



Speech By  
**Hon. Craig Crawford**


**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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Record of Proceedings, 12 June 2024

**MOTION**

**Far North Queensland, Infrastructure**

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (5.45 pm): What a pathetically cobbled together argument the LNP have tried to present tonight. I have sat here with my pen and my paper ready to have a conversation about the bridge, but we have gone all over the place. We have heard about bridges in Warrego and Condamine. We have heard about the Wangetti Trail and other stuff. They are absolutely all over the place.

I love to talk about my electorate and tonight I want to talk about the amazing team at Transport and Main Roads in Cairns, led by Ross Hodgman, the district director. I am well briefed and updated by them all the time. They have an incredible amount of work not only in front of them but also behind them. In Far North Queensland, highways and bridges are really hard work. Everything is always pushing against them, including the environment and the topography. You can really only build for half of the year because the wet season pretty much drowns everything. I acknowledge the civil construction industry and RoadTek, which is an arm of TMR.

After the flooding following Cyclone Jasper, the Gillies, the Kuranda, the Rex, the Palmerston and the Captain Cook—every single one of our major highways—were shut. They sustained major damage that took an incredible amount of work to fix. I was lucky to travel up the Captain Cook Highway with the transport minister and the Treasurer. It is always good to have the Treasurer with you when you are looking at damaged highways. We had a look at the amount of work that was needed. At Ellis Beach, there were places where two-metre boulders and others the size of motorcars were sitting on the highway. The road construction industry was working frantically and doing a great job, led by the Cairns TMR team and the RoadTek crews that work for them. They are hard-working public servants—the kind of public servants the LNP likes to run down.

I will move on to the bridge. We all want the bridge open. We all want an operating bridge. In fact, I am happy to go on record right now and say that I want a new bridge. We on this side of the House know how to build major infrastructure. We know we have to have a business case, do the planning and then get the construction funding. You cannot just sing—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr CRAWFORD:** I can tell the member for Southern Downs that to build Emu Swamp Dam you need to do a business case.

**Mr Hart** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Kelly): Order! The member for Burleigh is warned.

**Mr CRAWFORD:** You do that work and then you get the money for construction.

**Mr Crandon** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Coomera is warned.

**Mr CRAWFORD:** In this budget I see what I was looking for, which is the money to progress the preconstruction phases for the Kuranda bridge. We all want that bridge replaced. I have had the Treasurer underneath that bridge. I have had the main roads minister underneath that bridge. We have watched the movement of the steel structure.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr CRAWFORD:** I hear them rambling, but I am not taking their interjections. I want to clarify a few things that were raised by members opposite. I can tell the member for Gympie that B-doubles do not traverse the Kuranda Range so they do not need to go over that bridge. That is not an issue for us at this stage. A couple of members said that I have said that we need federal government funding for the Kuranda bridge. That is completely incorrect. They have the wrong highway. It is for the Cairns Western Arterial Road that we require federal funding. They are mashing two things together and coming up with something completely different. Wrong highway, LNP!

The member for Condamine talked about a 65-year use-by date. That is not correct. Main Roads run a time of approximately 100 years for these bridges. This bridge should give us another 30 years, but it is not going to. It is coming to the end of its life quicker than we would have liked. I am very well briefed by TMR on this bridge. They have been briefing me on the structural issues, what they have been doing and how they want to rectify it. Frankly, the LNP are not interested in the facts. They just want to have a political row, time and time again.