




Speech By
Lachlan Millar

MEMBER FOR GREGORY

Record of Proceedings, 26 October 2022

MOTION

Rockhampton Ring Road

 **Mr MILLAR** (Gregory—LNP) (5.45 pm): Let me start by supporting the member for Chatsworth's motion. Also, let me quote *Courier-Mail* journalist Michael Madigan, who I think summed up the Labor Party perfectly today in the article titled 'Federal Budget 2022: Labor turns its back on regional Queensland'. I table the article.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 26 October 2022, titled 'Federal Budget 2022: Labor turns its back on regional Queensland' [1757](#).

He said—

Regional Queensland may have given birth to the Australian Labor Party under a tree in Barcaldine, but in recent years it's been gazing at its progeny with a baleful eye, wondering how a child could allow itself to stray so far from home.

Yesterday's budget cuts for regional Queensland represented a good, hard kick in the stomach to hundreds of thousands of families across this state.

...

The ALP is billions of light years removed from those striking shearers who gathered under the Tree of Knowledge in Barcaldine ...

Labor may maintain a sentimental, romantic attachment to its Book of Genesis, but it is, in truth, a ... metropolitan party with an identity now firmly entrenched in a tertiary-educated middle class and a national vision largely removed from agriculture and mining, even if it will eagerly accept financial lifelines from both by way of increasing tax receipts.

That has summed up the Labor Party perfectly. The Tree of Knowledge is in my electorate of Gregory. I am very proud to have this important part of Australian history in my electorate, but when I pass this iconic monument, which is preserved so wonderfully by the Barcaldine shire council, I always wonder what those 13 shearers—

Mr BAILEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. As fascinating as this treatise is about Barcaldine, this is actually about the Rockhampton Ring Road. I ask the member to come back to the motion.

Mr Boothman interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Order! Member for Theodore, I have made my views very clear tonight on taking points of order in silence. I warn you. Member for Gregory, I have been giving you some latitude because I know your style, but I ask you to come back to the substance of the motion.

Mr MILLAR: Mr Deputy Speaker, I am coming back to the motion. What I am trying to explain to parliament is that the party formed in outback Queensland is now so against the very place it came from. I wonder what those shearers would be thinking about this party of today. They would be rolling in their graves. I wonder what party leaders like Ben Chifley would think of the party today. They would probably walk away from the party. Does the modern Labor Party really hold the values of those

shearers? No, not at the moment. They do not stick up for regional Queensland. I think of what Pat Ogden, a Labor luminary in regional Queensland in the seat of Gregory who sadly passed away recently, would think. Sure, Pat never put a No. 1 next to my name, and I understand that, but we both had enormous respect for each other knowing we were both fighting for our patch.

Mr BAILEY: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. This has gone so far off topic. We are now talking about a deceased life member of the Labor Party when the motion is clearly about the Rockhampton Ring Road and the federal budget. The member should be speaking to the motion.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The original motion refers, as I provided guidance before, to advocating for their communities. The member is broadly talking about advocating for communities using some stories to try to illustrate that. I do ask the member to come back more directly to the motion.

Mr MILLAR: The creation of the Rockhampton Ring Road is intended to improve road safety and improve freight efficiency, flood resilience and job opportunities, but the Labor Party do not want that for the Rockhampton community. The ring-road will link the Bruce Highway through Rockhampton, extending it from the Capricorn Highway at Nelson Street to the Rockhampton-Yeppoon Road/Bruce Highway intersection and will include a new crossing at the Fitzroy River at Pink Lily. The project is currently costed at over a billion dollars—the federal government providing \$852 million; the Queensland government \$213 million—and the design started in 2020, with the tender process started in November 2021. It was supposed to be due later this year, but right now it has stopped. The people of Rockhampton, the people of Central Queensland, have been duded by the federal Labor Party and now the Queensland Labor Party.

Rockhampton plays a significant role in our economic prosperity right across this state. You only have to look at the saleyards at Gracemere. You only have to look at Beef Australia. Rockhampton is one of the major contributors to Western Queensland for its services, yet the Labor Party do not want to put a road there. Where are the members for Rockhampton and Keppel coming out and saying, 'We want this road. We need this road'?

When the new Prime Minister was the opposition leader, he said, 'It is time for the coalition to back the Rockhampton Ring Road and deliver funding as soon as possible rather than taking the usual position of promising money, but pushing its delivery into the never-never.' That is what the Prime Minister has just done, pushed it into the never-never, like they have done with our beef roads. They have pushed our beef roads into the never-never. I call on the member for Rockhampton, the member for Keppel and the Labor Party to get this ring-road back on the agenda now.