




Speech By
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Record of Proceedings, 12 October 2017

ADJOURNMENT

Toowoomba, Infrastructure Projects

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (7.05 pm): I rise today to talk about the great LNP infrastructure projects going on in Toowoomba. We have the second range crossing funded and underway—a fantastic signature LNP project. We also have the inland rail coming our way. This do-nothing Labor government inherited from the LNP a \$50-million-plus allocation to lower the range tunnels for the existing rail lines so that containers that are used in modern shipping can take the wealth of the Western Downs to the port and export it to the world. This would mean jobs, opportunities and lower logistical costs for businesses and producers in my region.

In 2015 Labor inherited a budget from the LNP of \$50 million plus. In its own budget in 2015-16 it allocated \$55 million for this job. It was \$3 million short of what was required. In 2016 it reduced that budget. It dropped the figure by \$26 million and allocated \$32 million for the job. The passing loops were taken out. In 2017-18 Labor asked me to thank it for dropping the budget again by \$10 million to \$24 million. In the last three years it has dropped the budget some \$30 million. I have asked questions on notice and questions without notice in this House many times, including asking 18 months ago specifically about the start date of construction. This has been allocated in the budget by the Labor Party now for three years and it has done nothing at all but talk about it.

We now find that rail users are choking. People have made business investments based on the commitment made by this government that it has not delivered to the electorate and the people of the Darling Downs. There are people who are trying to lower their logistical costs so that they can compete internationally. Not only have we had \$30 million ripped out of Toowoomba; glossy brochure after glossy brochure has been advertising the good work the Labor Party has supposedly done. It has done absolutely nothing and now there is not enough money left to lower these tunnels. These tunnels were built 150 years ago by the first member for Toowoomba and the Darling Downs. They cannot take modern containers that are used to export to the world. This government says that it cares about the Darling Downs. It does not. It is completely city centric. It has allocated the money and spent none. It has done nothing to lower the logistical costs of producers and it is costing jobs and opportunities for the people on the Darling Downs and in my electorate.