



**PAUL FLETCHER MP
MEMBER FOR BRADFIELD
MINISTER FOR URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE AND CITIES
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TRANSCRIPT – ABC RADIO BRISBANE BREAKFAST WITH CRAIG ZONCA AND
REBECCA LEVINGSTON

Topics: *The \$1 billion federal government funding proposal for the M1 between Brisbane and the Gold Coast.*

CRAIG ZONCA:

If you're a tradie, a tourist, if you like visiting the beach or it's just what you have to do for business each and every day, congestion on the M1 between Brisbane and the Gold Coast; you get used to it as a way of life but sometimes you need to factor in more than two hours in peak times for that daily journey. This morning, the Prime Minister will unveil a plan to shorten that trip, spending a billion dollars in the process. That's from the federal government. They want the state to chip in as well.

Paul Fletcher is the Minister for Urban Infrastructure and Cities. Paul Fletcher, what does \$1 billion buy?

PAUL FLETCHER:

Well, good morning, Craig and Rebecca, and what a billion dollars from the Turnbull Government will support is two very substantial projects on the M1 corridor. One is between Varsity Lakes and Tugun at the Gold Coast end to upgrade the motorway to six lanes, three lanes in each direction. Also some other components such as ramp upgrades and so on. And then, the other project that we will support with this billion-dollar commitment is Eight Mile Plains to Daisy Hill. That's a little way south of the merge with the gateway, a very, very busy part of the motorway, and that would provide for widening the motorway from six lanes to eight lanes, and also some other elements, such as extending the bus way to Springwood. So those are the two projects that we are committing today \$1 billion for, to reduce congestion, improve travel times on the M1. So those two projects at the moment are on the Infrastructure Australia list as

priority initiatives. The next step would now be for the Queensland Government to develop detailed business cases, get them to Infrastructure Australia, and our hope is that that could be done in time for construction on these two big projects to commence in 2020, remembering that there are two existing projects co-funded by the Commonwealth and the Queensland governments that will start very shortly: Varsity Lakes to Mudgeeraba and the Gateway Merge.

CRAIG ZONCA:

Okay. So, the two projects you talk about with this billion dollars; you say the state government has to do up the business case to Infrastructure Australia in order to get this money. How much money do you also want the state government to contribute?

PAUL FLETCHER:

Well, we're proposing that this funding be provided on a 50-50 basis. That's the way that projects on the M1 between Brisbane and the Gold Coast have been funded previously under the current- under the Turnbull Government and previously under federal Labor governments. So...

CRAIG ZONCA:

But there had been a massive barney between the federal and state government over the other projects on the M1, with the state government wanting an 80-20 split, which you are doing on the Bruce Highway.

PAUL FLETCHER:

The basic principle is that in regional and remote areas, we tend to fund on an 80-20 basis. In the urban areas, we fund on a 50-50 basis. Of course, the M1 is the backbone of one of Australia's largest urban areas; the Gold Coast Brisbane [indistinct]. It's assessed as urban by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. And as I say, that's been the basis on which previous projects on the M1 between Brisbane and the Gold Coast have been funded on a 50-50 basis including under the previous federal Labor government as well as under this Liberal government.

CRAIG ZONCA:

If the state government don't agree to that 50-50 split, what happens to the project?

PAUL FLETCHER:

Well, look, I'm very confident that we'll be able to engage constructively with the Queensland Government, with Transport Minister Mark Bailey. I would note that after all the to-ing and fro-ing on the Varsity Lakes to Mudgeeraba and Gateway Merge project, we did reach agreement and indeed, those projects- early work on those projects is

already underway and once the Commonwealth Games are concluded, the work will get underway on those two projects. So just as we were able to work through on those projects, I'm confident we will on these. But the key point is today is a very significant day, because there's a commitment of \$1 billion from the Turnbull Government to reduce congestion on the M1, this vital corridor, and the LNP federal MPs like Karen Andrews, member for McPherson, Bert van Manen, member for Forde, and Ross Vasta, member for Bonner, have really fought for this funding commitment because they hear the message, as does the Turnbull Government, constantly from people in Brisbane and the Gold Coast and points in between: look, this is an absolutely vital corridor and anything we can do to reduce the congestion on it is so important.

REBECCA LEVINGSTON:

Paul Fletcher, you're the Minister for Urban Infrastructure, so you're interested in cities flowing well and being well connected. If you create more capacity for cars on major roads, it will mean that there are more drivers and more cars on major roads. How do you determine when you invest in widening roads and that kind of thing, which will naturally encourage more drivers, versus public transport and the way that some of the bigger cities around the world run?

PAUL FLETCHER:

Well, look, it's not an either or. It's important that we are funding both road and- both the motorways and public transport. And of course, other forms of urban infrastructure as well, like airports. We rely very much on Infrastructure Australia for its assessment of the business cases, but it is important to recognise that the M1 is an absolutely vital corridor. So many Queenslanders use it every day, and of course, people coming up from New South Wales as well. It carries over 150,000 vehicles per day, as you said, including over 12,000 heavy vehicles, so it's also vital for business and for moving freight around. And so, there's no doubt that additional capacity is needed. Now, we will be seeing business cases, I'm confident, from the Queensland Government coming forward to Infrastructure Australia. That will do the formal assessment of the benefits that will be available from this investment, but I think Queenslanders have made it very clear the people of South East Queensland, they use this road very extensively, that they want to see extra capacity, and the Turnbull Government is responding to that.

CRAIG ZONCA:

But when it comes to congestion-busting projects, the Queensland Government maintains their Cross River Rail project will do just that and get more people using trains, yet the federal government didn't want to come to the party at all on that.

PAUL FLETCHER:

Well, again, we made that decision based upon advice from Infrastructure Australia, that advice didn't say that Cross River Rail is a bad project – far from it – simply that at this

stage, it doesn't make sense to proceed with it for a number of reasons. Yes, there will need to be additional capacity at the core of the Queensland rail network or the Brisbane area rail network, but with things the Queensland Government is already doing like a new signalling system which lets you get more trains per hour, the expert advice that we received from Infrastructure Australia was that at this stage, the case wasn't made. Because remember, every dollar you spend on one project is a dollar you can't spend on another project. So you need to be putting the money to where it most needed. Is that project likely to make sense in years to come? It may very well, and of course, the Queensland Government has subsequently decided to proceed under its own steam, but clearly here on the M1, we are committing \$1 billion to improve travel times, reduce congestion on the M1 corridor, and very much wanting to work with the Queensland Government on that project.

CRAIG ZONCA:

The State Opposition going into the last election was advocating for an M2; a duplication, effectively, of 37 k's of the M1 as the way to go, instead of adding an extra lane, almost band-aid type solutions, on the existing road. Is that something that the federal government would ever support?

PAUL FLETCHER:

Well look, our focus at the moment is on providing additional capacity on the existing M1 corridor. We think there is a clear need for that, and that's why we are committing \$1 billion today. And so that is where our focus is.

CRAIG ZONCA:

Paul Fletcher, thanks for your time.

PAUL FLETCHER:

Thanks Craig, thanks Rebecca.

CRAIG ZONCA:

He is the Minister for Urban infrastructure and Cities. A billion dollars; the cheque book out, but conditional on the state government coming to the party with a billion dollars as well, and submitting that full business case to Infrastructure Australia.

- Ends -

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