



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADJOURNMENT

Maranoa Electorate: Infrastructure

SPEECH

Wednesday, 19 October 2016

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Speaker Littleproud, David, MP	Question No.

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Maranoa) (19:55): I rise to speak tonight on the government's commitment to building infrastructure, particularly in regional and rural Australia. There is no better example of that than my electorate of Maranoa. Maranoa is a diverse electorate, but primarily it is driven by agriculture. Agriculture is a common thread that links together every community right across Maranoa. We have what the world wants. Our story of Maranoa at the moment is just add rain. Add rain, because of the trade agreements that this government has put in place with China, South Korea and Japan. They are putting real dollars into the pockets of producers and people right across Maranoa, not only the primary producers but the small businesses that live right across my vast electorate.

To do that, and to ensure that those returns continue to get through to the bottom line, it is imperative for every government to ensure that the infrastructure is there to complement those trade agreements—to build the conductivity of the 21st century. We are doing that with the NBN—68,000 households and premises right across Maranoa will have the NBN connected by the end of 2019. Couple that with the Mobile Black Spot Program and we are allowing our producers to connect with the global economy. We are global players and we now need to act like that, have the language to embrace the world and have the tools to undertake it.

Another piece of that is the key infrastructure to deliver the products to the world. This government is doing that. It is doing that through the \$1.6 billion for the Second Range Crossing, which my friend and colleague the member for Groom, who is here today—along with the considerable sum of \$600 million that is being put into the Warrego and connecting highways throughout Maranoa, and along with the Wellcamp Airport, a private investment by a private company that saw the investment that our government is making in our part of the world and has the confidence to make further investment.

This government will take one step further. We will build the inland rail. We will build rail from Melbourne to Brisbane. Within 24 hours we will be able to get the product from Melbourne to Brisbane to connect it to an international agricultural export hub in Toowoomba, to connect the airport, the Second Range Crossing and now the inland rail. I have to commend the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, Darren Chester, for the leadership that he has shown throughout this whole program to ensure that there is clarity and transparency; to ensure that the \$894 million that we have spent to date on building the inland rail, making sure that it will happen, and the commitment that this government has made to ensure that the connectivity for the people of Maranoa and Groom and throughout regional Queensland and right throughout southern Australia will be delivered; to ensure that we are able to put money back into those businesses that employ people.

When we talk about the mantras of jobs and growth, this is the real delivery. This is the nuts and bolts of jobs and growth at a real and tangible level for the people of Maranoa and regional and rural Australia. This is real delivery by our government. This is what jobs and growth mean to regional Australia. This is delivery by the Australian government right here, right now.

We have had conjecture about what those corridors may look like. It is a good thing that we can have clarity and transparency in a process that will give everybody confidence that we are taking a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get this infrastructure right. I am confident that the minister, along with other federal representatives like John McVeigh and Mark Coulton, will ensure that we get that corridor right, that it will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to connect Australia to the world. This is an enormous opportunity, as in the next month the Wagner Airport in Toowoomba will have weekly flights connecting our product to Asia. It is absolutely visionary that a family of local prominence in Toowoomba will do this. It will not be just Toowoomba that will benefit from that. My learned friend the member for Groom will know that it is my electorate that will complement that as well. I am forever grateful to the Wagner family.

But it needs to be complemented by the inland rail. I am confident that the minister will now see that we will put in place the structure and process to ensure that that happens, to ensure that Australia is connected to the world.

That is the only way in which we will pay down the deficit we have. That is the only way that we will ensure that we are here and we will be able to sustain the infrastructure that continues to drive our part of the world. I can honestly say that our contribution to GDP per capita, in Maranoa, is greater than the Gold Coast or Townsville or many other metropolitan areas, because of what we produce. Now is the time to deliver that infrastructure to ensure that the money that we are investing gets delivery to the Australian economy.

House adjourned at 20:00