



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PROOF**

**Federation Chamber**

**CONSTITUENCY STATEMENTS**

**Sunshine Coast: Rail Infrastructure**

**SPEECH**

**Thursday, 8 September 2022**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

<b>Date</b>	Thursday, 8 September 2022	<b>Source</b>	House
<b>Page</b>	30	<b>Proof</b>	Yes
<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) (09:36): Enough talk—time for action. I'm referring, of course, to the \$3.2 billion new rail line that will run from Beerwah to Maroochydore. This rail line has been well studied and long wanted. Indeed, we saw this year that, in the federal budget, the single largest transport infrastructure project across the nation was for this Beerwah to Maroochydore rail line, with \$1.6 billion committed by the federal government: fully costed and fully budgeted for.

This rail line, of course, is needed for several reasons. Firstly, we know that South-East Queensland—in particular between Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast—is the fastest-growing region in the country. Population growth is going through the roof. Indeed, when the studies were done on this very project, it was before COVID. What we have seen post COVID is, again, the movement of people to the south-east corner—in particular between Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. Population growth alone justifies this infrastructure project.

But what we also see is a much-strained Bruce Highway, despite record funding from the former coalition government. We need to have fewer cars and more people in trains. Again, this is why we need this rail connection, which will take, for the first time in history, a rail line off the existing track, across the coastal strip, from Caloundra through to Kawana and up to the Maroochydore CBD. It is vitally needed.

We also recognise the environmental benefits of ensuring that we have more people on public transport, such as rail, rather than just in cars. We have the need for population planning. We need a population plan that has density around new railway stations—again, a reason for this program. We also have the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, where the world will be coming to the Sunny Coast. We need this rail line.

The moment of truth, though, is coming. The moment of truth will be at the federal budget. We will see whether or not the new government will honour its word. The minister herself, before becoming a minister, said about this very project, 'There is no time to waste.' Labor candidates on the Sunshine Coast, before the federal election, also said they supported this project. What have we seen since the election, though? Nothing. There have been no commitments made. All there is is weaselly words about having to work with the state government—also a Labor government—which has previously said it was a fully viable project but has not committed the funding. The moment of truth will be on budget night, and I tell you what: the Sunshine Coast and Brisbane will be watching. We are demanding that \$1.6 billion be in that budget.