

Speech to Brisbane City Council - Footpaths in Northgate Ward - Tuesday 28th October 2008

Councillor FLESSER: Thank you Madam Chairman. I'd like to talk about footpaths in the Northgate Ward. Madam Chairman Northgate Ward at present has a list of 23,000 metres of footpath. That's 23 kilometres long of footpaths that have been identified by the Council's Local Asset Services Engineers as being needed to be sealed.

Madam Chairman I didn't make up the list, but Councillor QUIRK keeps trying to say that these lists of footpaths that need sealing, long lists or something Madam Chairman. These are lists that are put together by Council Officers as a result of requests from residents or Councillors.

Madam Chairman, the footpaths don't automatically go on the list. The Council Officer's Engineers make an assessment if they believe there's a need, if there's a need for safety or if it's a heavily trafficked area, well Madam Chairman the Council Officers put the footpaths on the list.

I was very disturbed when I read an article in The Sunday Mail not that long ago on 'footpaths in the city on a rocky road'. Some of the comments from the LORD MAYOR really did disturb me, and Madam Chairman I'll get to how they're disturbing residents in Northgate Ward in a minute.

It said, "The LORD MAYOR Campbell NEWMAN denies there is a footpath crisis and says the money is needed elsewhere." In other words it needs to be spent on tunnels and large projects I assume.

The Council has only allocated \$1.123 million in this year's budget for new footpaths, and Madam Chairman when you compare that to the much smaller councils surrounding Brisbane...Logan City is spending \$1.8 million. So Logan City, tiny compared to Brisbane City Council is spending \$700,000 more than Brisbane.

At Ipswich City, it's paying this year to properly seal footpaths, \$3.9 million. Madam Chairman that's over three times what Brisbane's paying. But then again the LORD MAYOR is quoted as saying there is no footpath crisis!

He went on to say, "we have not underfunded footpaths, we're funding them at appropriate levels commensurate to the overall needs of the city."

Well Madam Chair, nobody expects the Brisbane City Council to seal all the footpaths that are listed in one year. But Madam Chair, the money that the LORD MAYOR put in the budget this year, \$1.1 million for footpaths is absolutely pathetic.

I know that all the Labor Councillors were very disappointed when the LORD MAYOR or the Liberal National Councillors wouldn't agree to the Opposition amendment [annexure 3:05:57] just \$1 million extra in the budget to help fix those footpaths in

desperate need in Brisbane. Even then that would have still only been half as much as what's been spent in Ipswich to fix the problems there.

Madam Chair when you look at the overall financial position of the city...at the end of the financial year we'll have \$300 million in reserves. We've just given the City of Brisbane Investment Corporation \$134 million. But Madam Chair, we're only spending \$1.12 million on footpaths.

Madam Chair the other thing I must say is that according to the LORD MAYOR's website, the Council will be debt free by the year 2010/2011. So Madam Chair, \$300 million in reserves, \$134 million to the CBIC and debt free in two years, but we can only afford \$1.1 million a year to maintain footpaths.

Now Madam Chair as far as Northgate Ward's concerned, like all Councillors here, I'm sure that you all get the same number of complaints about footpaths that I do. Just today I've received a letter from a resident in Wavell Heights. This resident sadly recently had a leg amputated. He writes to me talking about trying to get around the footpaths on this three wheeled mobility scooter and complaining about the state of the footpaths. In particular he talks about Simla Avenue.

He talks about large gaps and rough joins between segments of concrete between Newman Road, between Watkins Street and Main Road Madam Chair. I'm sure that all of us are receiving letters like that.

Just in the last couple of weeks, I've received complaints, one particular one from Helen Heimlich of Banyo about Elliot Road and how desperately Elliot Road needs a footpath Madam Chair. She also talks about 182 Tufnell Road where the footpath's broken and cracked and clearly needs to be repaired. A new footpath put in there.

Madam Chair, Marie Grey from Virginia talks about the need for a safe footpath to Riley Road, Virginia. She talks about how her neighbour slipped on the footpath and she fell and broke her hip. Then two weeks later one of her neighbours fell in Wellington Road, Banyo, between Hartley Street and Blinzinger Road and broke her arm. She's still recovering.

Carol Reed of Nudgee Beach recently contacted me about a fall she had on the footpath. There's an uneven footpath on Nudgee Road near the corner of Childs Road. She hurt her nose, her forehead, her knees and the palms of her hands.

Madam Chair, Margaret Condon of Nundah recently contacted me about a concrete footpath from Jenner Street. The response came back from Council Officers, it was already listed, assured me it was already listed along with the other 23,000 metres of footpath that are listed in Northgate Ward, and she obviously is still very much awaiting funding.

Madam Chair overall I just want to say that the LORD MAYOR's just not delivering enough money for those little projects out in the suburbs. Especially footpaths, and traffic management works.

It's fine to get out there with the big projects and say aren't I delivering. But Madam Chair, it's the people out in the suburbs who are suffering.

One point one million dollars out of the massive budget that the LORD MAYOR delivers to this Council for footpaths is just not enough, and Madam Chair I hope that the LORD MAYOR dramatically increases the amount of money spent on some urban footpaths in the next budget and over the next few years.

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