



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

ADJOURNMENT

Building Better Regions Fund

SPEECH

Tuesday, 8 August 2017

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

<p>Date Tuesday, 8 August 2017 Page 80 Questioner Speaker Littleproud, David, MP</p>	<p>Source House Proof Yes Responder Question No.</p>
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Mr LITTLEPROUD (Maranoa) (19:55): I rise tonight to talk about this government's investment in the Building Better Regions Fund. I congratulate my colleague Senator Fiona Nash for her unwavering faith in rural and regional Australia. This fund is acknowledgement of the importance of rural and regional Australia in our nation's economy. Our government's investment in this fund is not predicated on rural and regional Australia being a basket case but on its importance in terms of its contribution to rural and regional Australia. In fact, my electorate of Maranoa contributes more per capita to GDP than Toowoomba, Townsville or the Gold Coast.

Only in the last couple of weeks, our announcements through this government, in the latest rounds, of an investment of just under \$5 million in a cold storage facility in Warwick will create 150 direct jobs, 138 indirect jobs and 80 construction jobs and add \$111 million to the exports of this nation. It's a no-brainer. We should be proud of the fact that we are investing in rural and regional Australia. My community of Warwick has 15,000 people, approximately. This is adding an extra one per cent of the population for an investment of just under \$5 million. So we should be proud of the fact that we have faith in rural and regional Australia to have a fund that will contribute to create jobs and wealth in rural and regional Australia.

Our story in rural and regional Australia is one of optimism and a future of great opportunity, because we have put the foundation and the environment around the people of rural and regional Australia with the trade agreements that we fought so hard for, which are putting real dollars in people's pockets in my electorate. The story of Maranoa is 'just add rain'. There is real wealth being created in my electorate, because we have trade agreements and real wealth being created through great and absolutely unbelievable cattle prices, grain prices and cotton prices. Couple that with tourism. Put that also with the current investment in connectivity that we're also putting in place through internet and mobile phone coverage, but also connectivity through a \$1.6 billion investment in the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing. While that will benefit the people of Groom and Toowoomba, it is my people, the people of Maranoa, who will benefit from that because our product will get around the world even faster. We will create greater efficiency and productivity to each and every one of those primary producers across Maranoa, because of the investment and the faith that this government is showing in rural and regional Australia that we will be the economic engine room of this nation. We should be proud of a government that has the faith and confidence to do that.

We have done that not only in my home town of Warwick, showing the confidence in that community, but also in a little community called Morven, about 700 or 800 kilometres west of Brisbane. About 100 people live in Morven. We've seen the foresight of those people in Morven in having a rail hub that will bring cattle from north, south and west and put them on a train to take trucks off the highway and ease the burden on our highways and the burden of cost of maintenance. There is also the safety factor, to ensure that we put cattle on those trains and get them into an abattoir as quickly and efficiently as we possibly can, to ensure that that community can create more jobs—another 10 jobs during construction and two once it's completed. That's an investment in a small community. No matter the size, no matter how big your communities are in rural and regional Australia, we're not going to forget you on this side of the House. We believe in your future. We believe in the future of rural and regional Australia.

We're not just looking at the economic aspects of this; we're also looking at the social aspects. We've made an investment in a community called Blackbutt of about a thousand people just up on the D'Aguilar Highway. We're putting \$200,000 into independent aged care so that those people at that stage of their lives that are looking to retire with the security of living around their family can do it with dignity, can do it in a place around their family and friends and can stay in a little community like that and do it with security and confidence. That's what this government does. It's not just about economics; it's about the social aspects of having stronger communities, not only economically but also socially.

This is a great investment by our government in rural and regional Australia. It's something we should be very proud of. I call on those on the other side, if ever—God help us—one day they happen to be in government, not

to forget rural and regional Australia and to commit to the Building Better Regions Fund into perpetuity, because it will be a great investment in this nation's economy.

House adjourned at 20 : 00