



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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NORTH BANK

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (11.38 am): The North Bank debacle raises serious questions about the Bligh government's competence in handling infrastructure and planning issues. This particular project is one that sees a litany of broken promises from this government. It promised to beautify this area and give the river back to the people. Instead it came up with a proposal that juts 70 metres into the river and gives the river back to potential flooding. But the backflips and disasters with regard to this project continued with yesterday's announcement. We have a situation where the Premier yesterday claimed that going back to the drawing board was 'in the spirit of collaboration with a blank piece of paper'. In the same interview she went on to say, 'I do not expect to radically depart from it'—that is, the previous design that had been put up and absolutely pilloried because of its disastrous impact upon the visual amenity and potentially even the flood immunity of this city.

But this morning we also saw the Premier's own deputy stand up in this place to answer a simple question about what this project has cost so far. He made statements along the lines of there being no net impact upon taxpayers, but he could not tell us what is the actual cost to taxpayers. It is time this government came clean as to why it has not gone back to the drawing board and why it still has the same developer on the hook. What is the cost of breaking this contract? What is the deal that has been done? Why is the government not going back to the people with the opportunity to have a clean slate?

This matter raises questions about the broader issue of how this government handles crown land and potential developments. The same issue has arisen with the Mooloolaba Spit, where the state government came up with a proposal for 12-storey buildings on crown land. It tried to defend this high level of density in a sensitive area by saying it was in order to give a public benefit back to the people. The people do not want trinkets that ultimately destroy the future potential of these areas. They want to know that the state government is going to protect their interests rather than sell off land to its developer mates.