




Speech By
Trevor Watts

MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH

Record of Proceedings, 18 April 2024

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Toowoomba North Electorate, Infrastructure

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (2.31 pm): I rise to address an issue of pressing importance to my electorate of Toowoomba North and the neighbouring regions. We are currently facing escalating challenges that are exacerbating the cost-of-living crisis for everybody in the region and everybody who lives west of the Bremer bridge. The challenges stem directly from longstanding infrastructure deficiencies, specifically, the Bremer bridge, the Glenore Grove crossroads and the Toowoomba Range.

What does this really mean? This is a vital infrastructure artery and everything that comes into our lives comes down that road—whether it be fuel or fresh produce. Everything that we buy and pretty much everything we sell is going up and down that road all of the time so when it is inefficient it not only affects the livelihoods of the people in Toowoomba but also affects the livelihoods of the people in Ipswich West and the Lockyer. This is a critical piece of infrastructure. There are increased fuel costs, increased food costs and increased general deliveries. Everything that travels on the road is being affected because this Labor government has failed to plan. What concerns me is that in a press release on 11 April 2024, the minister stated—

This funding will ensure TMR is able to continue progressing additional structural investigations, assessments and monitoring to inform the design of rehabilitation works as a priority.

This is an admission that the minister still has no idea of the extent of repairs required. If you fail to plan, you plan to fail. The truckies I am listening to have some questions for the minister. How long has the government been aware of the structural problems affecting the Bremer bridge? How frequently has the bridge undergone routine inspections and maintenance checks since 2015? What is the total cost to date of implementing the temporary measures such as contraflow lanes, traffic lights and additional signage on the Bremer bridge? What is the projected duration for the completion of the current repair works on the bridge? Are these repairs intended as a permanent solution or merely as a temporary solution? If they are temporary, what are the government's detailed plans about cost replacements for a new bridge? Lastly, are there plans to upgrade and improve flood resilience on the Warrego Highway from the Bremer bridge to Toowoomba to prevent future disruptions?

These questions are important to the transport and logistics industry not only in my area but also in the adjoining electorates in particular and to everybody who lives west of the Bremer bridge. Our infrastructure needs to be efficient, productive and futureproofed. Our communities should not have to pay for the failures of inadequate foresight and delayed responses by this Labor government that is spending taxpayers' money and still has no plan for how to fix this road.