




Speech by
Curtis Pitt

MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE

Hansard Thursday, 21 June 2012

CAIRNS CBD, BUS STATION

 **Mr PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (3.22 pm): People who know me very well are very aware that I always try to play the ball and not the man. But the member for Cairns, through his words and actions, makes this commitment very difficult to keep. He has taken the opportunity to take a swipe at me on several occasions this week and it is only fair that I return the favour.

Since the Minister for Transport put out a press release earlier this month highlighting so-called unfunded Labor projects, which included the \$38 million Cairns CBD upgrade, the member for Cairns has been parroting the line over and over that the project would be scrapped because there was no money. He spent years deriding politicians on all manner of things—particularly those he said meekly toe the party line and do not stand up for their local area. He has now become his own worst nightmare—all that he used to despise.

Even LNP stalwart Warren Entsch said the Newman government has no excuse for scrapping the Lake Street upgrade. He stated—

The money may well have been (committed) by a previous government, but it's the government that made the commitment, not a political party.

And what did the member for Cairns say on radio station 4CA on 13 June? He said—

This \$38 million was just a figment of Anna Bligh's imagination ... The reason no dollars were spent by the previous Labor Government was because there was no money.

For the benefit of the House, I table an article from the *Cairns Post* on 15 June 2011 titled 'Far north's budget 2011: Construction, tourism big winners' which states—

The budget also contained the first \$12 million of a \$38 million package to overhaul Lake St Bus services and City Place ...

Tabled paper: Extract, dated 15 June 2011, from Cairns.com.au, titled 'Far North's Budget 2011: Construction, tourism big winners' [[386](#)].

And who was the author of this informative article? None other than Gavin King! It seems the member for Cairns either has a short memory or thinks nobody except the regular callers on John Mackenzie's show are listening so he can just say whatever he feels like. But the facts are these. His contribution to the Cairns electorate to date has conservatively been minus \$95.3 million. This is based on lost state funding of \$38 million for the CBD project and \$57.3 million for the Cairns entertainment precinct. It gets worse when we throw in the \$40 million worth of port land and the \$40 million from the federal government for the CEP.

When one looks at the \$186.5 million in savings found by the LNP from this financial year, one could be confused for thinking that Cairns is shouldering more than its share of cuts at a time when it can least afford to. If Brisbane's man in Cairns does indeed turn this around and bring on some projects to replace the shovel-ready ones that he has lost, I will congratulate him. But that is the point. These projects were well advanced in their planning or are shovel-ready.

At a time when Cairns and the Far North needs support from the state government, the member for Cairns and the LNP are walking away from projects that will provide vital jobs and economic stimulus to the region. What is that word he uses again? 'Underwhelming'. We have all seen the words of the member for Cairns come back to haunt him in the past. In fact, he may have got away with writing fish and chips wrapping before entering politics, but, quite simply, he is now accountable to more than his editor. He is accountable to the people of Cairns and Far North Queensland for everything he says, for everything he does and, more importantly, for everything he does not do.