




Speech By
Michael Hart

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

Record of Proceedings, 14 October 2021

STATE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE

Report, Motion to Take Note

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (3.55 pm): I rise to speak to the committee report titled *Examination of Auditor-General Report No. 14: 2019-20—Evaluating major infrastructure projects*. The Auditor-General's report talks about Building Queensland. In 2020 the Treasurer put out a press release and stood in this House and said that Building Queensland would no longer be a statutory body and would move into Treasury. The press release stated—

To ensure the Government utilises its resources efficiently to reinforce and strengthen our infrastructure investment and planning capability, Building Queensland will be integrated into Queensland Treasury.

"Combining the skills of Building Queensland and the existing capabilities within Treasury, including the Infrastructure and Economic Resilience Division ...

Apparently things change. When the government was reconstituted, the ministerial positions changed and all of a sudden Building Queensland is about to be back in state development where it started but will no longer be a statutory body. It will no longer have the independence from the department that it really needs to do its business cases properly. The Auditor-General had some things to say about that.

I wrote to the Auditor-General and asked him to have a look at the renewable energy costs that were put onto GOCs. I am glad that he is going to do that. In recent times I have written to the Auditor-General to ask him to have a look at the effect the government's best practice industrial conditions are going to have on infrastructure projects.

Mr McDonald: Union promotion.

Mr HART: I take that interjection. It is union promotion. This is in fact a grubby deal that the government has made with the CFMMEU, the ETU and the plumbers union. It is causing an extreme blowout in the costs of infrastructure. We have seen in recent times that the cost of Gold Coast Light Rail stage 3 has blown out from \$700 million to over \$1 billion—a 50 per cent blowout. We saw the cost of the Townsville stadium blow out by \$43 million. That was directly related to BPICs. We do not know what the figure is for the Cairns Convention Centre because it is hidden in the contracts, but the cost of it has blown out too. With the Capricornia Correctional Centre it is the same story. Cross River Rail is going to blow out in big terms. We have seen recently that the Coomera Connector is blowing out in extreme terms. This is all due to best practice industry conditions. The government can say that this is about providing fair wages and conditions for their workers, but it is not about that. It is about padding the CFMMEU, the ETU and the plumbers union with unfair wages and conditions—in fact, extreme wages and conditions—and blowing out the cost of projects.

What effect does that have on infrastructure for the people of Queensland? It means that they get approximately 30 per cent less bang for their buck because infrastructure will cost 50 per cent more over time. That means that we will get fewer roads and less rail. I seriously doubt we will ever see light rail stage 4 on the Gold Coast. I think the minister is dodging and weaving all over the place now to find a reason to cancel it.

Mr Bailey: It won't go past your brewery, brother!

Mr HART: I do not take that interjection from the minister. I would not be termed his brother, I am sure!

An honourable member: Comrade?

Mr HART: Comrade might be better. I take that interjection. I was a union representative after all back in the real world.

An honourable member: Which one?

Mr HART: The ALAEA. I bet no-one knows what that is. The ALAEA is the Australian Licensed Aircraft Engineers' Association.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): Member for Burleigh, I ask you to move that the debate be now adjourned.

Mr HART: Madam Deputy Speaker, I will wrap up my contribution now.