




Speech By  
**Brittany Lauga**

**MEMBER FOR KEPPEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 21 March 2018

**MOTION: ROOKWOOD WEIR**

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (5.43 pm): The member for Gregory comes in here and tells us all about the benefits of this project, that it is going to create all these jobs and do all this stuff for agriculture. We know he is preaching to the converted. What we need—

**Mr Millar** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Order! Member for Gregory, you have had a really good go. I have warned you several times. Next time you will be warned under standing orders.

**Mrs LAUGA:** We need the member for Gregory and his LNP counterparts in this House to get on the phone to Canberra and convince them of the agricultural benefits of this project and why they need to build this weir in Central Queensland. I rise this evening to speak against the amendment tabled by the opposition and in support of the motion before the parliament. I am speaking against the amendment tonight because, firstly, the amendment does not call on the Turnbull government to pay for half. There is no commitment in the amendment whatsoever with respect to committing half of the funding. How much do those opposite want Queensland taxpayers to pay for this? More than half? Do they think that is our fair share? There is also no urgency in the motion. It has nothing about urgency.

**Mr Hart** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Burleigh, you have been interjecting the entire evening and they are not being taken. Next time, you will be warned under standing orders.

**Mrs LAUGA:** Taxpayers agree that public funding must be spent shrewdly, which is why the Palaszczuk government undertook a business case to determine whether or not the Rookwood Weir is a good use of taxpayers' money. The business case by Building Queensland for the Rookwood Weir has been completed and released. The final business case says that construction of the Rookwood Weir would cost \$352 million. I support projects that stack up economically for taxpayers, including taxpayers in Central Queensland. By contrast, what do we see from the federal Liberals and Nationals? The LNP has dillydallied on how much to commit to this project. Originally, it was \$130 million. Then the member for Capricornia suggested there was \$260 million or possibly even full funding on the table from the federal government.

The state government sought clarification on numerous occasions on the funding offered by the federal government. For such a large amount of taxpayers' money, formal confirmation in black and white is obviously a basic requirement. We are still awaiting confirmation. What do we hear from Canberra and those opposite? The resounding sound of silence. Do they want this project or not? Barnaby Joyce, the then deputy prime minister, stated in correspondence to the minister, 'Our commitment has been clear from day one, that we want to see the weir built.' Well, pay for 50 per cent of it, please. It just begs the question: where is the money? Where is the commitment to the people of Central Queensland?

This project will provide 100 construction jobs and 76,000 megalitres for Central Queensland. That is water for our agricultural sector to grow, develop and thrive and water to supply our growing populations as more people continue to call Central Queensland home. The Queensland government has committed to pay half of the \$352.2 million construction costs and half of the operating costs, as long as the Turnbull government matches it. I think that that is a fair request.

The business case shows quite clearly that without a fair contribution from Canberra the price of the water will be too high for farmers and other potential users. Let me be clear—the Palaszczuk government is prepared to fund half the capital and operating costs for the weir. The member for Capricornia has talked up this project. In October 2017, she publicly stated that the Australian government had offered to double its funding commitment. Where is the money? Why are the opposition sitting on their hands and not standing up for Queensland infrastructure, for growth in agriculture and for jobs for Central Queenslanders? It is time for Central Queensland's federal parliamentarians to step up to the plate and secure half the funding from their Canberra bosses.

Waiting for the Turnbull government to stump up its fair share of cash is something Central Queenslanders sadly know all too well. I have stood in this place time and again calling on the federal LNP government to stump up its fair share for Central Queensland. Here I am again tonight calling on the federal Turnbull government to stump up half of the operating costs and the capital works cost for the Rookwood Weir. I called on them to pay for their fair share of the disaster funding for Cyclone Marcia.

They refused to pay their fair share of disaster recovery payments to local people after the Fitzroy flood, refuse to pay their fair share of the Rockhampton flood levy, refuse to pay \$34 million in unpaid health funding to the Central Queensland Health and Hospital Service, spent none of the \$5 billion Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility in Central Queensland and also threaten to cut Queensland's share of the GST. How much more do we have to endure from this federal LNP government? It is time the LNP stopped taking its marching orders from Canberra. I suggest that those opposite get on the blower and talk to their Canberra mates to get their fair share for Queensland.