




Speech By  
**Lachlan Millar**

**MEMBER FOR GREGORY**

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### **BUILDING QUEENSLAND BILL**

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (5.03 pm): I rise to speak to the bill. Firstly, I would like to thank the committee and also the secretariat. The objective of the bill is to provide for the establishment of a new independent statutory advisory body called Building Queensland. Building Queensland will provide independent expert advice, develop a robust and transparent framework for assessing infrastructure projects; evaluate proposals for new and existing infrastructure; assist or lead the preparation of certain business cases for infrastructure proposals; prepare an infrastructure priority pipeline document; lead the procurement and delivery of projects when directed by the minister; and publish information and promote public awareness.

I had a look at the document that was announced by the Deputy Premier today in regard to Labor's infrastructure plan. Although I thank the government for the Landsborough Highway, the Alpha Hospital is also there. I believe that the Alpha Hospital was announced under the former health minister, Lawrence Springborg, because it was something that I was very excited about. He made that announcement.

**Ms Leahy** interjected.

**Mr MILLAR:** Yes, and he did a great job there. It is disappointing to find that there is not much in that document for the Gregory electorate. The Gregory electorate is a wealth-creating region in this state. For the people of the Gregory electorate, infrastructure is a key ingredient for their survival, for their jobs, for their towns and for their small businesses. Infrastructure such as roads are critical to the electorate of Gregory. It was only last Sunday that I attended the Mistake Creek Progress Association. For members who might not know where Mistake Creek is, I point out that it is a small rural community that is located 50 kilometres south-west of Clermont on the Clermont-Alpha Road. It is a great community and the progress association is a vibrant organisation. All the people there want is to make sure that they get their fair share of infrastructure in their region. That infrastructure includes sealing, and finish sealing, the Alpha-Clermont Road. For well over 20 years those people have been waiting for the complete sealing of the Alpha-Clermont Road. The Alpha-Clermont Road is a major road artery for beef producers for getting cattle to processing plants in Mackay and Townsville. The road needs to be sealed completely. Last week I drove along that road. It is nearly all dirt and, to say the least, where I was driving it was absolutely shocking.

**Ms Leahy** interjected.

**Mr MILLAR:** I take that interjection from the member for Warrego. I did not get a flat tyre, but I think I was very close to getting one. The road is the backbone of the economy in that region. It is used to cart one of my area's major exports from paddock to plate, which is our beef industry. Believe it or not, those people who predominantly use the road out there are the ones who pay their taxes. They are the ones who employ people out there. They are the graziers and the farmers. They employ locals, yet the infrastructure—or the lack of it—is not up to standard. Could members imagine the outcry in

South-East Queensland, or even in Brisbane city, if we did not seal the roads? Yet for well over 20 years people in my electorate have been calling out to get this vital road, which plays a critical role in our economy, sealed.

I go back to the document that was released today by the Deputy Premier. Given that I did not see much for the Gregory electorate in that document, I thought that I might give some ideas of infrastructure that the people of my electorate of Gregory would like to receive. The Central Highlands Regional Council have two key infrastructure projects that are needed in Emerald. I support those projects wholeheartedly. One is the meatworks. This will be a critical piece of infrastructure for my region, as members would know that the closest meatworks is another 300 kilometres to the east in Rockhampton. The meatworks has all the ingredients to succeed. It has the skill base in the population ready to work in the meatworks. It has Fairbairn Dam for water and it also has the best cropping land in Queensland—or I say that it is the best cropping land in Queensland; some may argue with that—which is the golden triangle in the Emerald irrigation area, making it a perfect location for value-adding to feedlots and for us to produce the right beef for the growing high-end Asian market.

The Central Highlands Regional Council also has a proposal for inland port to be built at Yamala, which is 25 kilometres east of Emerald. An inland port in the region would be the centrepiece to transport our valuable commodities to our eastern markets, such as Gladstone and Brisbane. Those commodities include grain, such as grain, sorghum and sunflowers; pulses such as mung beans and chickpeas; cotton and, of course, beef—and hopefully that will be boxed beef if we can get the meatworks up as well.

The LNP has a record on delivering on projects for the people of Queensland. They included the \$8.6 billion investment on the Bruce Highway, the \$1.6 billion on the Toowoomba second range crossing, \$4.4 billion for the new generation rolling stock for rail and, of course, the LNP put \$495 million into the Royalties for the Regions program—a program that I supported very much, a program for which I thank the former deputy premier, the member for Callide, Jeff Seeney, who was passionate about Royalties for the Regions. I thank the member for Clayfield when he was treasurer for Royalties for the Regions. They get it. They understand that the economy exists in regional Queensland. Regional Queensland creates a lot of wealth for our state's economy, but you have to put the infrastructure out there.

We would like to see infrastructure projects for regional Queensland. I would like to think that Building Queensland would look at those two infrastructure projects that I mentioned before, the meatworks for Emerald and the inland port. Central Highlands Regional Council, led by Mayor Peter Maguire, the councillors and the CEO Scott Mason, is very sophisticated and well organised and has put a lot of effort into these proposals. The township of Emerald would very much love and embrace a meatworks and an inland port. It would provide jobs and another industry for Emerald. We rely on farming and mining, but we need to look at secondary industries to make sure that we keep the jobs going.

Let us not forget Western Queensland which at the moment is suffering through one of the worst droughts in living memory. It is possibly the fourth failed wet season. There are plenty of projects in Western Queensland, such as Cramsie Road—the road from Longreach to Muttaborra—that needs sealing and the Aramac to Ilfracombe road which needs upgrading and sealing. We have to remember that when we seal these roads we are sealing the economic arteries of regional Queensland. These roads are not luxuries. These roads are a necessity to keep regional Queensland operating. It is important to make sure that we take the best opportunities to support those areas and that they have the right infrastructure to be able to create jobs to continue to build on the economy in regional Queensland.