




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BONNEY

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ADJOURNMENT

Coomera Connector

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (7.17 pm): Since I was born in 1991 the Gold Coast's population has more than doubled. We are Queensland's second-largest city; the sixth-largest in the nation. More and more of these many new Gold Coasters are calling the north of our city home. In 2022 to easily drive between most of our city's suburbs you still have to jump on a National Highway. Someone travelling from Carrara to Coomera or from Helensvale to Pimpama has to get on the M1, the most congested road in Queensland. Trips that should take 15 or 20 minutes are taking, on a good day, twice or even triple the amount of time they should. It is even worse when there is a crash, because having only one road for so many people means it will always lead to a blockage. There is nowhere else for these Gold Coasters to go to get to where they need to. We saw that again this afternoon with a four-car crash in Helensvale and on Friday morning with an horrific incident at Coomera. None of that is good enough. It is frankly ridiculous.

The only solution is another road for local traffic to use instead of the M1. Public transport needs work, but it alone cannot fix this. The second M1, or Coomera Connector, is a basic bare minimum infrastructure requirement for our growing Gold Coast, but what progress has been made in the seven years since Labor was elected? The business case has not been released. The public environment report will not even be released until mid-2022. After criticising the LNP for proposing a two-stage road, the state government is now putting forward a three-stage road for just the first stage. We are now told that even one of those tiny sections will not open for years. The six lanes promised by Labor have now been reduced to four lanes, again after they criticised the LNP's proposal. The cost has blown out from \$1.5 billion to \$2.1 billion. Light Rail Stage 2 was built on the land needed for the road, but the planning for the road corridor was not updated at the time, which meant \$74 million had to be paid to a developer to fix this planning stuff-up and secure the road corridor.

How about the road design? Has that been done? No, the state government only just called for a design tender last week. They have had over seven years in government and they are only just starting the design. For that entire time—and this is something of a rarity in politics—we have had the same Minister for Main Roads. One would have hoped that would lead to better outcomes—the ability to see a project through—but, with the only tangible progress on this road being some survey pegs, the minister has failed dismally. I urge Minister Bailey to get off Twitter, stop playing politics and do the work to deliver the second M1. Gold Coasters need it badly and we have waited long enough.