



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PROOF**

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Fairfax Electorate: Rail**

**SPEECH**

**Tuesday, 16 March 2021**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<b>Date</b> Tuesday, 16 March 2021	<b>Source</b> House
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<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Responder</b>
<b>Speaker</b> O'Brien, Ted, MP	<b>Question No.</b>

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**Mr TED O'BRIEN** (Fairfax) (16:15): Never in our history has the Sunshine Coast been the recipient of so much federal government funding—never before. This is evidenced particularly with infrastructure. Between Pine Rivers and Gympie, the Bruce Highway spend alone is \$3.2 billion; the North Coast rail line has \$390 million; and there is the concessional loan to upgrade the Sunny Coast airport, at \$181 million. But, as we look to the future, there is one form of infrastructure that will transform the Sunshine Coast like none other, and that is rail. There are two projects that we need in particular. First, we need full duplication of rail—that is, two tracks—between Beerburrum and Nambour, designed in a way that will accommodate fast rail in the future. Second, we need fast rail from Brisbane through to Maroochydore. That is using the CAMCOS corridor, providing the Sunny Coast with a rail link to its coastal strip that it's never had before. On the latter project, Infrastructure Australia reported just last week what we all expected, and that is that the fast rail link to Maroochydore doesn't yet have its green light. There are a few key takeaways based on the criteria of Infrastructure Australia. No. 1: the strategic fit, the rationale, the why—a big tick for that. There is no doubt, and now Infrastructure Australia has confirmed it, that the Sunshine Coast does need fast rail as a solution—what it would do for lifestyle, jobs, unleashing new accommodation and affordable housing, and what it would do to boost the economy. The second takeaway is the main hurdle, and that is that the main proponent, which is the state government, has not yet supported the project. Third, there's more work to be done on the business case.

So, where do we go from here? We know Infrastructure Australia are not the decision-makers—governments make decisions—but they do provide good guidance. Firstly, in order to ensure the state government gets onboard, I've written to the state minister, Mark Bailey, and hopefully will engage with him to talk about how we take this project together as two tiers of government—indeed, three, with the local councils onboard. Secondly, Infrastructure Australia gave everybody a hint—the importance of this stretch of rail within a broader South-East Queensland fast-rail network. That is why we need to have a strategy that takes a South-East Queensland outlook. And, thirdly, what we really need to do is make sure the public keep getting onboard. Go to [fastrail.com.au](http://fastrail.com.au) and get onboard. *(Time expired)*