



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

Federation Chamber

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

National Stronger Regions Fund

SPEECH

Monday, 28 November 2016

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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| Date Monday, 28 November 2016 | Source House |
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| Speaker O'Brien, Ted, MP | Question No. |

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (18:10): I was hoping to get here earlier, to hear the member for Wide Bay speak. But soon afterwards the member for Lilley started speaking and I grabbed the popcorn in my office suite, because it was just hilarious. It was like watching a comedy video. The member for Lilley was exactly the same as the member for Oxley and now the member for Paterson. They just love to throw stones when they actually have absolutely no credibility when it comes to infrastructure.

I looked up some of the facts and, despite the member for Lilley previously being the Treasurer of this country, in the 2010-11 budget Labor estimated that they would spend \$6.8 billion—\$6.8 billion!—in the 2012-13 year on infrastructure. The actual—how much they really spent—was \$3.6 billion, barely 50 per cent. As we know already—other people have referred to this era as the 'post-truth' era, where the Labor Party will not hesitate to tell a filthy lie—they might have zero when it comes to truth but they only have 50 per cent when it comes to delivery of infrastructure.

I was also delighted to hear the furphies around the Queensland contribution to infrastructure from the Labor Party. After all, the person who put this motion is the honourable member for Wide Bay, a great LNP representative and a great Queenslander. In Wide Bay, just like in my seat of Fairfax, and running all the way up the coast either way in Queensland, we have the Bruce Highway. When the Labor Party were in power they committed to \$4.1 billion on the Bruce Highway. They never did it—they never do—but they committed \$4.1 billion. How much has the coalition committed to Queensland's Bruce Highway? It is \$6.7 billion—\$6.7 billion!

Ms Swanson interjecting—

Mr TED O'BRIEN: And I am delighted to have the uproar of congratulatory messages from the opposition here. Mr Deputy Speaker Hogan, do you know that just within the Sunshine Coast region, where I am, over a billion dollars will be spent on the Bruce Highway in coming years? In only the last week or so we have announced a \$181 million concessional loan for the Sunshine Coast Airport. The coalition actually delivers, and that is the contrast.

The National Stronger Regions Fund has been a roaring success. Of course, Labor's equivalent was the RDAF—the Regional Development Australia Fund. When I looked this up I found the Auditor-General's report from 2014, which spoke scathingly of its mismanagement and poor administration. Again, I find this bizarre, that here Labor are, coming in in numbers and trying to bag the coalition's performance on delivery when they themselves actually have none. Three rounds of the National Stronger Regions Fund have been enormously successful: \$630 million. And can I say how happy I am that within the seat of Fairfax, the Nambour Heritage Tramway project was a recipient in round 3.

For those who do not know Nambour, it is a town of which I am enormously proud as a member of parliament. In 2003, the Moreton sugar mill closed. It had been running in Nambour for well over 100 years—106 years. That had an enormous impact on the town's economy and on the town's identity. One of the things that the town looked at as a community with their local councillor, Greg Rogerson, was a revitalisation plan, and the heritage tramway was a part of that. Half a million dollars through this National Stronger Regions Fund will help get that tram off the ground or back on track.

I want to pay credit here to Michael Foley. Michael unfortunately left us some weeks ago. He passed away. But I want to pay tribute to Michael today. He was responsible for ensuring the heritage listing of that trail track. I also want to pay tribute to the committee—Paul Moriarty, Peter Clarke, Ron King, Kristen Beckhaus, Rhonda Billet-Haire—the Nambour Alliance and indeed the Nambour community. It is funds like this that the coalition delivers that get regional local communities boosting their economy again, and I am so happy to be speaking today in support of the motion.