




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Record of Proceedings, 16 August 2016

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.53 pm): First I thank our deputy chairman of this committee, Dr Mark Robinson, for the excellent work he did—I also acknowledge the other committee members from our side of this House—in relation to the estimates committee. In the short amount of time allocated to me I will refer to my conversations at the estimates hearing with the Deputy Premier and her officers and the Minister for State Development, Minister Lynham.

This is said to be an infrastructure budget; however, as we have seen and as has been reported on numerous occasions, the infrastructure spend is the lowest for many years. It is some \$2 billion less than in the LNP's last budget. We also saw a lack of transparency from this Palaszczuk government on the only infrastructure project it has: the so-called Cross River Rail that the Deputy Premier has been talking about. Queenslanders have no further idea—unfortunately, the Deputy Premier was not forthcoming at the estimates hearing—about this project.

The Deputy Premier has now been caught out. Through the estimates process, the six new secret taxes that went through cabinet were revealed. All of these taxes were mooted to go onto all motorists and property owners throughout Queensland. Interestingly, the chair of the committee would not allow LNP members to call these levies and taxes 'taxes'. I am not quite sure what it is when a Queensland taxpayer is expending something. It was very difficult to understand what we are meant to call them if the Deputy Premier will not allow us to call them taxes. They are taxes, but the words 'taxes' and 'levies' were ruled out. Obviously the committee chair was trying to protect the Deputy Premier, who was struggling on that issue.

The Cross River Rail document that went to cabinet was clear. Cabinet ministers all agreed on the body of it. It contained new taxes. Government members said that there would be no new taxes, levies or charges, but we see in this budget that that promise has already been broken. To see that we only need to look at the changes applying to foreign investors.

How is the Deputy Premier planning to pay for the No. 1 infrastructure project? Certainly the money is not there in the budget. There is some \$50 million just to create another bureaucracy. Queenslanders would like to know how Cross River Rail is going to be funded. Unfortunately, the Deputy Premier was not able to answer those questions.

The Deputy Premier put this No. 1 infrastructure project on the table, but we now learn it is only a tunnel. There are no trains allocated. It was a great part of the day when we discovered there were no trains. This project is for a tunnel without trains. There was no clarity provided in terms of how the Deputy Premier plans to fill the black hole. The question remains: who will pay for this \$16 billion project?

In relation to state development and Minister Lynham, concerns were raised about the substantial underspend on capital works for Commonwealth Games venues. It clearly ignores the loss of economic benefit if they were delivered within the original schedule. Also, the minister was unable to explain why the Building our Regions program has cost Queenslanders jobs and why less than one per cent—only \$406,000 out of the \$7 million budget—actually went out the door. He was also unable to explain why no jobs were created, because less than one per cent of his budget got out the door. It was very disappointing to see the lack of projects in rural and regional Queensland.

In relation to trade, we saw policy on the run, with the Deputy Premier forced to open a trade office on the whim of the Premier when there was no advice taken or analysis made by Trade & Investment Queensland. That was clearly set out in that estimates process.