



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

ADJOURNMENT

Queensland: Infrastructure

SPEECH

Thursday, 22 October 2020

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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Speaker O'Brien, Ted, MP	Question No.

Mr TED O'BRIEN (Fairfax) (16:40): Today the Prime Minister echoed those four very sweet words: 'How good is Queensland?' There are words, however, that you never hear. Nobody has ever said, 'How good is the Queensland state Labor government?' I've never heard that in my life. For good reason, because when you look at infrastructure in particular, the Labor state government groans under the weight of their own ineptitude. When the Palaszczuk government came to office in Queensland, they inherited a situation where the Queensland government, the former LNP government, were spending twice as much on infrastructure as New South Wales and Victoria—twice as much. Over the first five years of the Palaszczuk government, they have reversed that trend. It's been New South Wales and Victoria who have been spending twice as much as Queensland.

These statistics are based on an independent analysis done by the federal Parliamentary Budget Office. It tells an horrific story. It tells the story of a completely incompetent Queensland Labor government, a government that has already missed an opportunity. If the Palaszczuk government had even just delivered on the former LNP's infrastructure plan, they would have spent an extra \$12.7 billion by the end of June 2018, let alone if they had kept ahead of New South Wales and Victoria. At the same level, it would have been tens of billions of dollars more on Queensland infrastructure than that. But they did not. The Queensland state Labor government failed, and they failed the people of Queensland. We're talking billions here, not millions. We are talking about multiple dams, roads and rail. We are talking about thousands and thousands of jobs that Queenslanders have missed out on because the state Labor government has fallen short of their investments in infrastructure.

The Parliamentary Budget Office could only do an analysis on data available up until June 2019. So I looked at the state Labor government's own figures for the year ending June 2020. Between December last year and June this year—only seven months—the state Labor government in Queensland fell short of their own infrastructure commitment by \$1.3 billion. So, here we are, facing an economic crisis probably as large as we've seen since the Great Depression. The state in Australia that you read about in the newspapers nearly every day is Victoria, due to the lockdown and the problems with their economy as a result. But if you look at the unemployment statistics of only last week, it is Queensland that has the highest unemployment rate in Australia today. This is an absolute disgrace.

If Queensland Labor were to win the next state election, the state from which I hail, we'll be looking at a lost decade—10 long years of suffering under an incompetent Labor government that fails Queensland and fails to spend. It risks making Queensland the rust belt of this country, which is why it's so vitally important we have the LNP in Queensland. The federal government will continue to do its job. The federal Parliamentary Budget Office proved that the federal government, this coalition government, contributes about twice as much to Queensland in infrastructure in this funding split than to other states and territories. This state election is vitally important.