



Speech By  
**Brittany Lauga**


**MEMBER FOR KEPPEL**

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## **ADJOURNMENT**

### **Northern Australian Infrastructure Facility**

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (3.07 am): If the Prime Minister of Australia calls an extraordinary sitting of the federal parliament for matters of national importance, which will cost millions of dollars of taxpayers' money, the public expects a productive sitting of the parliament. When it is a waste of time and money, it leaves taxpayers rightfully very angry. This week, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull forced Australian taxpayers to fork out the incredible cost of flights to Canberra so that all 226 parliamentarians could attend an extraordinary sitting of parliament, yet the Turnbull government failed to recognise funding for infrastructure in Northern Australia as a matter of national importance and pass the Northern Australian Infrastructure Facility Bill.

From 1 July 2016, projects in Central Queensland, such as the Great Keppel Island Revitalisation Plan, could have applied for a slice of the \$5 billion worth of Northern Australia infrastructure funding. The commencement date of the scheme is now up in the air, because the Turnbull government has failed to prioritise the bill.

Last year, Rockhampton based senator and Minister for Northern Australia Matthew Canavan promised that 'the government expects that the NAIF will be available from 1 July 2016', but that is now in jeopardy. The legislation passed the lower house and proceeded to the Senate, which has now risen and will not return until budget week next month. We are now effectively in a federal election campaign without the government even passing the very legislation it needed to establish its big-ticket item for Northern Australia, the NAIF. This is insulting.

The absolute disregard for our region is now beyond words. Malcom Turnbull clearly does not think that Northern Australia is a priority, and Senator Canavan and the member for Capricornia, Michelle Landry, have proven that they have no influence in their own government. Two and a half years after the federal government was elected, Central Queensland is still waiting for something positive to materialise. Mrs Landry and Senator Canavan have been spruiking their grand plans for the north, but time and time again they fail to back it up with anything tangible.

I call on the Turnbull government to bring on the debate on the NAIF Bill on 2 May so that it can be passed. The Turnbull government owes it to the people of the Keppel electorate and Northern Australia to ensure this bill is passed. I again call on our elected federal representatives to stump up and finally do something—anything—for Central Queensland. All the federal government has achieved is to jam the handbrake on NAIF support for the essential infrastructure that we need to create jobs for mums and dads in Central Queensland who are already doing it tough.