

Phil Thompson 28.8.03

LAI D UPON THE TABLE OF THE HOUSE

THE CLERK OF THE PARLIAMENT



25 JUL 2003

Ms Christine Scott MP
Member for Charters Towers
Stock Exchange Arcade
2/76 Mosman Street
Charters Towers Qld 4820

Dear Ms Scott

I refer to the petition lodged by you with the Clerk of the Parliament about replacement of the rail bridge over the Copperfield River at Einasleigh.

Enclosed for your information, is a copy of my response to Mrs Grace Smith, the Chief Petitioner on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Steve Bredhauer

**Minister for Transport
and Minister for Main Roads
Member for Cook**

Enc (1)

10 JUL 2003

Mrs Grace Smith
First Street
Forsyth Qld 4871

Dear Mrs Smith

I refer to a petition you lodged with the
over the Copperfield River at Einasleigh.

The decision to restore the Copperfield River Bridge is dependant on the final decision of an Expression of Interest (EOI) process the Queensland government has undertaken for operation of the Savannahlander rail service. This is the only service that normally operates over the Copperfield River Bridge providing a weekly return tourist service from Cairns to Forsyth. The aim of the EOI process was to determine whether an alternative operator could provide additional benefits to maximise the potential of the Savannahlander, ensuring sustained economic growth along the rail corridor and further enhancing tourism in the region.

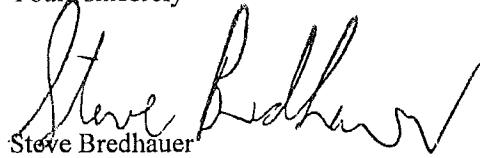
The government announced Cairns Kuranda Steam (CKS) as preferred bidder for the service in March 2003, and since that time has been negotiating with CKS on the form of the service and terms of the service contract. CKS has proposed a range of travel options that are hoped will significantly increase patronage from current levels on the service.

Unfortunately, CKS recently suffered from an arson attack that has delayed its capacity to assume management of the Savannahlander service. However, CKS remains committed to the service and it is now hoped, pending finalisation of a service contract, that it will assume operation of the service this year. Until that time, QR will continue to provide the service in its current format.

I can assure you the decision on the restoration of the bridge will not only take into account the cost of its restoration, but also the importance of sustainable economic growth in the region and the role that the Savannahlander rail experience can play, in particular for those residents beyond the Copperfield River Bridge from Einasleigh to Forsyth.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Bredhauer", with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Steve Bredhauer

**Minister for Transport
and Minister for Main Roads
Member for Cook**