




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Regional Forums

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (2.25 pm): As a regional member of parliament and the shadow member for regional development, I am passionate about supporting the people of rural and regional Queensland. It is at the core of everything that we on this side of the chamber do because this city-centric Labor government continues to overlook and underestimate regional people and their communities. Our road networks are failing, our health system is understaffed and in crisis, women cannot give birth in our major centres and primary producers are constantly being demonised and challenged by excessive red tape.

One would think that anything that this government could do to put a focus on regional communities would be a positive, but when it comes to Labor's regional community forums I have had long-held concerns. Yesterday's media release about the next round of forums heralds how fantastic regional community forums are. It spruiks about listening to regional Queensland, developing discussion themes and creating positive outcomes. What a load of rubbish! They have been running since 2019. There have been no outcomes, no achievements and nothing that anyone knows about. The regional forums are another example of how this Labor government is more worried about what things look like rather than what actually goes on. The forums are chaired by Labor members. In the case of the Darling Downs and South-West they are chaired by Ipswich MPs and in the case of Western Queensland it is the member for Pine Rivers. Members on this side of the House who actually represent regional Queensland are not even invited and our communities know it.

In August last year I asked the Premier a question on notice about these regional forums. I asked: who was on each of these forums; what is the selection process; where are the minutes of the meetings; and are they transparent. This question has forced the Premier, kicking and screaming, to provide a little bit more information. We now have the membership of those committees but we still have no details about meetings, no outcomes and we do not know what is being discussed. We do not know what is being put forward on behalf of our regions. There are one paragraph summaries of what members heard about. For example, the forum members heard from ministers and senior government representatives; the forum members heard about regional achievements; the forum members learnt about the role of renewables in Queensland. Hang on, I thought this was actually an opportunity for the government to hear from regional members across the region, not for the government to tell them how good the government is. Apparently forum members are progressing various priorities identified from their respective forum action plans. What are the priorities? What are the action plans? Are they representative of our broader communities? Are they representative of what our communities need—and that is an LNP government!