




Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

Record of Proceedings, 14 February 2024

TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (2.12 pm): I, too, would like to pass on my thanks to Jodhi for her work on this. Like the member who spoke before me, I am no longer on the Transport and Resources Committee either. I would also like to thank all of the committee members, especially the chair, Shane King, member for Kurwongbah. Thank you for your help and certainly for your guidance, mate. I wish you all the best in your new role.

This was a big trip for us. We got to Weipa the day before and we took off at about five o'clock in the morning to drive down to Cooktown on the Peninsula Developmental Road, which ends at Laura but we had to get to Cooktown. It was an experience to see the difficulties that people in the cape face when it comes to transport. As parliamentarians—particularly the current government—we need to make sure every community has bitumen access to be able to get to places. We finally have complete bitumen to Muttaborra from Longreach.

Mr Stevens: Muttaborra to Hughenden.

Mr MILLAR: Exactly. We also need the 19 kilometres from Bedourie to Birdsville, which the committee has been out to see and inspect. Certainly, it is important that we make sure we continue to build on those roads and make sure they are maintained. These roads from Weipa to Laura are the only way to get there. With limited maternity services in Cape York, most mums have to go to Cairns to have their baby delivered. They have to go down a couple of weeks early and await the birth of their child.

In terms of flooding, we have just seen cyclones go through that area and they can be devastating. It is about people being able to access basic food supplies to continue to live in those areas. If we do not maintain roads like this one and make them bitumen, people do suffer.

Mr Perrett interjected.

Mr MILLAR: I take the interjection from the member for Gympie. Agriculture is an incredibly important part of Cape York. The beef industry is a lifeblood. We have to be able to get our cattle out to where they have the go, whether it is to the processor or for live trade. It is important that we ensure people can generate economic opportunity for the state.

I congratulate the two departmental staff who were on the trip with us in 2022. They did a fantastic job. They and their departmental colleagues were so committed to making sure the Peninsula Developmental Road was finished. They were proud of what they were able to achieve, especially in terms of the Archer River Bridge. That is a significant piece of infrastructure. If we can get it at least 90 per cent accessible, without it going under, that will be fantastic.

When you use the Archer River Bridge now, you go across it, down into a gully and then back out. Of course it is going to flood. That place floods all the time in the wet season. If we can put in important infrastructure such as that, it is worthwhile. I could see the pride in the departmental staff in terms of achieving something of great significance for the people in Cape York. Public servants are the people who do significant work for us in government. They turn up every day and put their minds to making sure we have a better way in Queensland.

Finally, I reiterate: it is important that regional Queensland has access to good roads. An example is the Dawson Highway, which needs significant infrastructure improvements.

Mrs Frecklington: There's a beef road.

Mr MILLAR: Yes, absolutely. For the first time in a long time, the Capricorn Highway from Emerald to Alpha is starting to come apart. Surprisingly, last week when I was in Longreach I noticed that the Barcaldine to Longreach stretch of road needs work. Let's continue to invest in roads.

(Time expired)