



Speech by

Fiona Simpson

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SALE OF PUBLIC ASSETS

Ms SIMPSON (Maroochydore—LNP) (11.59 am): After listening to the transport minister this morning, I am now aware of a new Queensland government tunnel project: Minister Nolan digging a hole for herself trying to explain the inexplicable—her government's asset sales and affected jobs and services in Queensland Rail. The minister's defence of the dismantling of the rail freight system on the Mount Isa line and calling it 'reform' saw her descend even further into her self-made hole. Then she claimed it was all okay because the freight could go on the road, as there was road capacity. Clearly she has not been driving on those roads lately. Then she went on to tell the rail workers who are wondering about their future as these rail freight depots close—and potentially there will be further closures in Queensland under this government—that they have rolled gold conditions, so what should they be worrying about? This comes from a minister who recently refused to guarantee workers' jobs with her own job.

I turn to the issue which has caused this desperate and poorly considered fire sale of state assets against the wishes of Queenslanders and without their consent—the management of the Queensland economy and the poor management of desperately needed infrastructure. It does not matter how much money you give a Labor government; it just cannot handle it, but boy it is good at spin. However, spin will not save South-East Queensland from traffic gridlock or the failure of the rail system as it rapidly approaches the looming 2016 capacity constraint—a constraint that may be reached even earlier. Nowhere is this more evident than the farce which the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan has become. It is a piece of puffery, having blown out in cost by 280 per cent since it was launched in 2005 from \$32 billion to \$124 billion. A significant portion of this is in transport and main roads. These projects have grown from \$25 billion to \$95 billion on paper and delivery times have been pushed out. I will quote a few examples.

The recently completed Bundaberg Ring Road had an initial budget of \$42 million, but within one year this had blown out by \$50 million. Then we saw a blow-out in dates, such as the completion date for the Yamanto-Ebenezer section, which has been put back from 2014-15 to 2018-19. The Tugun bypass blew its budget by nearly \$390 million. I am going to table a list of projects whose costs have blown out in an analysis of the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan. We asked the government when the SEQIPP was tabled to also table a document outlining what had changed in that program, but it refused to do so. It basically said, 'Go and read it.' Well, we have read it and we have added up the figures. No wonder the government did not want to put out any spin in regard to the significant cost blow-outs. This is really what is at the heart of this government's poor management of infrastructure—poor planning. It just cannot manage it. Then what happens is the government sneakily resequences, changes the scope and does not tell the public. Meanwhile Queensland continues to grow, and projects which have not been properly costed and scoped are pushed further and further into the future, without a proper analysis to look at the best way to meet the needs of the growth in a timely way.

The SEQIPP has become aspirational rather than operational. It is testament to this government's failure to plan well. It is also an indication of projects which have significantly blown their costs. Then we see other projects pushed off the agenda without an announcement from the government. I table this document as a piece of analysis of SEQIPP.

Tabled paper: Document listing transport project costs [\[1004\]](#).

When one water project alone blows its budget by \$800 million, is it any wonder we see other much needed projects, particularly in transport and main roads, pushed off the agenda without a program to bring them on, to do them with the right budget and the right scope so that we have real planning to meet the growth of Queensland?