




Speech By
Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Record of Proceedings, 15 July 2020

ADJOURNMENT

Haghton Water Pipeline, Stage 2

 **Mr STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (7.15 pm): There is no doubt that the Palaszczuk government is invested in regional Queensland, particularly in Townsville. As we emerge from the COVID-19 health pandemic and transition into an economic recovery phase, it is the Palaszczuk government again investing in local jobs and infrastructure in Townsville.

The Premier also announced the Back to Work program, which has been very successful in our city, with many employers taking on extra workers to help them in their workplace. When Clive Palmer's Queensland Nickel closed its doors, 800 people lost their jobs in one day. It was the Back to Work program that employed 2,700 workers in more than 1,000 businesses across the city.

The Palaszczuk government knows that investing in local infrastructure creates local jobs and keeps the local economy moving—infrastructure like the Townsville stadium and stage 1 of the Haghton water pipeline worth \$215 million and creating over 1,000 local jobs. When it comes to stage 2 of the water pipeline project promised by the LNP federal government, they have done the dodgy on the people of Townsville. On 3 June the *Townsville Bulletin* quoted the member for Herbert as saying—

... the relevant departments just need to sign on the dotted line.

Mr Thompson said he had spoken to the Deputy Prime Minister and Infrastructure Minister, Michael McCormack, and said a final draft for the agreement had been agreed to.

"He and Minister (Anthony) Lynham have reached their agreement through their long, drawn out debate, and it is positive, the money is ready to roll," Mr Thompson said.

However, there has been no agreement from Minister Lynham, nor the Treasurer, nor the Premier, as the \$195 million towards stage 2 would reduce Queensland's share of the GST distributed by the Commonwealth to the tune of around \$156 million.

If this were to happen to other projects around the country then maybe this would be palatable. However, we find that that is not the case. In fact, 18 projects around the country have been exempt from GST allocations including projects in Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, Northern Territory and the ACT. The only reference in five years that mentions Queensland is the fruit fly response for Tasmania! This deal has more hairs on it than Chewbacca.

I want to know why the federal government is treating the people of North Queensland as hillbillies? Why does Michael McCormack think he can pull the wool over the eyes of the people of Townsville? The Palaszczuk government has done the heavy lifting when it comes to investing in critical infrastructure. It is time the federal government honours its election commitment and stumps up its fair share without ripping off the people of Townsville.