



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**Federation Chamber**

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**Bruce Highway**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 10 October 2016**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<p><b>Date</b> Monday, 10 October 2016</p> <p><b>Page</b> 1433</p> <p><b>Questioner</b></p> <p><b>Speaker</b> O'Brien, Ted, MP</p>	<p><b>Source</b> House</p> <p><b>Proof</b> No</p> <p><b>Responder</b></p> <p><b>Question No.</b></p>
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**Mr TED O'BRIEN** (Fairfax) (17:28): I move:

That this House:

- (1) recognises the vital role the Bruce Highway plays in connecting communities all the way from Brisbane to Cairns;
- (2) acknowledges that the Australian Government is investing \$6.7 billion into upgrading the Bruce Highway;
- (3) notes that:
  - (a) the Australian Government has approved \$6.4 million to fund a planning study into upgrading the Bruce Highway between Pine Rivers and Caloundra Road; and
  - (b) the Queensland Government is not planning to finalise the planning study until the middle of 2018;
- (4) calls on the Queensland Government to expedite its work on the planning study so that much needed upgrade works to the Bruce Highway can start as soon as possible; and
- (5) congratulates the Australian Government for approving the supplementary study into upgrading the Bruce Highway between the Sunshine Motorway and the Maroochydore Interchange.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you will be happy to know my mum gave me a call on Saturday afternoon. It was not to have a chat to her son. Along with probably hundreds of others, she was stuck on the Bruce Highway—southbound, Sunshine Coast to Brisbane. After a quick Google search, I was able to assure my mum it was due to yet another accident. This time it was not a fatal one, thank God. Almost on a daily basis, there is an accident on the Bruce Highway. The local *Sunshine Coast Daily* ran a headline story about a month ago entitled 'Breaking news: no accident on the Bruce today'.

There is no piece of infrastructure more critical to the life and productivity of the Sunshine Coast region than the Bruce Highway. What our region needs is a modern, integrated transport solution—road, rail and air—and among that mix there is nothing more important than the Bruce Highway. It is a piece of infrastructure to which the coalition has committed a considerable amount of money. Only recently, a tender was announced for a \$929 million upgrade with an additional lane in each direction between the Caloundra Road turn-off and the Sunshine Motorway. In addition, the minister recently announced the bringing forward of a \$187 million upgrade of the Maroochydore interchange. Put together, that is over \$1 billion of works planned for the Sunshine Coast stretch of the Bruce Highway. To make the case for further lanes of the highway between Caboolture and Caloundra, a joint Commonwealth-state study is getting underway, and I call on the Queensland government to progress that study as a matter of urgency.

I feel that for too long people have looked at the Bruce Highway upgrades only in the context of solving problems—safety, congestion and flooding. All of these are absolutely key factors to address, but I believe we also need to talk about the upside, the aspirational side—that upgrading vital infrastructure like the Bruce Highway is just as much about unleashing the economic capacity of the region. It is why I am so happy, too, that the minister recently announced, to supplement the study for extra lanes between Caboolture and Caloundra, another study that will look north of the Sunshine Motorway to the Nambour Connection Road and Maroochydore Road turn-offs for additional lanes. This means more economic growth for our region. If you take tourism as an example, outside Brisbane the Sunshine Coast continues to be the most visited holiday destination in Queensland by other Queenslanders. Can you imagine, therefore, the impact that additional lanes on the Bruce Highway, already an overly utilised asset, would have on just that one sector alone, let alone the other sectors covered within our diversified region?

These commitments have been long fought for and, as the new member for Fairfax, I am very grateful for them. But, quite frankly, it is not enough. That is why my colleagues within the Sunshine Coast region, in Fisher and Wide Bay, together with me and also our colleagues further north and further south, will continue to campaign for further upgrades to the Bruce Highway, and we will be doing so as a unity ticket.

In that spirit of unity, I am delighted to see that the shadow minister has turned up today to speak to the motion. Indeed, there is nothing more heartening than a unity ticket on the Bruce Highway. I am sure that is the spirit of cooperation that the shadow minister will bring to this discussion. I have to say I was somewhat bemused recently with the shadow minister visiting the Sunshine Coast region and taking credit for the upgrades within the region, when he was referring to a time when the Labor Party actually committed \$4.1 billion for upgrades to the Bruce Highway, compared to \$6.7 billion by the coalition. But that is okay. If we can have a united purpose here, I will be delighted. First and foremost, I would reach out to any member of the opposition to make a phone call to the Premier of Queensland and her colleagues and call for them to hurry up. Let's get on with these studies for more lanes for the Bruce Highway.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER ( Mr Hogan ): Is the motion seconded?

An honourable member: I second the motion and reserve my right to speak.