




Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Murrumba Electorate, Road Infrastructure

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumba—ALP) (12.07 pm): Today I rise to detail how the Palaszczuk government is advancing Queensland by delivering the infrastructure we need. Not only are we encouraging innovation and not only are we attracting investment in new industries and projects; we are creating community-building infrastructure such as the Rothwell roundabout upgrade. The member for Indooroopilly said that business is grinding to a halt. It is not grinding to a halt in my area. I talked to a local tourism operator and they said that business is booming.

It will be the Palaszczuk government that funds the majority of the Rothwell roundabout project, completes the designs and builds this vital piece of infrastructure in our area. It is a piece of infrastructure that will complement the soon to be opened Moreton Bay Rail Link—another great Labor project—a rail line that will change lives and drive economic development in our area. This infrastructure can only be done because the Palaszczuk government has recently announced that we will provide funding of \$22.6 million to upgrade this vital intersection, and I thank the Minister for Main Roads very much for that.

We are stepping up to do this after the project viability was threatened by a funding withdrawal from the federal LNP. This is what the LNP stands for—cuts to jobs and services. The federal LNP originally stepped away from funding this project, saying that it would not release funds sourced from the Moreton Bay Rail Link project, but the upgrade of the Rothwell roundabout was necessitated by the rail link. It was to be funded in accordance with the funding formula used for the Moreton Bay Rail Link which is federal 64.7 per cent, state 26.1 per cent, and local 9.2 per cent.

In accordance with this funding formula, the Moreton Bay Regional Council has committed \$3.2 million to the upgrade, yet the federal government has refused to honour this funding arrangement for the intersection upgrade. As part of the 2014-15 federal budget, the Abbott government removed \$159 million from the Moreton Bay Rail Link project, leaving nothing for the people of Murrumba and Redcliffe. It was the Palaszczuk Labor government that kept this roundabout project alive.

It was literally days after becoming minister that the Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports wrote to the former infrastructure minister, Warren Truss, requesting that the federal government fund the project as per the formula. The member for Redcliffe and I have been in constant communication with the minister, showing why the roundabout is critical, and supporting the minister's intense lobbying of the federal government. Twice we brought a local delegation to Parliament House to meet with the minister. Our push culminated in a write-in campaign. Thousands of householders in the electorate of Murrumba received a flyer from me asking them to write to me personally about why we needed the upgrade to the roundabout. I gathered those letters and emails and, with the federal ALP candidate for Petrie, Jacqui Pedersen, we got a delegation—

Mr Hinchliffe: Hear, hear! A great candidate.

Mr WHITING: A great candidate—to meet the minister at the roundabout, where we presented him with the correspondence.

The current member for Petrie has recently jumped on the bandwagon. After a year of us chasing the money, he decided to launch a petition calling for funds for the roundabout upgrade. It would have been much more useful for him to have secured fairer funding for the Rothwell roundabout upgrade from the \$159 million that was taken from the Moreton Bay Rail Link project—

A government member interjected.

Mr WHITING: They cut it. The money was there. They had to get it. I am pleased to say that the federal government has decided to provide some funds for the project—up to \$11.7 million. I thank the federal government for that, but it is much less than what it was going to provide originally. It is a 50 per cent cut—another LNP cut. The federal government has taken so long to provide these funds that it has badly delayed the project. If the federal government had acted promptly on this matter, I believe that construction could have started about a year earlier. Instead, the intersection upgrade will be completed about a year after the Moreton Bay Rail Link opens and that is despite this upgrade being recognised as an integral part of the works that are needed for the rail line.

We welcome the federal government's commitment, but the real thanks go to the Palaszczuk Labor government. Our commitment to this project proves our commitment to providing infrastructure. It is only this government that has created an infrastructure plan. Queensland had had no coordinated plan for infrastructure investment since 2011. While the federal LNP government dithers over Queensland infrastructure, such as the Townsville stadium and the Cross River Rail, it is the Palaszczuk Labor government that has taken the steps to put in the local infrastructure that we need in the Murrumba electorate.