



Speech by

Andrew Cripps

MEMBER FOR HINCHINBROOK

Hansard Tuesday, 24 May 2011

MOTION: REGIONAL QUEENSLAND, INFRASTRUCTURE

 **Mr CRIPPS** (Hinchinbrook—LNP) (6.41 pm): I rise to second the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition, the member for Callide, and I am pleased to do so as the LNP shadow minister for regional Queensland during a regional sitting of parliament in one of this state's great regional cities. After two decades of Labor Mackay is still a great regional city, despite the neglect of regional Queensland by the Goss, Beattie and Bligh Labor governments. Mackay is one of the ready examples of Labor's neglect of regional Queensland. It is great that the Queensland parliament has come to Mackay because community and industry stakeholders and civic leaders of this city have actively engaged government and opposition members, detailing to them serious and pressing inadequacies as far as social and economic infrastructure is concerned throughout this region.

Why is there such a serious and pressing inadequacy in social and economic infrastructure in the Mackay region? Indeed, how could there possibly be such an inadequacy in the Mackay region when the Mackay region has been one of the focal points of the mining boom in Queensland? Just west of here, in the Bowen and Galilee basins, the mining industry has fuelled extraordinary economic growth in this region. These Labor governments have benefited greatly from that extraordinary economic growth. They have accepted the royalties and the taxes that have flowed from the boom, but what has been the fallout? Firstly, serious housing affordability issues that have underlined the two-speed economy phenomenon and, secondly, crumbling roads that have deteriorated under the weight and volume of heavy machinery.

The Bligh Labor government would have you believe that all of the challenges facing the Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac region and other regions around the state have suddenly arisen since the severe floods and cyclone events that have plagued Queensland's regions in recent times, but this is absolute nonsense. It is a fabricated political script manufactured by a desperate government, and I do not believe that Queenslanders will fall for such an outrageous untruth because they know that their roads were crumbling and they know that their cost of living was spiralling well upwards before the floods and the cyclones hit. The Bligh government has also tried to conscript the recovery effort into its re-election platform, taking credit for centrally funded disaster payments and the work of other people.

The government recently claimed the salvaging of fallen plantation timber in my electorate as an initiative of Operation Queensland, but the reality is that these plantations were sold off as part of the state government's fire sale of state owned assets and it is the private owner of these plantations that organised the salvage project. It is the private owner of these plantations that will create the jobs associated with that project, not the government. The government has also recently taken to getting others to fund its initiatives. A gas company is funding the delivery of renal dialysis chairs in Gladstone and a Middle Eastern state is funding the delivery of cyclone shelters across North Queensland. But, bold as brass, the members of this government are there getting their picture taken and taking credit for the work of others—promises that they have not delivered.

But the best effort was yesterday, when the Bligh government did a big song and dance about \$300 million worth of road repairs for the Mackay-Whitsunday-Isaac region funded under National Disaster Relief and Recovery Arrangements. NDRRA is a joint state-Commonwealth funded program designed to share the cost of relief and repair projects in communities following a natural disaster. NDRRA funded

programs should not be announced as if they are a government achievement or a government initiative. The announcement of NDRRA funding is a sombre affair because it means that there has been a natural disaster. It was galling to watch the Minister for Main Roads stand up here this morning and celebrate the NDRRA funding as if the Bligh government could be proud of itself.

Why does the Bligh government have to cling to these half-truths and beat-ups? Why does it have to draw these long bows? Because it has failed dismally to plan and build key infrastructure in regional Queensland and it has not afforded regional Queensland the recognition it deserves as the wealth generator and contributor to the state economy that it is, and it is embarrassed about that. A member of the government is going to get up and move an amendment trying to pull the wool over the eyes of the people of Mackay, but they should not believe it. This government has been in power for two decades, and the problems that the infrastructure is facing in this state—

(Time expired)