



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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MOTION: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL GROWTH

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.28 pm): Listening to Queenslanders is vitally important and the conversation with Queensland that the Leader of the Opposition, Lawrence Springborg, has outlined is a key in our performing as an alternative government, and in listening to people and giving them what they want and need to secure Queensland's future. In the next few months my colleagues and I look forward to outlining not only what we have heard from Queenslanders but also the answers to the issues that they are raising.

What I have heard to date from people who have spoken to me about infrastructure issues is that they do want government to plan for growth but they are sceptical about what they are seeing currently with an infrastructure program that is more about catch-up than it is about building for the future. We see catch-up going on with our roads, which are so badly congested that one government study estimates that avoidable traffic congestion is causing a huge impact on the economy of Brisbane of upwards of \$7 billion in annual costs. We see a situation in Queensland where, despite the rain of recent times, there are still water restrictions because this government failed to plan for timely water infrastructure in Queensland. Queenslanders know that their roads are congested and they are concerned that tomorrow they will still be gridlocked on our roads, despite the Premier's assurances that the congestion is being fixed.

Queenslanders know that there is still a water crisis. And what is the solution of this government? A major piece of infrastructure that is still more than six years away in terms of delivering meaningful yields to Queensland. In fact, the lie of the Traveston Dam as being an emergency drought response was laid bare particularly in the last few weeks when the Deputy Premier and minister for infrastructure announced that the government might be short in the water grid and was planning another \$0.6 billion in contingency programs if it did not rain. As we know, there has been rain but it has not been sufficient to relieve the water crisis. So this government's plan had been for Queenslanders to be under harsh water restrictions until 2013 before an alternative major bulk supply came into the system.

The state opposition, the National-Liberal coalition, has supported the concept of a water grid, but we have asked for value for money, for scrutiny and for some honesty from this government about the fact that there is a need for a climate independent source beyond what is currently supplied by the government. It is clear that the \$1 billion overspend due to the way the government has designed the water grid is money that is not going to deliver a secure water system in time for Queensland. More than \$1 billion has been wasted in the way that this government has contracted work and poorly scoped its projects. That is more than \$1 billion that will not be available for other infrastructure, not just in south-east Queensland but throughout the rest of Queensland. Queenslanders understand that. They know that this government failed to plan for growth and it is now playing catch-up. Queenslanders are being asked to pay through their taxes for a gold-plated system which actually delivers a bronze-plated result.

We have seen a cost blow-out of more than \$600 million for the western recycled water pipeline with lower yields than anticipated. As our shadow Treasurer has explained, we have seen infrastructure borrowings rise by another \$3 billion to \$55 billion for Queensland. We support money being spent on infrastructure but we know that, if there is to be sustainable growth in this state, the government has to do a little bit better in how it applies those infrastructure dollars. We want to see a situation where all of

Queensland benefits and not just the first few projects that are in the chute and are so badly scoped and badly planned that their costs are blowing out by literally hundreds of millions of dollars.

The cost of the upgrade to the Houghton Highway has also blown out by more than \$300 million and the list goes on. Let us have a look at another example where the government promised to build new infrastructure in a timely way—much-needed infrastructure to relieve congestion, such as the railway to Springfield. The government promised it by 2011 at a cost of \$840 million. It has now announced a blow-out in costs and only half of it will be done by the due date—

Time expired.