



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Rail Infrastructure

SPEECH

Monday, 19 October 2009

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Questioner
Speaker Neumann, Shayne, MP

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Mr NEUMANN (Blair) (7.45 pm)—I am happy to speak in support of the motion moved by the member for Oxley, Mr Ripoll. I note that the member for Oxley has referred to both rail and road in his motion. The commitment of the Rudd Labor government to South-East Queensland in relation to the Ipswich Motorway upgrade and to the Gold Coast Rapid Transit rail is very welcome. The Brisbane future public transport network and the \$20 million in funding that the federal government will commit for a feasibility planning study of the Brisbane inner city rail capacity upgrade—to be completed, it is estimated, in 2012—will make a big difference. If the federal government chooses to actually fund that inner city translink, that will be of great help not only to the people of Brisbane but also to people on the Gold Coast and in Ipswich. Like any city, Brisbane is a place where people come to work, for recreation, to get together to see a film, to have friendship and fellowship and just to shop. So that feasibility study will be most welcome and I urge the government to look seriously at funding it.

The Gold Coast Rapid Transit funding is particularly welcome not only for those people on the Gold Coast but also for other people in my area of Blair, in Ipswich and in the rural areas outside who use the Gold Coast regularly for recreation and holidays. Over the next four years, the federal government will invest \$365 million on 13 kilometres of light rail and transit infrastructure from Griffith University to Broadbeach. That is very important not just for linkages for students but also for access to Broadbeach for recreation, shopping and the beach.

The Ipswich Motorway upgrade is also critical and the federal government has put forward \$1.95 million in funding for it over the next four years. It will spend \$884 million in additional works between Dinmore and Goodna and you can see that happening right now. There is also a rail corridor, secured by the state government, which goes up from Springfield through to Ipswich, linking the University of Southern Queensland at Springfield to the Ipswich campus of the University of Queensland. That is an important infrastructure corridor and I would urge the federal government to look at that in the future.

This government has put an enormous amount of money into South-East Queensland for rail and road, but these things are particularly important. The member for Oxley mentioned the western corridor, the area between Ipswich and the south-west suburbs of Brisbane through to Forest Lake and Springfield. In 20 years, about 85,000 people will live in Springfield and it is estimated that Ipswich will have a population of about 434,000. This is all part of the South-East Queensland regional development plan, so road and rail infrastructure is particularly vital.

One in seven people in Australia lives in South-East Queensland. It is the area where the biggest regional councils are—big regional councils created through council amalgamations. Councils like Lockyer Valley, the Somerset Regional Council, the Scenic Rim Regional Council and the Ipswich City Council are large councils not only in the area they cover but also in population compared with some of the more rural and regional areas of our country. Local government plays an enormous role in this and the South-East Queensland Council of Mayors has played a strong advocacy role in getting South-East Queensland moving, but the federal government is strongly committed to road and rail infrastructure and the runs are on the board.

The Ipswich Motorway should have been funded many years ago by the previous, Howard government. There were 11½ years of inertia, idleness and ignorance on the issue. The people of the western corridor, from south-west Brisbane through to Ipswich and the rural areas outside it, were frustrated all through that time. It is the Rudd government that has put the money into South-East Queensland in terms of Gold Coast rail, the Ipswich Motorway upgrade and so many other roads, whether they be the Cunningham Highway south of Ipswich or the Warrego Highway west of Ipswich. We are seeing resurfacing everywhere. It is all part of the Rudd government's nation-building and stimulus strategy, sadly and regrettably opposed tooth and nail by those opposite, to their shame and discredit. I commend the member for Oxley for his motion. It is apt and appropriate.