




Speech By
Andrew Powell

MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

Record of Proceedings, 8 August 2017

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL:
INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (4.08 pm): I, too, rise to address the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee's consideration of this year's appropriation bills. I want to pick up where the member for Keppel left off and comment on the rank hypocrisy of the member for Keppel and of those members opposite. If members want to see hypocrisy around a funding program they need to look no further than the way this government has fudged the job-creating figures around the Works for Queensland program. We are talking about a \$200 million program that the Labor government claimed is supporting 6,000 jobs. I want to commend the Deputy Leader of the Opposition because at the estimates hearing she began by exposing just how farcical those figures are. Three rubbish bins would be placed in a council area at a cost of \$5,000 and that would support two jobs—for about five minutes. Also, \$20,000 worth of signage would be erected at a dog park and that would support three jobs—maybe for five minutes. Top dressing a sporting oval was apparently going to support five jobs—maybe for two days.

When we asked the director-general of the Department of Local Government what they did to check these figures, he said that the information was provided by the councils. When I asked him if he checked it Mr Carroll replied, 'We believe council's information as it is provided to the department.' I continued, 'You take it as read?' Mr Carroll said, 'Absolutely.' We can announce that 11 jobs were created by spending \$5,000 to place three bins in a council area, \$20,000 worth of signage in a dog park and top dressing a sporting oval. I find it absolutely hypocritical of those opposite and a laughable way of claiming that they created jobs across this great state.

I want to commend the Deputy Leader of the Opposition on her questioning around Cross River Rail. As she mentioned earlier, she exposed the decline in patronage and the fact that we have had a 16 per cent fall in patronage on rail from 2008 to 2016. In five years since 2011 the number people on trains, the passenger load, has declined on the Merivale Bridge in the morning peak from nearly 6,000 down to less than 5,500. The data demonstrates there is significant capacity available on the Merivale Bridge and on the number of trains currently crossing the bridge during the morning peak. I think that was an excellent line of questioning by the deputy leader.

Turning to more transport issues, we asked a number of questions concerning preparation for the Commonwealth Games and we have continued that line of questioning this morning. For the benefit of South-East Queensland commuters across the entire network and not just on the Gold Coast line we tried to ascertain what the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games train timetable would look like. The CEO of Queensland Rail, the minister and the director-general of DTMR could not give us a straight answer on what the timetable would look like. They could not give us any guarantees. To be blunt, I cannot take this morning's guarantee from the Premier that NGR trains will be on the tracks for the Commonwealth Games at face value either as a result of what we have seen from the Deutsche Bahn report which was released today. We had questions about New Generation Rollingstock. Again, as we heard today, 10 of the 15 NGR units that are actually in Queensland have had zero on-track testing time. That is very concerning given the commitment that the Premier has made today.

We heard about train driver recruitment and we heard about how a union official was able to return to a train driver's job after being away from that role since 2006. In contrast, a qualified freight locomotive driver who passed the test to drive on Queensland Rail's network in 2008 was rejected by Queensland Rail HR and found to be unsuitable for a position. We asked how many others were on the same kind of leave this union official was on, and the answer we eventually received through a question on notice was that he was the only one of a kind.

Mr Cripps: A bit sus.

Mr POWELL: I take that interjection from the member for Hinchinbrook. It is very sus, but it goes to show that this is all about jobs for union mates, not jobs for Queenslanders. There has been no effort whatsoever to fix the rail fail that is going on in this state. That rail fail is still hitting commuters hard, with 1,800 services a month cut from the timetable. We see no end in sight for commuters in South-East Queensland.