




Speech By
Brittany Lauga

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2022

MOTION

Rockhampton Ring Road

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (5.29 pm): I am still a bit perplexed about that contribution from the member for Callide. May I correct the record? It was probably only a couple of months ago that I was sitting in the driver's seat of a heavy vehicle—the type of heavy vehicle that the member for Callide would run a million miles away from because it was a council recycling truck. I was very pleased to talk to the council operators of the Rockhampton Regional Council recycling truck, who do a fantastic job. I was with the Minister for Environment talking about our food and organic waste trial and how well it is going in Rockhampton, so I would like to correct the record, member for Callide.

I rise to speak against the opposition's motion and in support of the government's amended motion. Let me be clear: the Rockhampton Ring Road will go ahead. The funding amount remains the same as in the previous budget. Only the timetable has changed. Both the federal and state governments remain committed to the project and will look to bring funding forward if possible. Like everyone, I have been disappointed by the federal government's decision to delay the Rockhampton Ring Road. This is a critical infrastructure project for Central Queensland, but the tenders are coming in at nearly double what they were 12 to 18 months ago, an increase of more than 70 per cent. The Palaszczuk government remains committed to deliver the \$200 million in funding allocated for this project. Since the announcement, the member for Rockhampton and I have voiced our disappointment with the federal government.

Mr Minnikin: Oh, yeah!

Ms LAUGA: We have. We actually pick up the phone to our federal—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Through the chair, member.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

Ms LAUGA: You just—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Comments will come through the chair.

Ms LAUGA: Those opposite just need to wait and see. We will always put Central Queensland first and we will not stop fighting for our fair share. The member for Rockhampton and I will absolutely be fighting to have this project brought forward.

Unlike those opposite and the federal LNP, Labor is transparent about infrastructure projects and we deliver. There is none of this pork-barrelling that the LNP is renowned for, like the \$300 million Building Better Regions Fund where nearly 90 per cent of the funding was spent in coalition and marginal seats. They are very quiet now. This is just one in a long line of rorts from the Morrison-Joyce

government. There were sports rorts, car park rorts, safer communities rorts and then the Building Better Regions rorts. When asked about the Australian National Audit Office's findings then deputy prime minister Barnaby Joyce said, 'I don't care.'

The numbers do not lie. Barnaby Joyce, Scott Morrison and the LNP clearly prioritised their own seats over worthy projects in other parts of the country, including the very worthy new community centre at Woorabinda. We know that former LNP ministers made decisions on the basis of 'choose your own adventure' criteria that were not fully explained to those applying for grants, nor did they keep proper records of decisions. The only thing that Scott Morrison, Barnaby Joyce, Michelle Landry and Matt Canavan cared about when they were in government was diverting funds for their own electoral purposes, such as the \$660 million worth of taxpayer funds which were spent on 47 car park projects in marginal or LNP seats.

The LNP could not care less about building a better Australia or developing all regions. Unlike the LNP, we do not have colour-coded spreadsheets with marginal LNP electorates prioritised for funding. We have open and transparent tender processes and open and transparent grant funding. Not only do we undertake business cases for infrastructure projects; we publish them. Those opposite must surely remember the Audit Office's scathing report into Campbell Newman 'Tower of Power'.

I am very pleased there is an extra \$250 million in new funding in the budget for upgrades to the Bruce Highway around Rocky and commitments to other Bruce Highway projects in Central Queensland, all of which provide a strong pipeline of work for our local contractors. I am proud to report that the fully funded \$80 million Rockhampton-Yeppoon Road upgrade continues to steam ahead, with construction due to commence early next year. I understand that around 90 jobs will be supported through this project; the same with the \$19 million upgrade of the Emu Park to Rockhampton Road, which is on track to start construction at the end of this year. This project, which I personally fought for and am proud to be delivering, includes two overtaking lanes, road widening to include wide centre line treatment, pavement works and safety improvements. I commend the amended motion to the House.