



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

Federation Chamber

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Infrastructure

SPEECH

Monday, 22 May 2017

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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<p>Date Monday, 22 May 2017 Page 140 Questioner Speaker O'Brien, Ted, MP</p>	<p>Source House Proof Yes Responder Question No.</p>
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Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (12:17): Here we have the member for Grayndler's great optical illusion—'Albo's' evidence based mirage. I think we all know that the Labor Party, and particularly the member for Grayndler, in his former roles under the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd era, are hypocritical when it comes to infrastructure. They are all talk; no action. The entire thing is a facade.

We heard in the recent budget a \$75 billion commitment from the coalition government towards infrastructure over the next 10 years. That is for road, rail and air. If the member for Grayndler is right, then the facts would bear it out. However, I have compared the annual spend under the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd era on transport infrastructure, and the average annual spend was just over \$6 billion. In a comparable time frame, the coalition since 2013 spent over \$8 billion. So, \$6 billion, Labor, and \$8 billion, coalition, and the member for Grayndler actually suggests that the coalition is spending less. Straight mathematics tells you the complete opposite. The coalition now has a \$75 billion commitment for a 10-year period, moving on.

I found it fascinating that this motion seems to give so much credibility to following Infrastructure Australia's advice. We just heard from the member for Grayndler a complaint that the Brisbane Cross River Rail was not included in the budget. Yet there was an interview on ABC Radio, that I believe was only this morning, where Steve Austin interviewed Jackie Trad. It was based on comments from a spokesperson from Infrastructure Australia, who said that Infrastructure Australia:

... has a number of outstanding concerns with the Cross River Rail business case and we have advised the Queensland government of these concerns.

We are working with the Queensland government to address these and we hope to be able to finalise our evaluation when they are addressed.

It is all well and good to promote an evidence based approach. However, if you do not like the outcome you cannot then stand up and complain, and that is exactly what we have had from the member for Grayndler. The member for Grayndler also did not take advice from Infrastructure Australia on the Perth Freight Link, despite the fact that it was identified by Infrastructure Australia as the highest priority infrastructure job. He has now decided that Infrastructure Australia is really good when it agrees with Labor's political agenda but really bad when it does not. That is not evidence based policy making. It is Albo's mirage. It really is. It is an absolute facade. It is an optical illusion. It is all about the politics.

Look at the spending on infrastructure by the coalition government in my patch of the world, on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland. You will see that a coalition government has extended a \$181 million concessional loan for the Sunshine Coast Airport to become a fully fledged international airport. You will see 80 per cent of the \$929 million works between Caloundra Road and Sunshine Motorway—the sod was turned only last week. You will see 80 per cent of the \$187 million job around the Maroochydore Road interchange.

In the recent budget alone, we have \$530 million of Commonwealth money for the Bruce Highway from Caboolture to the Caloundra turnoff and \$120 million for the Deception Bay Interchange. Labor would never do this. Where the coalition has committed \$6.7 billion to the Bruce Highway, Labor committed \$4.1 billion. While the coalition was prepared to go 80-20 with the state, the Labor Party went 50-50. They are full of it. Unfortunately, it is all based on ideology.

I will finish with one point about Queensland and the asset recycling initiative. How much did we get out of that? Zero. Why? We got zero because the Labor Party in Queensland is ideologically opposed to it. It is all ideology from Labor.