



Speech by

**Fiona Simpson**

**MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE**

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## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; ESTIMATES A**

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (2.35 pm): In responding to report No. 2 of Estimates Committee A, I want to comment in particular on the Office of Urban Management. As we know, a lot of portfolios are handled within each of the estimates committees, and so there is a fairly limited amount of time available to address these particular subareas. The Office of Urban Management has been a very important initiative that has been rolled out. We have given bipartisan support to the concept as there was a need to address appropriate management and appropriate planning, particularly within south-east Queensland. The National Party opposition also flagged that there was a need to look not only at urban management issues but also population issues in regional Queensland and areas where there is a decline to find an integrated solution, not a piecemeal response to growth and population decline.

I wish to speak specifically to the Office of Urban Management. It was an important initiative to have that tied to the Treasury portfolio. Now that the former Deputy Premier and former Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth, has left that role, there is certainly a fair amount of concern as to whether there is any real commitment on the part of this government to the timely and cost effective roll-out of the necessary infrastructure which must match the South East Queensland Regional Plan. There is a lot of concern outside of the south-east as well as to what the infrastructure plans will be for other regions and how they fit into the greater picture of Queensland.

It was significant that only a couple of months after the infrastructure plan was released for south-east Queensland the Premier released the small print for the plan which was, 'We just may not be able to deliver this on time and on budget because we have just found out there is a skills shortage and this is terrible. If we cannot deliver, don't blame us.' That is basically paraphrasing what he said. We warned the government that, as there has been an infrastructure drought for seven years, it will have to eventually deliver the infrastructure but it will be harder to ramp it up given the fact that when infrastructure spending is wound back at a time of growth it is harder to then recruit and crank up the machine and get it rolling.

That is bad planning. This government says that it is all about good planning, but for the last seven years we have seen bad planning and quite predictable shortages in these areas with the windback of infrastructure delivery. It is not rocket science. If members talk to engineering firms and related industries which are at the coalface of delivering infrastructure, they will find that they have been warning about this for years. The growth in Queensland is high but not extraordinary and certainly not unpredictable.

The growth rates for Queensland for the last 30 years are quite predictable. It never ceases to amaze me when I hear people throw up their hands and say, 'Growth is so high,' as if it has suddenly popped out of the box. That is just dumb. If members look at the figures—I got them from the library; other members can get them, too—they can easily see the growth and realise that it has been quite predictable. Good government should plan and deliver things in a timely way, and this government has not.

The roll-out of the infrastructure plan is something that we flagged well before the Premier did. We said that there was a concern about it being done in an appropriate and timely way. We will continue to pursue the government about this issue because it promised initially to deliver this, and it has failed to

deliver it in the last seven years. Now, with gridlock on our roads, a breakdown in infrastructure services and a lack of services that should have been rolled out three, five and even seven years ago, people are facing such difficulty today. Certainly it was also our policy to have—

Time expired.