




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

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MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Transport Infrastructure; Koala Protection

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads and Minister for Digital Services) (10.10 am): Welcome back, Mr Speaker. It is great to have you back. The Palaszczuk government is making the most significant investment in transport infrastructure in our state's history with \$13 billion for our Bruce Highway Upgrade Program, the \$2.16 billion Coomera Connector built by us and the \$298 million Centenary Bridge upgrade, as well as billions going into the M1. We are delivering the services that Queenslanders deserve in the transport and main roads space. One of the great success stories for our government has been the balance we have been able to achieve as our road network and transport footprint continue to expand. We are building a balanced transport network that tackles the rapid population growth while also protecting our landscape and environment.

On the Gold Coast construction is right now underway on the northern section of the Coomera Connector stage 1. It was the Palaszczuk government that unblocked this project, secured the corridor in the three years to 2019 and has committed the billions in funding to make the second M1 a reality.

We have also made an historic purchase of 400 hectares of land—which to give members a sense, that is 140 hectares larger than Toohey Forest on Brisbane's south side—for koala habitat. The area called Greenridge near Pimpama is where we are relocating the often fractured and at-risk local koala populations that live adjacent to what will become the second M1. In doing this we have worked with local koala conservation groups to give fresh hope to a koala population that was in terminal decline from urban development. Wildlife fencing has been installed along the length of the new motorway corridor to protect native wildlife from construction activities.

Last week I was in Tallebudgera on the southern Gold Coast at the Tallebudgera Connection Road, which is a state controlled road.

It was very good to meet with the locals; I enjoyed it immensely. This area, sadly, has a poor track record of fatal and traumatic vehicle strikes for koalas. That is why I was joined by staff from the Currumbin Wildlife Hospital, Wildcare Australia and some of our TMR Gold Coast staff to announce a new koala trial zone on Tallebudgera Connection Road.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Burleigh and member for Coomera!

Mr BAILEY: Mr Speaker, people do not seem to support the protection of koalas. It is very sad.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BAILEY: I would have thought bipartisan support would have been a lay-down misère on this, but nonetheless. We are introducing a 50-kilometre-an-hour speed limit from 6 pm to 6 am every day in a trial during the most active time for local animal movements. We are also installing signage along the entire stretch of the road to warn motorists about the koalas that are in the area. TMR will be

monitoring vehicle speeds and we are aiming to see a reduction in the number of koala deaths and strikes along our road. I want to thank Tracey and Joanne, two of the local residents who joined in with the announcement, who do so much to protect and support local koalas and their habitat.

It is disappointing to see that the Brisbane City Council has failed to do the same along Boundary Road at Whites Hill. In March 2021 I wrote to the council to outline the process for a speed limit review on the road. At the time council's engineer conducting its 2020 review had not taken wildlife into consideration and recommended retaining the 70-kilometre-an-hour speed limit. It has now been more than two years and the number of cars on Boundary Road has continued to grow and the strikes of local koalas has, sadly, continued. I urge the Brisbane City Council to undertake its speed review and include wildlife in the brief, which it should have done in the first place in 2020. It must do everything it can to protect the local koala populations that live in the vicinity of Boundary Road at Whites Hill. I am pleased to say that the Palaszczuk government is acting to protect one of our most treasured animals along the Tallebudgera Connection Road, because we take our obligations in that regard very seriously.