




Speech by

Peter Wellington

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Hansard Tuesday, 10 July 2012

NAMBOUR RAILWAY STATION, DISABILITY ACCESS UPGRADE

 **Mr WELLINGTON** (Nicklin—Ind) (11.40 am): Ever since the Liberal National Party won government in Queensland all we have heard is how the state government must cut costs and save unnecessary expenses. One project that comes to mind is the proposed disability access upgrade to the Nambour Railway Station. I refer members to the recent answer to question on notice 231 where the Minister for Transport said—

I thank the member for Nicklin for the question.

The detailed design for the construction works, including the new lift for Nambour, has been completed.

In recognition of the state's financial position, Queensland Rail Limited has reprioritised its Capital Plan for 2012-13. This means that Queensland Rail Limited will not progress with the tender process and construction activities for the Nambour station Disability Discrimination Act upgrade as previously planned and designed. This project will be revisited once appropriate funding is identified and made available in the future.

Can I say on behalf of the many, many people who use that station that we are very disappointed with the government cutting funding for this project because this planned upgrade was a further extension of improvements to the railway station that started with the provision of surveillance cameras not only in the railway station and the subway but also in the whole precinct including the car park which is owned partly by the government and partly by the local council.

The reason I raise this today is because it appears quite inconsistent with the recent decision of the Attorney-General and this government to embark on a High Court challenge; to spend up to \$300,000 in going to the High Court to challenge the constitutional validity of the federal government's proposed minerals resource rent tax.

It is ridiculous because in 12 months we may have a federal election and my money is on the government changing. My money is on Tony Abbott being the next Prime Minister of Australia and my money is on that the government will say there is no carbon tax and there is no future for the minerals resource rent tax. In the *Australian* newspaper the Attorney-General said—

Queensland Attorney-General and Justice Minister Jarrod Bleijie said the intervention allowed the state to put forward its argument regarding the contentious MRRT.

'I want to be clear, the government is not supporting or joining Fortescue Metals in its challenge to the tax,' Mr Bleijie said.

'Legislation allows attorneys-general across the country to intervene in any proceeding involving a constitutional challenge, and that is what we are doing. This is a battle that has to happen because there is the potential that the MRRT is constitutionally invalid.'

Every day every minister of this government has, as had previous ministers, opportunities to be involved in going to court because the legislation allows them to do it. Every day a minister could make that decision because the state laws allow them to do it. That does not make it right and that does not make it necessary. At the moment quite clearly there are two sets of rules in Queensland. The Premier, Attorney-General and the leadership group want to go off to the High Court and waste up to \$300,000 for political

gain when they know that when the federal government changes in just over 12 months this minerals resource rent tax will not happen in Australia or Queensland. What a waste of money! On the other hand we see the elderly and people with disabilities not able to access proper disability access facilities at Nambour Railway Station.

Recently I put a question to our Premier on issues of funding for my electorate and the Sunshine Coast. In his answer to me he said words to the effect, 'Well, member, I am happy to work with you if you give me some suggestions on how we can save some money.' This is the first issue I would like to put on the table before the budget comes down next month on how the government can save some money. Why the heck is the government wasting \$300,000 of taxpayers' money going to the High Court simply because the minister can? I think it is a sham and a disgrace. I think the sooner Queenslanders see the way this government is operating the better.