



Speech by

Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Thursday, 5 August 2010

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL AND APPROPRIATION BILL: ESTIMATES COMMITTEE E

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (3.14 pm): I again thank the committee members for their dedication to the estimates process. I particularly want to thank the chair, the member for Bundamba, for her leadership of Estimates Committee E. The Bligh government is committed to delivering infrastructure and jobs, building our regions and managing growth. For instance, Australia's largest infrastructure project, the combined Airport Link projects, will help cut travel times and eliminate Brisbane's worst bottleneck, the airport roundabout. This roundabout will be replaced with a signalised fast diamond that reads and responds to traffic as it occurs. These projects will generate more than 10,000 jobs through to 2014. This is just an example of the issues that were available for the estimates committee to consider.

Equally, the state government is committed to managing growth. At the Growth Management Summit held in March Queenslanders spoke and we as a government listened. In the four months since the summit we have delivered eight forums to discuss growth with local authorities in fast-growing regions outside the south-east, as well as six urban development areas to promote growth and provide affordable housing and build our regions. In that context I acknowledge the member for Gladstone's comments during the debate today about the community she represents and the importance of various aspects of my portfolio to the significant prospect of great development in that community. I acknowledge those issues.

That is why, with Gladstone and the Central Queensland area as one example, the government has reiterated that 57 per cent of this year's \$17.1 billion capital works budget will go to regions outside the state's south-east. We are positive about managing growth, we are positive about delivering infrastructure and we are positive about generating tens of thousands of jobs. That positivity was evident, I thought, during the estimates process. I had great feedback from the majority of the committee members to the discussions that we had around those key issues in my portfolio.

Unfortunately, equally evident was the member for Gympie's lack of enthusiasm. His disdain for the process seemed to be demonstrated by his continual practice of asking questions outside of the scope of the estimates process. We have heard the Attorney-General comment on how the member for Southern Downs seemed to have some of that disease afflicting him well as.

Mr Lawlor: It was contagious.

Mr HINCHLIFFE: I take that interjection from the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading. The honourable gentleman, the member for Gympie, repeatedly posed questions on outdated budgets and on portfolios that we just could not address on Estimates Committee E. He asked questions so convoluted that they were devoid of meaning. He again went on to detail his obsession with the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program's date of release. SEQIPP, as members of the House would probably be aware, is an annual document that can be thoroughly assessed and questioned in the House at any time, queried through questions on notice or inquired after during direct engagement on any day of the parliamentary sitting. It is not a budget document. However, he was obsessed with talking about that in the context of the estimates committee process. I look forward to his questions at any time.

How could we forget, when contemplating the hearings held for Estimates Committee E, the member for Southern Downs's withering defence when those opposite were labelled the best resourced and laziest opposition of all time? There was no denial. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition could not refute the claim. Instead he said it was not original. He said that it was not the first time this statement had been made. On that we can absolutely agree.

I have already highlighted that the state government has delivered on infrastructure. For the 10th year running we have delivered Australia's biggest infrastructure spend, with \$17.1 billion invested in capital works. As I say, 57 per cent of that money is dedicated to building our regions and taking the pressure off the state's south-east. What will happen if Abbott is elected? What will occur if Abbott takes the helm? What we have committed they will cancel. They will cancel much needed national broadband for our fast-growing regions, they will cancel the \$1.4 billion from the forecast national infrastructure spend and they will cancel \$400 million of investment in Queensland's roads, rail and port. I commend the Estimates Committee E report to the House and remind people how important that process is if you engage in it properly.