




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Record of Proceedings, 28 February 2017

MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Palaszczuk Labor Government, Performance

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.24 pm): The speech that we have just heard from the minister shows how completely out of touch this do-nothing Palaszczuk government is in relation to rural and regional Queensland. This is the government that slashed the successful Royalties for the Regions program. They halved it, they narrowed it and then they only put one per cent of its budget allocation out the door. This year we see that this is a government that is so worried about the next election in rural and regional Queensland they are ramming through these projects to local councils but forgetting that they have halved and narrowed the successful Royalties for the Regions project.

Just before question time we heard from the opposition leader about the jobs crisis facing Queensland. We are seeing a concerning trend and this government is doing nothing in its approach to improve this situation. It does not take a genius to figure out why we are seeing so many jobs disappear from regional communities across the state. Labor has completely gutted the Infrastructure budget. The Premier has chopped the government's Capital Works Program and regional Queensland has borne the brunt of this rip and tear approach.

In 2014-15 the LNP delivered more than \$10 billion in infrastructure spending. Last year Labor only delivered \$8 billion in infrastructure spending. They gutted the Capital Works Program by \$2 billion in their first year in office. Over the next four years the capital purchases have been slashed by almost \$3 billion. That means \$3 billion less invested in projects and jobs right across Queensland but particularly in rural and regional Queensland. It is clear that regional Queensland is bearing the brunt of this do-nothing Labor government and its savage attacks on the Infrastructure budget. It is clear that the Deputy Premier is unable to fight for her patch and get the money spent on infrastructure.

Let us go through the figures region by region. Labor's own budget papers show a \$180 million cut to infrastructure in Townsville this year, and that is on top of a \$220 million cut in Townsville the year before. Since Labor's election, per capita infrastructure spending in Townsville has declined by \$823—that is \$823 less spent on infrastructure per person in Townsville. Is it any wonder why unemployment in Townsville has reached its highest level on record, at an unacceptable level of 11.4 per cent? This is a region that has seen more than 13,000 jobs disappear since Labor's last election and it is directly attributable to infrastructure cuts.

Cairns has not fared any better. Infrastructure cuts in the budget this year total \$120 million on top of \$150 million the year before. That is \$545 per person in infrastructure cuts. The member for Mulgrave is failing to deliver for his own patch. Youth unemployment continues to skyrocket, with 2,200 young people losing their jobs on this do-nothing government's watch. No matter where we look, regional Queensland has been short-changed by a government that is simply only focused on Brisbane and its inner-city Greens preferences. Mackay has seen infrastructure spending dramatically cut by

\$80 million this year alone. This region has seen 3,400 jobs disappear since Labor's election. I would ask the people of Mackay to let their members know that those 3,400 people are not happy that their only response is an Elton John concert.

It is clear that this Palaszczuk government is doing nothing. It is clear that they are completely out of touch. The Deputy Premier has slashed \$3 billion from the Infrastructure budget. If this do-nothing government were serious about delivering jobs for regional Queensland, if they were serious about boosting the economies of regional towns and cities, if they were serious about improving the liveability of regional communities, they have to be serious about infrastructure; they have to put the money into the regions so the local councils can continue to employ their road crews. It is that simple.