



Speech by

John-Paul Langbroek

MEMBER FOR SURFERS PARADISE

Hansard Wednesday, 18 August 2010

MOTION: NATIONAL BROADBAND NETWORK

Mr LANGBROEK (Surfers Paradise—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (4.40 pm): I move the following amendment—

Delete all words after 'That this House' and insert:

supports a fast, reliable and affordable broadband service for Queenslanders.

That should placate the member for Rockhampton, who delivered that contribution that was so embarrassing, including making reflections on members which really is just so inappropriate.

The NBN is a political construct. It has nothing to do with delivering real benefits at a reasonable price. Even the Premier came in here knowing that she has delivered a debt of \$85 billion and will deliver multibillion dollar deficits over the next few years and she spoke with no great conviction. No telecommunications company would come near the NBN because they know that it does not make sense. The NBN is about politics, not the internet because Labor's NBN is an uncosted, unsupported white elephant that has already seen a cost blow-out from \$4.7 billion to \$43 billion. The people of Queensland know only too well exactly how this happens because Queenslanders have seen this state Labor government mismanage projects time and time again and waste billions upon billions of dollars. We have seen it with the water grid, the desalination plant, the Traveston Dam and the health payroll system.

Labor has zero respect for the hard work and sacrifice of taxpayers to earn the cash to pay their taxes. It arrogantly wastes money like it grows on trees because its members have no idea about business. It is great to talk about vision; however, the six leading members of the government have a collective work experience of 181 years and only two years of that has been spent in the private sector. We see also that there have been no years spent running their own business or starting their own business, no years spent as a director of a family business or a company, no years spent as a director of a public company, no years in a senior position in a public company, no years in a senior position in a private company, no years working in corporate finance, no years working in corporate or business restructuring, no years working in or with a bank, no years of experience in the capital markets, no years in a stockbroking firm, no years in negotiating debt facilities with banks, no years running a small business, no years at the World Bank or IMF or OECD and no years in Treasury or Finance. However, they are happy to have the Premier's former chief of staff, who probably wrote her speech today, standing up for the NBN. The fact that Mike Kaiser is the chief troubleshooter for the NBN should explain to all Queenslanders that the NBN is just a political construction of the ALP.

The incredible cost of the NBN—at least \$43 billion—will be at taxpayers' expense. How will we pay off \$43 billion? This is very easy for the government, which loves talking in billions—billions not millions. Repaying a million dollars at a dollar per second would take 11.5 days. However, paying back a billion dollars would take nearly 32 years and paying back \$43 billion, which is of course the amount that this is now proposed to cost, would take over 1,367 years at the rate of a dollar per second.

Members opposite talk about vision and all that sort of thing and it all sounds very flash; however, either users will pay massively increased broadband costs or the shortfall in revenue will result in increased taxes for families and businesses. In fact, the heads of agreement with Telstra for the NBN

actually requires that Telstra not offer cheaper 100 megabit broadband. That is right: the Labor Party is making sure, right from the outset, that families will pay more for broadband and it is restricting competition just to make sure. As if the cost-of-living pressures are not high enough, the NBN will make it worse for Queensland families.

We know that under this government there is zero chance that the NBN will be rolled out on time and on budget. We know that the federal ALP has a terrible track record when it comes to delivering programs: computers in schools, insulation in homes, school assembly halls built in schools that are being closed, school tuckshops that cost more per square metre than five-star restaurants. These projects are minuscule in comparison with the NBN.

They must be joking! How on earth are we supposed to believe that this lot is capable of delivering this promise on time and on budget? But we have a plan to responsibly bring affordable high-speed broadband to 97 per cent of Australians at a speed greater than that promised by Labor. Established telco businesses decided that the risks associated with this broadband folly were way too high. Do we need fast broadband? Of course we do, but we should not be spending billions of dollars on it when a comparable outcome can be achieved for far less.

(Time expired)