




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL:
PUBLIC WORKS AND UTILITIES COMMITTEE**

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (10.47 pm): In rising to make a contribution this evening, I want to reflect on a couple of the contributions that have preceded me—firstly that of the chair of this committee, the member for Kallangur. I do reflect on the fact that the chair was quite unwell on the day, but clearly he was a lot more unwell than we all thought because he was delusional if his report is any indication of what he thought actually occurred on the day. It certainly was not the case.

Secondly, I come to the contribution just made by the Acting Minister for Main Roads because the previous one bailed—sorry, he has not been bailed yet; he was stood aside. He was not only laughing in the faces of mums and dads and Queensland families when it comes to the 3½ per cent increases year in, year out on their car registration but doing it while also cutting road funding in this coming financial year. I will start there. The minister can spin the four-year QTRIP program any way he likes, but we know that under Labor the four years are used to prop up budgets and make them look like they are increases when in reality they are hiding annual decreases in actual road infrastructure construction.

We saw that, because if we compare what was spent in 2016-17 with what was spent in 2017-18—and that is a fair comparison—we see extraordinary reductions in spending across the roads budget across the state. The reductions are as follows: the Darling Downs is going down \$134 million; the far north region, down nearly \$35 million; Fitzroy, down nearly \$27 million; Mackay-Whitsunday, down just over \$16 million; the metropolitan region, down \$33½ million; the Sunshine Coast region, down \$63 million; the northern region, down \$17½ million; the north-west region, down \$15 million; and the south-west region, down almost \$8 million. They are real cuts. If the government is making savings because it is getting a better dollar figure for its contracts, then it should reinvest that money back into the infrastructure that is actually needed now.

Further proof of that can be found with some of the road reliability and productivity targets that are in the SDS. When questioned on this, both the minister and the director-general could not answer why not only are those targets not being met but the targets are being lowered for future years. They have basically thrown their hands up in the air, accepted the fact that rail fail is here to stay under this mob, accepted the fact that they are cutting funding from road infrastructure and construction across the state and said, 'Too bad. Our network reliability and our network productivity is out the door. We're going to lower the standards to match what we can achieve.' Guess what. We suspect that next year they will have to lower them again because they will not hit the mark again.

I want to turn to one interesting story that developed as a result of questioning on the day and it was in the ports part of the portfolio. It concerns what is appearing to be an increasingly farcical set of events that has led to the Port of Gladstone dredging the wrong part of the port of Bundaberg in preparation for the HMAS *Tobruk* to come and be prepared for sinking. They spent \$330,000 to dredge a component of the port of Bundaberg. They then went out and consulted and found that is probably not where they should put the HMAS *Tobruk* and that it would be put down next to the molasses port

instead but it was all okay because they were going to use that part that was dredged sometime in the future. When I called back the CEO for the Port of Gladstone and asked him when exactly they envisaged using that part of the port, he could not give us an answer. It certainly was not weeks and it certainly was not months; it was a matter of years.

The next question was whether the port has done any hydrological surveys to determine how quickly that part of the port is going to silt up again. The CEO said that he could not provide that on the day but he was more than happy to take it as a question on notice, except he was overruled by the minister because the minister did not want the truth coming out. The truth is that this government has spent \$330,000 dredging the wrong part of the port of Bundaberg. Whilst it might be needed in the future, it is going to be silted up by the time they do need it so they will have to spend the money again to dredge that part of the port.

This goes to show how incompetent the Palaszczuk Labor government are. They do nothing in just about every other facet. In this case, they have actually done something but they did not ask whether they should do it in this place before they did it. Now that they have done it, they have wasted the taxpayers' dollars. That sums up this part of the portfolio in this Appropriation Bill.