



Speech by

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SOUTH EAST QUEENSLAND REGIONAL PLAN

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—Lib) (4.40 pm): I am very pleased to rise to speak about the South East Queensland Regional Plan. I thank the Premier for standing up here and telling us that what we are talking about today is a plan that will 'safeguard the future of this wonderful region'. This provides one with a very wide scope to look into the future of the 280- by 140-kilometre area that is the south-east corner. What one realises is that, after seven years of government, the Labor government is now just deciding that it should plan for the rapid growth that is expected in the south-east corner.

I acknowledge the former Deputy Premier for at least having the courage in this place to do something about planning, for having the courage to make a fist of something that has been neglected by the rest of the government for so long. However, just as it may be a sad day for Mr Beattie, the Premier, as he will have to have his hands dirtied by factional battles and friction, it is a sad day for the south-east corner as the last pair of remotely responsible hands have passed the responsibility for carrying out the South East Queensland Regional Plan to the Premier and, in some other respects, to the minister for everything else, the Deputy Premier, who if history repeats itself will simply walk away from the job and into another one if things are not going to plan.

In true Labor style the government has promoted this infrastructure plan in its usual smoke-and-mirrors way. It all sounds good and looks great on paper, with the funky artwork and the innovative language that probably cost as much to put together as a small stretch of highway. But, in the end, a large number of the initiatives, or at least the initiatives for the next five years, are initiatives that had been announced prior to the plan. Any new initiatives are not going to be done for a number of years. The plan has also provided the Labor government with an opportunity to put back projects that have been earmarked to be completed in the next few years or put back projects that have been on the cards in the past. When confronted with this, the government says, 'Well, it is in the South East Queensland Regional Plan. It will be done by 2026.' However, if it had been done when the government said it would be done, the problems would be fixed now and not later and the growing pains that south-east Queensland is currently experiencing would not be happening.

There are, of course, a number of projects that have been missed out in the plan and that will now not be on the table for another 20 years. Gold Coast members will be very aware of traffic issues in my electorate of Surfers Paradise because they affect many people on the Gold Coast. Bundall Road at the Ashmore Road intersection and the Monaco Street bridge duplication are not on the radar screen because they are not in the South East Queensland Regional Plan. Those traffic issues affect many residents of the Gold Coast morning and evening. All in all, south-east Queensland should be appreciative that this plan has come about and that there is some structure to the way that the south-east will grow up over the next few years.

Aside from the big ticket transport and health infrastructure, I would like to briefly raise in the House a pet area of mine and something that needs to be addressed in depth and given significant weight in the next five to 10 years. I note that the regional plan says that by 2026 we will have reduced our water usage by 25 per cent per person per day. While I think that is fantastic—and if it were to come about, it would go a long way towards helping the water problems we face and will face—more needs to be done. One

cannot clean a window just by cleaning the inside. The hard work must be done to build more dams and more water infrastructure to help the south east. More than that, looking beyond the 2026 deadline, planning needs to start in the next five to 10 years for the next phase of water infrastructure that will help Queensland for 20 years after that, such is the nature of building water infrastructure.

Australia is the world's driest continent and Queensland is even worse off than many other parts of the country. Water is the most precious resource we have and with a changing climate and more erratic and sparse rainfall we must do everything we can from this place, aside from rain dances and cloud seeding, to ensure that we maximise the water we have. This may also include looking into ways of recycling water for agriculture as they do in other parts of the world rather than simply letting it run off. It is now time to get smart with water and realise that we do not have enough to take it for granted. I encourage the Premier and the government to stop using smoke and mirrors and be serious about where Queensland is headed.