, so vital as a road safety measure to help reinvigorate tired drivers, will not receive the adequate attention they deserve. What must be also borne in mind is that as it takes longer to complete the maintenance the more likely it is there will be further deterioration, so the problem just keeps on compounding.

Based on the audit conclusion it appears as though the situation is grave and this minister is out of his depth. However, the possibility of the current Minister for Transport and Main Roads ever fixing the maintenance issues seems distinctly remote given the inability to even offer a date to restore the 472 weekly train services that were cancelled in late 2016. Now we have 'road fail' as well as 'rail fail'. What an absolute genius! It takes a very special mix to have your own Twitter hashtag #railfail and now, under this man's watch, #roadfail.