



Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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MOTION

Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (6.05 pm): I move—

That this House:

1. supports the LNP's policy agenda to develop Northern Australia and in particular North Queensland;
2. supports the establishment of the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility (NAIF) to encourage investment in infrastructure that benefits Northern Australia, including, port, road, rail and water infrastructure; and
3. calls on the Palaszczuk government to support investment decisions by the NAIF to progress projects in North Queensland.

As I travel around this great state listening to everyday Queenslanders, I am constantly reminded that Queensland does not have a shortage of good ideas but certainly has a severe shortage of capital, and this shortage of capital has only been made worse over the years by incompetent Labor governments. The LNP came into power in 2012 with \$80 billion worth of debt, rising up to \$100 billion worth of debt. It has all gone—completely squandered—by those opposite and their predecessors, although a lot of them are still sitting on the front bench and we now have one of them as the Treasurer of this great state. Incredible! This shortage of capital has been made even worse by this inexperienced Palaszczuk government's \$2.3 billion worth of cuts to the LNP's infrastructure plan, Labor's failure to deliver 20 per cent of the infrastructure budget in its first year and the politically motivated scrapping of the LNP's highly successful Royalties for the Regions program that delivered over \$700 million of much needed infrastructure in regional Queensland. Given the Palaszczuk government's inaction on infrastructure in regional Queensland, it is critically important that it does not delay or does not frustrate any Queensland applications for funding to the Northern Australia infrastructure fund. In fact, if this Labor government was serious about the development of rural and regional Queensland, in particular Northern Queensland, it would actively be out there championing and supporting the NAIF.

As the LNP members of this parliament know, the NAIF's \$5 billion fund of concessional finance is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to get North Queensland moving. It was the LNP members of rural and regional Queensland and particularly North Queensland—members like the member for Hinchinbrook—who argued for this funding to be put on the table by the federal LNP government. We know that this \$5 billion is sitting there ripe for the taking, and what do we need? We need a competent state government that can actually push projects. What a shame we do not have that! This is an opportunity that, if tapped into, would provide thousands of jobs—no, I would say tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of much needed jobs and game-changing infrastructure such as water, rail and port infrastructure that would actually get this state moving. The NAIF is targeted at projects that would not otherwise be able to secure debt funding from any other source and without NAIF these projects simply would not be developed. We know that North Queensland has the land. North Queensland also has the water. It has an embarrassment of riches, and when it comes to natural resources it just needs the investment in the infrastructure. Most importantly, it needs supportive governments to get it moving.

This inexperienced Palaszczuk government, which has a dedicated minister for North Queensland—who appears as competent as the rest of them—needs to stop the petty political games and back Queenslanders, back the jobs of North Queenslanders instead of their own, and get behind this vitally important \$5 billion that is sitting there on the table, ripe for the picking. But, no, unfortunately, we see Labor's petty political games. We saw it with the minister for roads in relation to the northern beef roads. We saw it in relation to the water projects—those vitally needed projects. We saw it with Rookwood Weir. What did we see? We saw petty political games from those opposite.

The people of Queensland want action from this government. They want support to take that vitally important \$5 billion that is sitting there. They do not want the minister's petty political games about, 'It's not going to go to the Northern Territory; it has to be in Cairns', and thinking that that is going to be a way to tap into this vitally important money. We need to support North Queensland and we need to get behind this fund.