

**Question on Notice  
No. 784  
Asked on Thursday, 24 May 2007**

MR LANGBROEK asked the Minister for Local Government, Planning and Sport (MR FRASER)—

**QUESTION:**

With reference to the construction of a new bridge at Macintosh Island in the electorate of Surfers Paradise—

Will he provide details of advice given to him that enabled an exemption to be provided under the *Indy Act* to disregard and circumvent the *Environmental Protection Act* with respect to the construction of this bridge?

**ANSWER:**

I am sure the Member for Surfers Paradise would agree that the bridge over the Nerang River in the MacIntosh Island Park Precinct is an important link from the park to the oceanway and beach front.

The existing swing bridge was closed by the Gold Coast City Council in November last year, as engineering reports commissioned by Council found it was unsafe for use in certain conditions. As a matter of public safety, I agreed with Council that it was important to replace the bridge as soon as possible.

The State Government and the Gold Coast City Council are working together to fund and support the replacement of the bridge. Council, however, was not in a position to ensure the bridge was replaced in time for the conduct of the 2007 Lexmark Indy 300. Therefore, I exercised the powers available to me under the *Gold Coast Motor Racing Events Act 1990* (the Act) to direct the Indy promoter to be responsible for the replacement of the bridge.

Section 15 of the Act provides the power for me to direct the promoter of the Indy 300 event to undertake such actions in relation to the motor racing event for any year. Section 12 relates to the exemptions provided under the Act to which the member has referred. This action assisted to ensure the replacement of the bridge as soon as possible for all concerned. The Act does allow exemptions to certain laws for the replacement of the bridge.

The works undertaken to replace the bridge will not result in a significant environmental impact. The new bridge will directly replace the previous bridge and will be constructed in the same alignment, minimising effect to the local environment. All work is being conducted in accordance with a site management plan and the Gold Coast City Council is fully informed of the work and processes being undertaken.

I would not have needed to contemplate the exercise of the powers under the *Gold Coast Motor Racing Events Act* if the Gold Coast City Council had properly ensured that the bridge – which is owned by the Council – was in a fit state of repair. The refusal of Council to confront this matter resulted in the bridge falling into disrepair and being closed by Council as unsafe.

The exercise of my powers ensures that this year's Indy 300 can be conducted as planned, and the massive injection of wealth into the Gold Coast again achieved, while also ensuring that the local residents and ratepayers of the area have the benefit of a safe and operative bridge.