




Speech By
Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee, Report

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (4.03 pm): I rise today to speak in support of the report of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee which recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2015, be agreed to. As a new member of the Queensland state parliament, I was interested in the whole estimates process which gives the committee the opportunity to ask questions of the relevant minister in relation to the government's spending in their departments.

To say that I was disappointed at the start of the hearing would be an understatement. The opposition continued to ask irrelevant questions of the ministers about matters that did not reflect the purpose of the estimates process. As a new member to this process, I struggled to understand why those opposite continued with their line of questioning even when the chair made it quite clear that the questions being asked were out of order and irrelevant to the minister whose portfolio was under consideration.

I take this opportunity to thank the Deputy Premier, Minister for Transport, Minister for Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning and Minister for Trade for her answers to questions from government, opposition and crossbench members. Of the key budget initiatives funded in the budget, I was pleased to hear of the federal and state government commitment of over \$8.5 billion to fix the Bruce Highway over 10 years. The highway provides a critical link for freight movements between inland production areas and 11 coastal ports, including the port of Gladstone, and major regional centres in the state. It is also a major commuter route that needs continuous maintenance and upgrades to keep those using it safe. The projects include major upgrades and realignments, strengthening and widening type works plus a range of safety and efficiency measures to target poor crash sites and to provide additional overtaking lanes and rest areas. Some of these projects will be taking place in my electorate.

In addition to this, I was also pleased to hear of the \$104.8 million for the Bridges Renewal Program over four years which will enable road infrastructure systems in my electorate to facilitate larger vehicles accessing the port of Gladstone from outlying rural areas. By upgrading these bridges—for example, by replacing one-lane timber bridges with dual-lane concrete bridges—residents will enjoy better and more reliable road access. Freight from farms and from local factories will be able to pass safely and quickly along these routes with greater improved productivity.

I was also pleased to hear of the establishment of Building Queensland which will help to deliver a state infrastructure plan driving economic growth through innovative property and infrastructure partnerships and facilitate priority development infrastructure in Queensland. It will deliver a better planning system that supports effective public participation whilst providing for efficient and constant decision-making that instils investment and community confidence. Building Queensland will develop

and administer the Community Resilience Fund to build resilient infrastructure and a suite of local government funding programs.

Another successful program in this budget is the continuation of the Queensland Reconstruction Authority. It will continue to help communities to prepare for natural disasters, which we recently experienced in my electorate and electorates north of mine. It will assist in the management of Queensland's strategy for disaster resilience.

I also take this opportunity to thank the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines for his replies to questions from government, opposition and crossbench members. I must say some of the answers were well thought out and utilised the time that he had available to him. Once again, as a new member to the estimates process, I must say that the minister's answers to questions were very thorough. The member for Dalrymple can attest to how thorough the minister actually was.

I congratulate the minister on his budget initiatives of progressing the restoration of community rights to object to mining projects while maximising simplicity and efficiency of processes for all stakeholders, including agricultural infrastructure within the definition of restricted land. The minister's restoration of this process honours a significant election promise to restore objection rights for our communities. This legislation will help set the scene for a productive relationship with resource companies by helping to lessen anxiety towards resource development among landholders and agricultural stakeholders alike.

I take the opportunity to also thank the committee secretariat who continue to support all on the committee. I thank them for their endless work in keeping us informed of all the goings on of the committee. I commend the report to the House.