



Speech By  
**Glenn Butcher**


**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 March 2016

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST**

**Gladstone Electorate, State Infrastructure Plan**

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (11.41 am): I rise today to speak about the Palaszczuk government's State Infrastructure Plan and what it will deliver for my electorate of Gladstone. This plan, the first in more than three years, will drive the Gladstone economy and deliver the infrastructure the region desperately needs to grow and generate jobs. It delivers on another Palaszczuk government election commitment to ensure Queensland, once again, has a statewide infrastructure plan.

The establishment of the new State Infrastructure Plan, with an initial investment of \$500 million, will see \$40 million invested in my electorate and others, including the electorates of Callide and Mirani, to fast-track the delivery of the Dawson Highway timber bridge replacement program. This is something that the people of my electorate have been crying out for. Once again, we see that the Palaszczuk Labor government is listening to and delivering for Gladstone.

This \$40 million commitment will see five timber bridges at Catfish Creek, Nine Mile Creek, Sheep Station Creek, Maxwellton Creek and Doubtful Creek replaced with more durable and reliable concrete structures. These new structures will widen the Dawson Highway at these five locations, significantly increasing safety for all road users, including heavy haulage vehicles.

This project will significantly improve the region's freight operations and open up new opportunities by lifting the existing weight limitation in place on these old timber bridges, which currently see some vehicles travelling hundreds of additional kilometres via Rockhampton. This will also be of great benefit to the people of the Mirani electorate. I know that the member for Mirani, Jim Pearce, also welcomed this announced by the Palaszczuk government on Sunday.

The agricultural industry across our communities will benefit from better access to the Gladstone port. It is the lifeblood of our region and the Palaszczuk government is committed to supporting our local farmers. This investment in the Dawson Highway will make it easier for local producers to access the port and maximise their export opportunities safely and efficiently.

I know this announcement will be welcomed by the primary producers in my area, in particular Will Wilson from Calliope Station and Leo Neill-Ballantine from Galloway Plains, who have met with me on numerous occasions to discuss how we can ensure better access to the Gladstone port for our farmers. For cattle farmer Will Wilson, having road train access into the port is essential for growing his business. With about 14½ thousand cattle on his property at Calliope Station, Mr Wilson is one of the biggest producers in Central Queensland. He and his fellow cattle producer Leo Neill-Ballantine are among a group trying to establish a new industry for the port—box chilled beef. I know at the recent community cabinet meeting held in Gladstone both Leo and Will were very passionate about their plight when talking to the Premier. Obviously, given this announcement, the Premier is listening. These

businesses will get on with it. Without a secure supply route and direct access to the port, attracting investors has been very hard. Now there will be higher profit margins for these business models because less money will be spent on fuel and less time wasted driving back and forth from Gracemere.

The State Infrastructure Plan is what investors have been wanting to see and hear. As the member for Gladstone, I welcome this investment in local infrastructure. The Palaszczuk government has demonstrated its commitment to the people of my electorate who are feeling the impact of the downturn in the resource sector. Not only will this bridge replacement program generate many jobs in the short term, but the future potential for my electorate with the upgrade of this road network is huge.

Since the beginning of 2015 the Queensland government has approved almost \$2 billion in infrastructure spending commitments for Queensland, including a new high school at Calliope in my electorate and an accident and emergency department upgrade. The Queensland government is investing \$10.1 billion in infrastructure this financial year, supporting 27½ thousand jobs. Over the forward estimates, government capital investment will be more than \$35 billion.

The Queensland government is committed to delivering the economic and social infrastructure projects that are needed in the Fitzroy region. Through the State Infrastructure Plan the Fitzroy region now has an infrastructure blueprint and a clear four-year pipeline of work that will meet the future needs and demands of our area, where the population is increasing every year, and deliver economic growth and jobs year after year. I thank the Palaszczuk government for investing in the Gladstone region to continue the great work that we do at the Gladstone port and for getting on with the job.