




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

Record of Proceedings, 15 September 2015

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee, Report

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (3.58 pm): In speaking to the committee report with regard to the portfolio related to infrastructure, I acknowledge the minister. I also acknowledge the committee members and the work that the committee has done over the course of this parliament. I put a number of questions to the minister about the Galilee Basin. As you walk through the centre of Charters Towers, and probably any place in rural and regional Queensland, you see empty shops and streets that have come to a virtual standstill.

When we look at state development and infrastructure planning, I cannot understand why we do not build a railway track in the Galilee Basin. This is about getting jobs for the state and, I might say, jobs for the country. It is about royalties and transport haulage. The moment we build that railway track it provides opportunities for coal to be removed and exported. That would provide royalties for the next 50 years and transport haulage opportunities. At the time they privatised the coal component of Queensland Rail some \$1.7 billion a year in revenue was going back to the state. At the present time there is no revenue going back to the state. That is due to the selling of the coal component of Queensland Rail.

It is very important that the government forget about sweeteners and things that will buy votes and instead give us a tangible solution. When we met the Premier in Charters Towers the big issue for business, for the council, for the chamber of commerce was to get those mines up and going so they can create jobs and then the whole region will benefit. Everybody will benefit from that. Those in Brisbane will benefit from that. If we want to kickstart the economy in this state then we should build the railway track in the Galilee Basin. It is very simple. It can be done. They did it in the past. I cannot see why it cannot be done now.

I put a question to the Minister for State Development with regard to rural roads. I am happy to see that \$3 million has been allocated for preparatory work to finish the remaining 42 kilometres of the Gregory Developmental Road. We still do not know when that will be completed. This funding is only for the preparatory work.

There is funding for the preparatory work for the Cape River bridge. This is a good start, but we want to see it built not just the preparatory work done. The Cape River bridge is continually flooded when it rains. I am aware that it is in drought at the moment. People cannot get to Clermont during rainy periods because they get blocked off by Cape River. It is a good start that the preparatory work will be undertaken for the Cape River bridge. We also need work done on Snake Creek, Stockyard Creek, Basalt River and Clarke River.

With regard to water infrastructure, we are pushing hard for a weir to be constructed on the Upper Burdekin. I acknowledge that the minister put forward amendments to the Water Act two years in

advance, which is a good thing. Landowners are prepared to chip in to construct a weir, but we do need support from the state government. I know that the council is on board at the present time. This would allow for water trading and give irrigators an opportunity to irrigate and develop crops, particularly through this drought area.

We need to expand when it comes to that water infrastructure development. These are not massive projects but they are projects that will help support these communities. They would support a meatworks that could fatten cattle all year round. Given the desperate and serious times that we are going through at the moment, this is an opportunity for the state government to contribute and do something constructive for the state.

I wanted to bring those matters to the attention of the House. Once again, I congratulate the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee on its report.