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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Federation Chamber

ADJOURNMENT

Infrastructure

SPEECH

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BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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| Speaker O'Brien, Ted, MP | Question No. |

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (12:43): People might often wonder why it is that this government is so determined have a strong economy. One of the reasons is that it delivers vitally important infrastructure to those people who need it most. Last week, there was an announcement of \$1.9 billion for infrastructure in Queensland. I can't tell you how impressed I was with the ongoing commitment of this government and its senior ministers to my part of the world. I'm delighted, too, that the member for Wide Bay, whose electorate is just north of the electorate of Fairfax, is here in the chamber. We now have \$3.2 billion allocated to the Bruce Highway between Brisbane and the Wide Bay electorate. It is an extraordinary amount of money. Last week we saw the bringing forward of \$113.5 million into the forward estimates to continue work on the Bruce Highway, in particular between Caloundra Road and Pine Rivers. This is all about ensuring that the Bruce Highway has additional lanes so that people can get into their car in Brisbane and drive to the Sunshine Coast on six lanes—three lanes each way. This is possible only through the strong economy that we have and the continued delivery of funding. The bringing forward of that money is vitally important.

So, too, is the bringing forward of \$90 million for the Beerburrum to Nambour rail project. This rail line has been in need of an upgrade. In particular there will be a duplication between Beerburrum and Landsborough. That will separate passenger rail from freight rail. It will make passenger trips more frequent and slightly faster. It will double the capacity of freight, which for such a strong trading region is very important. We also know that it was thanks to a concessional loan of \$181 million that the Sunshine Coast international airport is now being built. That is now well underway.

Have we delivered on the planes? Yes. Have we delivered on the lanes? Yes. Have we delivered on the trains? Yes. We are doing that because we have a strong economy. We are doing that because we are committed. And we will continue to deliver.

Just next year we will see the international airport open on the Sunshine Coast. How good is that? Just next year we will see the opening of the Bruce Highway—six lanes between Caloundra Road and the Sunshine Motorway. How good is that? It was 80 per cent funded by the federal government. Next year we should see the Beerburrum to Nambour works begin. Next year we will see a \$241 million set of works on the Bruce Highway, Maroochydore Road and Mons Road begin construction. In other words, this isn't just about ticking the box and moving on; this is about continued investment. I can assure you, Deputy Speaker, that I, along with my colleagues the member for Wide Bay, the member for Fisher, and, indeed, the member for Longman now, will be working as a united force, as we always have, to make sure that we continue to deliver.

We have to remember, when we talk about lanes and trains and planes, that it's not just about infrastructure; it's about people's lives and livelihoods. This is about the people who are able to put food on the table at night because they've got a job, not just through the construction of these pieces of infrastructure but through the ongoing economy that comes from it. This is about giving people careers and opportunities. It's about building regions of Australia and, in particular, our region of the Sunny Coast. It's about making sure people don't die on our roads. Again, I pay tribute to the member for Wide Bay for the work he does on road safety.

This is what it's all about. It's about keeping people alive. It's about keeping people safe. It's about making sure that those of us, including those opposite, who have a love of family, can spend more time with their families. That's why we do this. That's why we're in this House. That's why an economy is so important. That's why I'm so proud to be part of this coalition government.