



Speech by

## Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

Hansard Wednesday, 21 February 2007

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### MOTION: BEATTIE LABOR GOVERNMENT

**Miss SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (5.57 pm): We have heard the Deputy Premier try to defend the lunacy of seven high-rise towers being built on the Brisbane River. Seriously: if this is a government that thinks it has a vision, then I think it had better get its eyes tested!

**Mr Hobbs:** Get a snorkel!

**Miss SIMPSON:** Or get a snorkel! This government talks about promoting high growth and high density and not about building timely infrastructure in the areas where it is needed in this state. Its focus is not on building timely and cost-effective infrastructure; it has been on managing its own image. The water crisis in south-east Queensland is not about global warming; it has been caused by sea warming by this Labor government. We now have a business community that is potentially facing much stricter and harsher water restrictions of level 5—the details of which this government has not yet released, but we do know it will mean job losses. Are these water restrictions only going to apply to business during the current water crisis? Apparently not. The word is that businesses will face these ongoing restrictions on a permanent basis. Those water restrictions presumably will apply not only to those areas that face an immediate water crisis but to the wider south-east Queensland network that is going to be put into a water grid by this Beattie government. That means that areas that actually have an ample water supply for quite some time will find that their businesses will be impacted by being brought on to level 5 water restrictions and paying up to double the water prices at the same time.

When we look at the range of decisions that this government has made, we find that they are knee-jerk reactions, poor planning and at a great cost not only to businesses but also to the taxpayer. When a government undertakes panic driven infrastructure planning rather than timely and cost-effective infrastructure planning, it is always more costly.

I want to talk to members about a very interesting phrase that is part of the image management of this government. It is called the government's just-in-time policy for infrastructure development. I kid you not. In a briefing of Sunshine Coast members, because we wanted to know what was happening with the water infrastructure needs of our areas and how that infrastructure would link into the greater south-east corner, we were told about the just-in-time policy. This government is trying to make a virtue of not having timely infrastructure. It says, 'You don't want to build infrastructure too far ahead because that is costly. No, under our just-in-time policy, we will build it just ahead of when it is needed.' Gee, that just-in-time policy sure did not work very well for Brisbane, which is finding that it is a just-a-joke policy.

Under this government, the just-in-time policy means that people are facing increasing hardship. In one industry alone—a nursery related industry—at least 300 jobs have been lost and up to 600 jobs potentially could be lost when the next level of water restrictions come in. That has ramifications for a number of other businesses. What has this government's answer been? 'Don't worry, there's low unemployment.' That is true for some parts of the state, but there are suburbs in Brisbane that have an unemployment rate of between 13 and 17 per cent. That is a different story. Every job is precious. When a

government fails to manage the timely planning of infrastructure, the impact is significant. It is felt in the pay packets of those people who can least afford it.

When we look at what is occurring in terms of water infrastructure in south-east Queensland, we see that people are being told many furbies by this government in regard to the program. I refer to the northern interconnector with the Sunshine Coast. The government's justification is that it will be a two-way interconnector. The reality is that it is only a one-way interconnector. The situation is that the greater region will pay—under postage-stamp pricing—for this poorly delivered infrastructure by this state government. We are concerned that this government has failed to heed our advice over the years about the appropriate infrastructure that should be put in place. Unfortunately, the range of options that it has on the table, including the Traveston Dam, has an unacceptable triple bottom line impact.

We urge the government to adopt our water infrastructure plans, which are sensible. Our concern is that the government's style of infrastructure delivery is one where we will see towns facing job losses not only now but also in the future under level 5 water restrictions.