




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE

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

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (4.33 pm): I rise to speak on the estimates hearing on the budget. I put a question to the Deputy Premier asking why Cross River Rail was prioritised over other major infrastructure projects in Queensland. It is very disappointing that a project that will cost more than \$5 billion, if not more, but which will only save about five minutes in terms of transport times can be prioritised. With that costing and those figures, that could create five major water infrastructure projects in rural and regional Queensland. The government did come up with some perception that it was going to upgrade Burdekin Falls Dam and develop a hydro-electric scheme as well as a hydros scheme at the Lower Burdekin by raising the dam wall with the support of the federal government, but I believe that the government has taken this position as a result of its no new dams policy. It sees aspects of these projects so that it appears that it is delivering something, but it is not necessarily delivering anything. With regard to hydro power, it is talking about 50 megawatts. Given the amount of money and the cost factor to provide 50 megawatts, the water drawn to be used for that hydro scheme will be to the disadvantage of the landowners and irrigators in that region.

There is an opportunity to look into Hell's Gate Dam, which will gravity feed water to Townsville. It will provide water security in the Charters Towers region. It will open up that area for development. It will also provide water infrastructure and water security in the Burdekin region for the term of its natural life. Looking at something that is right down the bottom end means that you are only going to pump water back to Townsville when there is the opportunity to construct Hell's Gate Dam. I have to acknowledge that the Minister for Natural Resources did say that he will be communicating—and he has—with Townsville Enterprise to include Big Rocks Weir into that feasibility study. That is possibly a good thing because Big Rocks Weir is only a \$20 million project but will provide 10,000 megalitres of water to the Charters Towers region and naturally provide recreation and the potential of opening up the area for agriculture. Not only that, it may provide security for a meatworks.

I note that LNP members were talking about all the things they had contributed in that three years. There is the big Taj Mahal across the road, but that is all that I can see. I have been searching to try to find what the LNP delivered in my electorate in that last three years. I have asked the Parliamentary Library to search for this and it is still searching. There is nothing. There is nothing at all. With regard to their contributions and good government, yes, we are selling our energy assets and they sacked 16,000 public servants. The minister came into my electorate every week criticising and saying that I could not do anything or that I could not deliver anything. That is because the LNP delivered nothing for that region anyway. I do not think that this budget has been a good budget. However, if we compare this budget with the previous government—given that I am still searching—those on that side of the House should not be pointing fingers at the present moment. I wanted to bring that to the attention of the House.