




Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

Record of Proceedings, 22 May 2024

TRANSPORT AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (2.14 pm): I would also like to make a small contribution into what I see as a significant inquiry into a very important road in my electorate. I have spent a lot of time on that road—more than anyone in this House would have—and it is a road that is used frequently. Not only is that road used for the transport of cattle by road trains given the organic status we have out there and the great marketing that OBE have done in getting our wonderful beef into places like Korea, Japan and so on but also that road is a mecca for the baby boomers who are cashed up and have Winnebagos and caravans and love to head out West at this time of the year right through until probably about October.

I really like recommendation No. 3 of the committee which is that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads consider urgent steps to pave and seal the remaining 15.7 kilometres of unsealed road between Birdsville and Bedourie. Birdsville is the last town in Queensland not to have an all-access road to a major area. Over the last two or three seasons we have had wonderful out of seasonal rain in that area where the Diamantina is flowing, the wild flowers are showing and the pastures are significant. A fun fact: if we have good seasons out there, cattle can put on two kilograms a day. That is better than a feedlot. That is pure organic grass cattle fattening country. It is one of the most significant pieces of country you will ever see.

If members get a chance to go out there please go out there. Not only is the beer cold at the Birdsville pub, but the locals would certainly love to see you. The most important thing is the sealing of that road. I am hearing reports that we have some health services, such as the dental truck that comes down from Mount Isa, that are not coming through to Birdsville at the moment—I will be up-front with the House that we have to get this confirmed—because of the unsealed road. We have kids out there who need those dental services. Birdsville has a population that is significant for Western Queensland. I ask the transport minister and the health minister to look into that. I will get more information. It is important that the road is sealed so we have access.

The other issue is that we have a growing cattle industry out there that is very important given its organic status. It is renowned in Japan. It has been going for over 35 or 40 years, it was started by the Brooks family. They have a collective of graziers all over the Channel Country, who are part of the marketing of OBE beef.

Ms Leahy interjected.

Mr MILLAR: I will take that interjection from the member for Warrego who has similar graziers in her electorate. By the time cattle leave Birdsville and get into the south-east, that affects the condition of the cattle. We have to try to find an all-access opportunity. From Birdsville to Windorah we need to put in more overtaking lanes—another 20 kilometres of them; four more overtaking lanes of five kilometres—on which we can land an RFDS King Air for emergency. We need to make them longer

than five kilometres. We need to make them 10 kilometres. As the chair of the committee at the time of the inquiry pointed out, by the time you try to get past a road train you have about three or four kilometres of dust that you are trying to get through and by the time you hit the bitumen to get around the road train, the road train is coming off the bitumen again and going back into dust. It is a safety issue. I ask the Minister for Transport to put some money aside for this in this budget. Let us get the 15 kilometres sealed and let us put more overtaking lanes in place so we can have a safe road and give something back to the very people who make our state economy great by exporting great cattle.