



Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

Record of Proceedings, 14 October 2021

STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (3.40 pm): I move—

That the House take note of the State Development and Regional Industries Committee Report No. 10, 57th Parliament, *Examination of Auditor-General Report 14: 2019-20: Evaluating major infrastructure projects*, tabled on 21 June 2021.

It is a great time to be standing here and talking about infrastructure. From what we have seen in recent times, the Palaszczuk government has a draft 20-year infrastructure strategy laid out. Consultation for that closed last week and, from what I understand, they held 13 regional workshops and met with 270 stakeholders. That is going to be a very important document for this state's future and we all look forward to seeing that when it does come out.

We also have the Queensland government infrastructure pipeline which includes over 1,000 projects that are in either delivery or planning. That gives context, when we look at this report, of how many infrastructure projects we are handling.

That pipeline also includes our four-year infrastructure forward program as well. That is worth, as we have heard, \$52 billion. That also includes the current financial year's allocation of \$14.7 billion. We are rolling out critical infrastructure funding programs as well that integrate with this pipeline. One of the things I am talking about specifically is our hugely important \$3.34 billion Queensland Jobs Fund. Part of that includes \$2 billion for the Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund. I make note that the minister has done a great job on that. Let us also not forget the \$1 billion for the incredibly successful Works for Queensland program. All of these are very important programs.

There is an incredible amount of infrastructure being rolled out in Queensland, with a massive pipeline of projects on the way as well.

Mr Saunders: It is what Labor governments do.

Mr WHITING: I will take the interjection from the member. This is what Labor governments do. No other government, no other party would go down this line.

One of the things we are looking at today is what has changed since this Audit Office report. There are three things: South-East Queensland cities including Brisbane are now Olympic cities. That is an incredible honour and that will be a massive catalyst in terms of timing for a lot of these infrastructure projects. Secondly, our population is booming. We know that; we keep hearing it all the time. More people are moving to Queensland. Tens of thousands of families throughout Australia are moving to Queensland. Thirdly, we are also becoming, as we have talked about before, a renewable and hydrogen superpower. We have seen the game-changing announcements in Gladstone this week, and clearly there will be more as we move down this very necessary path. Those are the things that have changed when we consider this report.

In some ways, this report has been overtaken because Building Queensland has been folded into the department of state development, as we can see throughout this report. This report from the Audit Office is in some ways quite a technical report. For example, it talks about recommending improvements in options analysis to better address issues identified through assurance activities. When you are doing infrastructure analysis, building business cases, it is a particular skill and there are different ways you can do that.

The report makes some good points which are being adopted, as we have seen in this report. For example, the Building Queensland expertise has been transferred to the department of state development, it is being delivered by the same staff, and it is recognition that we can always improve our business case development and better integrate our business case development with clients such as Transport and Main Roads.

It is very clear that the department is reviewing and adopting the learnings from Building Queensland. For example, it has been acknowledged that the department will use the report to help evaluate their business plans and Building Queensland has improved overall the quality of infrastructure proposals going to the government.

Before I end my contribution, I wish to correct the record in my contribution to the private member's motion last night. Last night I stated the member for Glass House said last March that the worst is over and that the border needed to be opened. It was not in March 2020; it was on 21 May 2020 when the member said, 'The worst has passed,' and it was on 16 June 2020 when the member said, 'Open the borders.' I should clarify that the member did not state this on social media; these statements were made in the House. I table abstracts from the parliamentary record regarding his speeches from those two dates.

Tabled paper. Speeches dated 21 May 2020 and 16 June 2020, by the member for Glass House, Mr Andrew Powell MP, and dated 21 May 2020, by the member for Thuringowa, Mr Aaron Harper MP, regarding coronavirus [1758](#).