




Speech By
Bryson Head

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2022

MOTION

Rockhampton Ring Road

 **Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (5.23 pm): I rise to support the motion as moved by the member for Chatsworth, the shadow minister for transport and main roads. The member for Chatsworth knows how critical infrastructure is in the regions and how important road upgrades, such as the Rockhampton Ring Road, are to the people of rural and regional Queensland. The delivery of this project is absolutely essential for our state—for our truckies and for all our tourists who want to drive up the Bruce Highway or, should I say, Queensland's longest goat track. For those who do not quite follow me, the track starts north of Gympie and goes all the way through to Cairns.

I wish I could say it was our only goat track, but it is one of many thanks to the maintenance backlogs under the Palaszczuk Labor government. The member for Chatsworth has even had the pleasure of touring my electorate in a semitrailer with the former member for Callide. Has the Minister for Transport and Main Roads toured Callide in a heavy vehicle? No, he has not. Have the members for Keppel or Rockhampton spent much time in a heavy vehicle? Given their completely weak advocacy on this issue, I suggest not.

The frustration from many truckies as they drive through Rockhampton on the Bruce Highway is extreme. At the wrong time of day, trucks caught in traffic can be held up for more than half an hour, ultimately leading to higher prices of goods for all Queenslanders. That is one of many reasons the Rockhampton Ring Road project absolutely, fundamentally needs to be delivered—not next year, not next term, not next decade but today.

Without trucks, Australia stops. The member for Chatsworth understands that. That is why he moved this motion today, which I absolutely support. There is not one product at the local supermarket that ends up there without a truckie. Believe it or not, there are not many products that end up there without the farmers of rural and regional Queensland.

Roads across Queensland, including many in Callide such as the Bruce Highway, Leichhardt Highway, Chinchilla-Wondai Road and Gayndah-Mount Perry Road, are completely inadequate for the vehicles and people that use them. I will continue to advocate for the people of my electorate every day I am the member for Callide because I want every single individual who lives there to have the best life they can. In contrast, the members for Keppel and Rockhampton remain as steadfast as a wet lettuce leaf in their advocacy for their communities.

The Rockhampton Ring Road is one of many projects that are long overdue. It is appalling that the local Labor members failed completely to lobby the Albanese Labor government on the delivery of this project. Anthony Albanese released a media statement in January 2019 claiming that the Rockhampton Ring Road was a certainty under Labor. The only certainties under a Labor government are broken promises, higher taxes and the complete and utter neglect of rural and regional Queensland. The fact that there is not one maternity ward in the entire electorate of Callide is case in point.

When a baby was born on the side of the Bruce Highway near his electorate, the member for Rockhampton did not say a peep. The members for Keppel and Rockhampton continue to fail their communities by refusing to stand up to their health minister. They fail to mention the fact that Gladstone and Biloela mothers put further strain on their own hospital because maternity wards remain on bypass thanks to the Palaszczuk Labor government.

Mr HARPER: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. The member is straying completely from the motion.

Mr POWELL: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker. The original motion clearly refers to the advocacy of the members for Keppel and Rockhampton on behalf of their communities and that is what the member for Callide is referring to.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): I will allow it.

Mr HEAD: I can only imagine the stress on the healthcare workers at Rockhampton having to cope with the workload of not only their own patients but those from two other hospitals as well.

I have been trying to understand how Labor members, who apparently cared so much about this project, have all of a sudden stopped fighting for it. Last night, as I was eating a nice juicy T-bone steak for dinner, it struck me: Rockhampton is the beef capital of Australia, and we all know how much the Labor Party hates the beef producers of Queensland.

Clearly, they could not find the courage to support a project that ultimately supports the farmers and graziers of Queensland—the people who work from sun-up to sundown to provide the food on their plates. That is why they cut Building Better Regions, Urannah, Hells Gate and Emu Swamp Dam. Billions of dollars were stripped out of rural and regional Queensland with nothing but support offered by regional Labor members. I absolutely support this motion moved by the member for Chatsworth.