




Speech By
Bryson Head

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 22 May 2024

TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (2.23 pm): In rising to talk about this public works inquiry, I want to thank the committee secretariat for their work in organising this trip out west to a remote part of Queensland. I thank all of my colleagues who participated in that. The shadow minister for transport, the member for Chatsworth, also joined us, which was fantastic. It was great to get out to a beautiful part of Queensland and take a look at the issue of roads in remote parts of Queensland. We were there just before the Birdsville Races, which is a fantastic event. I personally have not been fortunate to make it. Because of that, the council had spent a lot of time, effort and energy grading the roads. It is a shame that we as a committee did not make it there a couple of weeks prior, before a lot of graders had gone through, to experience those roads in a very degraded state, which is often the case for gravel state roads across a lot of Queensland. Unfortunately, they do not get maintained enough and we need to be doing a lot more to seal them.

The committee was tasked with looking into the roads from Birdsville to Bedourie and Birdsville to Windorah. At some point I would love to look into some roads such as Brigalow to Biloela or Biloela to Wandoan or maybe even Biggenden to Burra Burri. Those are a couple of state owned roads that need a few upgrades. Perhaps the committee in the future could take a look at some great roads across the Callide electorate.

I say thanks to the member for Gregory for taking up this issue. He has been a great member for Gregory. I know the LNP candidate for Gregory, Sean Dillon, will be steadfast in his advocacy for a lot of these western roads. He is a true Queenslander. He is a man from the bush who understands the issues that face rural Queensland. The candidate for Gregory, Sean Dillon, is going to make a great member in this place should he be elected in October. I look forward to welcoming him formally if we get across the line.

I now want to touch on the committee's recommendations. Recommendation 2 speaks about the need for flexibility when applying national guidelines to low-volume roads. This is certainly a big issue that we heard a lot about out there with the Birdsville Races and the Big Red Bash which bring a lot of traffic in a short period. The roads outside of that also have small windows where they provide significant economic contributions through what they are exporting and transporting. As the member for Gregory touched on, it is a brilliant beef area; the Channel Country of Western Queensland is a unique area. If honourable members have not been out there, I very much recommend they go. It is about the second best area of Queensland—second only to, of course, the electorate of Callide.

The economic contribution of the beef industry is huge. We need to be looking at all roads that cart the beef. Whether it is out Birdsville, Bedourie and Windorah way or the beef corridors of Central Queensland, the roads absolutely need upgrading to improve the economic contributions to this state. We have been calling for this for a long time and we will continue to do so. If members have not heard, it was Beef Week recently. I have my beef pin on today.

Mr Smith interjected.

Mr HEAD: I take that interjection from the member for Bundaberg. If he really thought that, he obviously does not listen too much. Maybe he should find a way to use his ears and listen to his constituents, who absolutely do not support the Labor government across his electorate. It was recently Beef Week and it showcased a beautiful industry that represents this area of Queensland. Of course, the beef industry contributes a lot more to just South-West Queensland. If honourable members missed Beef Week, they should make sure they get there in three years time.

Recommendation 3 talks about the need for urgent steps to pave and seal the remaining 15.7 kilometres of the unsealed length of the Eyre Development Road between Birdsville and Bedourie. When it comes to paving roads it is absolutely critical for road safety. We know that rural Queenslanders are killed on our roads at a far greater rate than that of the city and this absolutely needs to be addressed. We need to prioritise investment in rural and regional Queensland because the stats show that those are the people who are getting killed on our roads. A significant contributor to that is the poor state of our roads and the fact that we have not spent enough on infrastructure in rural and regional Queensland in this state.