



Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Record of Proceedings, 8 August 2017

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

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.48 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the report of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee. This Labor government promised a big jobs bonanza. We all know—and we have heard it many times from this side of the House—that it has given Queensland not only a jobs crisis but also a budget con job. We have seen 30,000 jobs lost just last year. We have the second highest unemployment rate in the country—it is worse than Tasmania's. We have 56.2 per cent youth unemployment in the outback. We have something like 28 per cent unemployment in Townsville. These are unacceptable figures. It is something that those on the other side of this House are not taking seriously. We were able to expose through the committee process the details in the budget that prove these figures—that prove that Queensland is facing higher unemployment, higher costs of living, fewer projects start and delivered, and more and more job-stifling red tape.

In another display of secrecy and selective release of information, we uncovered that Building Queensland, an entity whose responsibilities include developing rigorous business cases for projects, did not even consider the 16 per cent fall in rail patronage from 2008 to 2016 whilst they were developing the business case for Cross River Rail. Additionally, Building Queensland did not consider the information held by the Department of Transport and Main Roads that shows that the estimated passenger load has declined on the Merivale Bridge in the morning peak from 5,989 in 2011 to just 5,426 people in 2016.

The data clearly demonstrates that there is significant capacity available on the Merivale Bridge and the trains that currently cross the bridge during morning peak. Instead of using actual patronage data, Building Queensland has used a crystal ball to forecast a tripling of demand for rail services to justify and support the Deputy Premier's No. 1 infrastructure project for Queensland. We all know that the projections—and this came through the committee—are not supported by the available public data for rail patronage since 2008 and casts serious doubt over when a second heavy rail crossing will be required.

During the hearing the government was unable to provide the cost-benefit ratio of the upgrade to the Beerburum to Nambour rail line despite Building Queensland completing the business case for the project back in 2016. The information provided to a question on notice taken during the hearing confirms the suspicion of this side of the House that the upgrade to the Beerburum to Nambour rail line has a higher cost-benefit ratio than does Cross River Rail. In effect, this means that, for every dollar of taxpayer funding invested, the return is higher for the Beerburum to Nambour rail duplication project, despite the Palaszczuk government not committing any funding to the duplication of that line.

Although the CEO of the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority was listed on the witness list tabled in the parliament, the Deputy Premier and the member for Bulimba claimed that the witness list did not include the CEO. The member for South Brisbane later clarified this misleading statement and then claimed that the acting head of the Cross River Rail, announced on 15 June 2017, was not the CEO.

The LNP notes that the parliament passed the Cross River Rail Delivery Authority Bill at the end of 2016, yet after nearly eight months the Deputy Premier has been unable to recruit a CEO. This is for the supposed No. 1 infrastructure project of the Deputy Premier, who thinks Boulia is Biloela.

I move on to the portfolio of State Development. The budget papers show that this do-nothing Palaszczuk government has again failed to deliver almost half of the projects it promised under the Building our Regions fund. There is nothing new there. We know that it is an anaemic replacement of our much loved Royalties for the Regions program. The committee also discovered that this government has not funded any projects in the local government areas of the Lockyer Valley, Southern Downs, Goondiwindi and Somerset which overlap LNP seats. It is obvious that those on the other side of the House have no clue about Queensland.

(Time expired)