



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

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COALITION POLICY, COORDINATOR-GENERAL'S OFFICE

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (12.10 pm): The state coalition is announcing today that a powerful Coordinator-General's office will be re-established under a coalition government to drive critically needed infrastructure construction. This is in stark contrast to the Beattie Labor government's bizarre arrangement where the Coordinator-General and his deputy are also doubling up as directors-general of the Premier's department and the department of state development. Labor's arrangement is not in the best interests of rebuilding Queensland after the eight years of infrastructure drought—a drought it imposed upon Queensland at a time of consistently high population growth.

Queensland has faced an average of 2.3 per cent population growth over the last 25 years. But in the last few years there has been no major road projects delivered and there has been no major water infrastructure delivered in south-east Queensland. The only dam that the Beattie government boasts about, Paradise Dam, was initiated by the coalition in its two brief years of minority government.

The positions of Coordinator-General and Deputy Coordinator-General are significant in their own right and must be undertaken by highly capable individuals with experience in major project delivery. People fulfilling such roles should not also be responsible for administering major government departments. It is a divided focus. That is not a surprise for Labor. It has failed to know how to respond to the infrastructure crisis—a crisis it created. Its answer thus far has been through press releases and stunts. But that does not put water in people's taps and does not solve the increasing gridlock on our roads.

Labor has cobbled together the Coordinator-General and Deputy Coordinator-General and the directors-general roles as an alliance of convenience rather than a common-sense approach. It is more about securing higher remuneration packages for the current Coordinator-General and his deputy to give them some pay parity with that which they received in their previous roles in the private sector.

Labor's arrangement is not about having an office of Coordinator-General which is focused on one thing and one thing only—that is, driving timely infrastructure and project delivery. When the Beattie Labor government announced its South East Queensland Regional Plan we welcomed the principles of the plan but warned that its success would depend on timely infrastructure delivery. We also raised the concern of having extremely high population growth in the corridor to the south-west of Brisbane where there is no water and no other infrastructure. Still the state government has failed to answer our concerns about timely infrastructure. Our concerns have proven to be well founded in light of the Beattie government's knee-jerk water announcement to flooding other areas outside of south-east Queensland with no environmental planning and cost benefit analysis having been undertaken. This is allegedly to provide water for new growth corridors.

In contrast, the coalition has a comprehensive, environmentally and socially responsible approach to the growth needs of all of Queensland, including south-east Queensland. It involves plans to boost regional development and to build a network of healthy communities, not just Beattie's unserved megacities. We have plans to build catch-up infrastructure, which has lagged under Labor, but also to put in place forward infrastructure to support the future needs of Queenslanders.

Yesterday we delivered our position paper on the south-east Queensland water supply to responsibly meet future needs. I applaud the policy of zero outfall. In our first term of government there will only be 50 per cent outfall. We will progressively move towards zero outfall. This involves responsible recycling for industrial and agricultural use and having clean drinking water available for those in our cities and communities.

Our announcements today and yesterday are about getting the priorities right. They are about driving infrastructure programs which are absolutely essential. They are about ensuring that Queensland has an environmentally, socially and economically viable future. Bureaucratic deadlock in delivering infrastructure has weighed the Beattie government down and stymied its approach to delivering the infrastructure plan that has been tabled. We will deal with that with a powerful office of Coordinator-General. That person would not have a divided focus—that is, running the premier's department as well.