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## CASSOWARY COAST COURIER COLUMN JULY 2010

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**Date: Monday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2010**

**For immediate release**

### **CASSOWARY COAST STATE BUDGET REPORT**

The 2010-2011 State Budget imposes more debt and higher taxes on all Queenslanders. The budget papers reveal that Queensland's debt increased from \$43 billion in 2008/09 to \$52 billion in 2009/10 and was on track to blow out to nearly \$84 billion. The debt and interest on the debt, continues to grow. The budget papers still contain no repayment plan.

The debt will eventually need to be serviced by Queensland taxpayers. Taxes, fees and charges will continue to increase under the Bligh Labor Government. The cost of living and the cost of doing business in Queensland are spiralling out of control. Labor has introduced a new fuel tax, increased car registration and overseen a huge increase in electricity prices.

Despite insisting Queensland's economy is improving, the Bligh Labor Government is moving forward with its plans for a fire sale of state owned assets, including our railways, ports and motorways, despite the fact this policy is strongly opposed by the overwhelming majority of Queenslanders. In fact, our plantation forests have already been sold.

I am concerned about the absence of any allocation in the 2010-11 budget for a new QPWS Ranger Station in Cardwell, which was first promised by the Bligh Labor Government in the 2008. This project is already long overdue. I will be asking questions of the Environment Minister about the absence of any specific budget allocation in the state budget papers.

While previously announced funding for infrastructure in the Cassowary Coast are confirmed in the budget (\$13.7 million for a water treatment system and the \$26.7 million for a sewerage treatment system in Innisfail), there are no new initiatives to encourage population decentralisation and regional economic development on the Cassowary Coast.

Stanwell Corporation will invest \$2.68 million for ongoing upgrades to the Kareeya Hydroelectric Power Station on the Tully River. The Kareeya Station is an important strategic part of North Queensland's electricity infrastructure network. I am pleased to see Stanwell Corporation continue to make regular allocations for maintenance and upgrades.

Previously announced funding for major road projects on the Bruce Highway (Cardwell Range and Innisfail to Cairns sections) and the Jubilee Bridge are confirmed in the state budget. However, I am disappointed not to see new funds in the budget for the Canecutter Way between Innisfail and Silkwood, via Japoonvale, which has been a priority for me.

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