



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ADJOURNMENT

Maranoa Electorate: Infrastructure

SPEECH

Wednesday, 30 November 2016

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

<p>Date Wednesday, 30 November 2016</p> <p>Page 5029</p> <p>Questioner</p> <p>Speaker Littleproud, David, MP</p>	<p>Source House</p> <p>Proof No</p> <p>Responder</p> <p>Question No.</p>
--	--

Mr LITTLEPROUD (Maranoa) (19:35): Today marks a very important day for the people of Maranoa, and particularly those who have been impacted by the inland rail and the corridor from Goondiwindi to Toowoomba. I was proud today to stand with Minister Chester, the infrastructure minister, to announce a project review group to ensure that those affected communities, those landholders, get the opportunity to have transparency in this process to ensure that we get the right corridor from Goondiwindi through to Toowoomba. This is an important project—a nation-building project—that took the leadership of infrastructure minister Darren Chester to bring it together, to ensure we give confidence and transparency to a very important process.

We are able to announce that the chair of that project group will be Mr Bruce Wilson AM. Mr Wilson is a former director-general of the Queensland transport department under both Labor and LNP governments, so there is bipartisanship in terms of this prominent Australian who can come and give credence to this process to ensure that every person's voice is heard in a proper and transparent manner. Three days after being elected, I met with affected landholders in the Millmerran area in particular and across the floodplains into Brookstead, that go into the seat of my good and neighbour, John McVeigh. Those landholders felt they were not being listened to by ARTC, and I really have to congratulate Minister Chester and his department for coming on this journey with me and allowing me to convince him that those people's voices need to be heard—because they, in their own words, are all for inland rail. They see the importance of this nation that inland rail will bring, but it has to be done in a way that all corridors are explored.

We have announced today that there will be three corridors: the existing corridor, which is Inglewood to Millmerran; the Karara-Leyburn option; and a West Warwick option. All three will be looked at with respect to how we will proceed from Goondiwindi to Toowoomba.

The terms of reference are quite important in this to give confidence to the community about what we are doing to ensure that they understand that this government is ensuring that their voices will be heard in an open, transparent way. We are going to review the current investigation work undertaken to date on all the routes, provide feedback on investigation findings, provide local knowledge about the proposed alignments and the likelihood of any detrimental impacts; seek out advice from local networks on information relevant to the ultimate alignment; and, finally, it will recommend and endorse an alignment, once the rigour and comparative analysis is complete. That is a comprehensive terms of reference that will give confidence to those affected communities.

I am proud to say that Minister Chester came with me on that journey. He ensured that the people of Maranoa, those affected in this significant build, will have their voices heard and that we actually bring them on this journey. This is a \$22.5 billion benefit to the nation. This will build directly, and indirectly, \$22.5 billion into our economy, getting freight from Melbourne to Brisbane within 24 hours, connecting us to global economies around the world, coupled with the trade agreements that we have been able to undertake in this last three years with China, South Korea and Japan. We are actually seeing that, coupled with the second range crossing—the \$1.6 billion investment that this government is making in the connectivity of our producers to the rest of the world.

This is an understanding by our government—an understanding that we actually have to have the tools of the 21st century to ensure that we can put real wealth and create the jobs in rural and regional Australia that will in turn ensure that this nation's economy turns in the right direction.

My electorate alone of Maranoa contributes more to GDP per capita than Toowoomba, Townsville or the Gold Coast, because we have what the world wants, and our trade agreements that this government has achieved over the last three years ensure that we are creating real wealth in our local communities. That flows back into the small businesses in each of those communities. It builds the resilience in each of those towns to ensure that we keep the teachers, we keep the young families. That is what a federal government should do. Those are the economic levers that we should be pulling—investing in infrastructure, putting infrastructure around the people

of our electorates to ensure the ones who are creating the wealth will continue to create the jobs, the jobs of the 21st century, and they will be in Maranoa.

Agriculture is the new paradigm. The reality is that we have what the world wants, and now the world is coming to get it. But we, as a federal government, are ensuring that we are giving the people the infrastructure to support that. I think that what Minister Chester has done today has shown that we have a federal government that are not only going to invest in infrastructure; we are going to listen and bring the community on that journey with us. I am proud to say that I am part of the great Turnbull-Joyce government. Thank you.