




Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Bailey**

**MEMBER FOR YEERONGPILLY**

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Record of Proceedings, 11 October 2016

**MOTION: WATER INFRASTRUCTURE**

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Main Roads, Road Safety and Ports and Minister for Energy, Biofuels and Water Supply) (6.42 pm): I rise to oppose this motion. Let us be clear: this is a fully federal government funded program. There is no money on the table from Barnaby Joyce; it is locked in his safe and he has the key. That is the situation. I would like to know from the opposition how it is that we are holding up money that we do not have from the federal government. They have given Queensland not one single cent for these feasibility studies. What Barnaby Joyce is saying to the proponents—we have a range of private proponents across Queensland who do not have the resources to conduct feasibility studies—‘We will not give you the money until you have completed the work.’

Today the opposition is backing Canberra and not Queensland. How do you hold back money you do not have? We do not have a single dollar in our possession. The federal government has made a decision to fund 14 projects 100 per cent. There is \$19 million worth of funding but it will not give the money over to private proponents across Queensland.

Let us look at these private proponents. They include the Southern Downs Regional Council; the Lockyer regional council; the Isaac Regional Council; the Farmers’ Federation; Cape York Sustainable Futures; the Tablelands Regional Council; the Isis Central Sugar Mill; and the Mount Isa to Townsville Economic Zone, which is the Mount Isa and Cloncurry shire councils. What we have here is a range of smaller private proponents—different from other states—who do not have the resources to do the feasibility studies. They have been raising it with us and asking, ‘What can you do to get the federal government to release the money for Queensland?’ We have gone in to bat for them.

Far from what opposition members say, we have been backing in these feasibility studies. In fact, I first called on the federal government to release this in May of this year. I wrote to Barnaby Joyce more than two months after the election to say, ‘We need more flexible funding to back these projects in. They need the money up-front to get the work done.’ Do members think he agreed to that? No, he did not. He is playing politics with these water infrastructure feasibility studies. It is shameful.

I might add that this is consistent with federal government form. We are seeing the federal government hold back more than \$60 million in beef roads funding in Queensland. At a time when employment is needed in regional Queensland, the federal government is holding back more than \$60 million in beef roads funding. It gets even worse: the federal government is also holding back the Northern Australian Roads Program funding. It has announced only six projects there. Regional Queensland needs these jobs, but Barnaby Joyce is holding up the Northern Australian Roads Program, the beef roads program as well as these feasibility studies. They are holding back regional Queensland.

We are backing in regional Queensland, yet the opposition is backing Canberra and not backing the state of Queensland. It is a pathetic outcome and a pathetic approach. You cannot hold back funds you do not have control of. We do not have a single dollar in control under this program. It is in Barnaby

Joyce's safe and he should let the funds go. When it comes to quality deputy prime ministers from the opposition side, Barnaby Joyce is certainly no Tim Fischer or John Anderson. He is an absolute embarrassment. He should cough up the money forthwith.

I make two final points. Opposition members bang on about Rookwood Weir. I will outline precisely what Barnaby Joyce agreed to. He agreed to fund the Lower Fitzroy weir's business case, which includes—wait for it—Rookwood and Eden Bann weirs. The whole point of conducting a feasibility study is to identify the economically responsible measure, yet we have the Canberra LNP, backed in by their lackeys here in Queensland, cherrypicking the Rookwood project. Rookwood might be better—I do not know—but let us do the feasibility study. Why is the LNP cherrypicking projects? It sounds very suspicious.

I oppose the motion. The opposition ought to support Queensland instead of Canberra. They should stop making things up because we do not control a single dollar of this program.

*(Time expired)*