




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TRAEGER

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENTS

Traeger Electorate, Roads

 **Mr KATTER** (Traeger—KAP) (2.49 pm): I would like to talk about the Queensland government's propensity for tunnel vision. When I talk about tunnels, I mean road and rail tunnels. Brisbane is the Australian capital for tunnels, with 22 kilometres of tunnels—although much less than Sydney—costing over \$14 billion. In this House we debate the separate states in terms of the inequities and how many rural and remote areas are frozen in time. In terms of access and the roads in our electorates, there is a lot of dirt roads and unsealed roads. Burketown and Doomadgee have been cut off two years in a row for three or four months at a time. There are also grocery shortages and phones can be down for a week or two. They are the sorts of issues we are dealing with. Journalists asked the other day, 'Do you have public transport problems in North Queensland? I suppose that is a problem.' I said, 'We'd love to have a public transport problem. We don't have public transport.' We have all these terrible problems and we come down here and every time we blink there is a new tunnel or a footbridge being built here.

I came across a Ken Henry quote from 2013. Ken Henry has had a very creditable career as under treasurer and with NAB. He said—

Governments are making decisions based on short-term political benefit rather than looking long-term at what's in the national interest.

Too much tunnelling

... Australia spent too much money on "extreme solutions" such as underground road tunnels to minimise community opposition to infrastructure projects and because projects were not planned far enough in advance ...

It would be understandable if tunnels were for a new port access to deliver something for all of Queensland, but a lot of them are for pedestrian traffic convenience, such as this new bridge across the river. It will get people to work 10 minutes earlier. That is good for people in Brisbane, but it does not do much for anyone outside of that area.

The things we talk about, such as the Ootann Road, do not really affect a lot of people. Not a lot of passengers will get to school earlier on the Ootann Road, but CSIRO's TraNSIT modelling listed this road as having the highest return on investment in the roads model. How much attention do honourable members think the Ootann Road gets in this place for the 80 to 90 kilometres that needs sealing? Like I said the other day, Cape York is completely undeveloped. If that were done, they would be able to pull triple road trains out of there and make the cattle industry viable, bringing them to markets and escaping the Kuranda Range. However, we never talk about Ootann Road because we do not worry about how industry is going to pay for all these things. We focus on the short-term things. On Kuranda road, which the member for Hill is always talking about, in Cairns there is one stoppage a week. It takes an hour and 20 minutes to travel down there. A two-kilometre tunnel—at the most—would take 40 minutes off that trip. Then they could take B-doubles into the Cairns port. That is how we should build Queensland and build industry in this place.