



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**

**Economy**

**QUESTION**

**Thursday, 15 June 2017**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## QUESTION

**Date** Thursday, 15 June 2017  
**Page** 6682  
**Questioner** Littleproud, David, MP  
**Speaker**

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder** Joyce, Barnaby, MP  
**Question No.**

### Economy

#### Economy

**Mr LITTLEPROUD** (Maranoa) (14:54): My question is to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources. Will the Deputy Prime Minister outline to the House the steps the government is taking to grow the economy through investments in the agriculture sector? Is the Deputy Prime Minister aware of any barriers to unlocking the potential of the agricultural sector, particularly in my home state of Queensland?

**Mr JOYCE** (New England—Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture and Water Resources) (14:55): I thank the honourable member for his question, and I thank him for the honourable way in which he conducts his job in his electorate and how hard he works for his electorate: 2,563 kilometres of pest control fencing out in the Paroo; bringing back the sheep industry; making sure that we get the benefits of the employment in places like Cunnamulla. I thank the honourable member for the hard work he is doing in the Mobile Black Spot Program, with 35 new and upgraded mobile phone towers, and how he continues to work so diligently for his electorate. I want to thank him also for the work he is doing with the Bridges Renewal Program and the \$2.5 million to replace the Lemontree Bostock Road bridge; or the Roads to Recovery, with \$35.6 million for councils such as Balonne—my old council—Barcaldine, Bulloo and Longreach. I thank him for the work he is doing in the Community Development Grants Program, to make sure that we get the Waltzing Matilda Centre up and running again.

These are all part of delivery, delivery that also goes hand in glove with the infrastructure requirements to build a stronger agricultural sector. Right now he is working with so many others for the Inland Rail, the \$8,400 million project, a corridor of commerce which will connect the seat of Maranoa to Victoria through western New South Wales. This is incredibly hard work. As recently as yesterday he has been in my office with the Minister for Infrastructure and Transport making sure that this project is completed soon so that we can get that agricultural product moving, products such as cotton, beef and coal. It is very important that we move products such as coal, because that is how we actually balance the books and make money. In the budget in Queensland the other day, it was interesting to note them spruiking their budget surplus because an extra \$1½ billion came from coal royalties. That was an extra \$1½ billion—it was in excess of \$3 billion in royalties all up.

That is very important, because we believe that there is the capacity for us to use these resources that we always have to make sure that we fix our power problems. Power is a big issue in the agricultural sector. I was listening to the Prime Minister before when he was talking about peaking power. For a moment there he was talking about the Labor Party frontbench. It was very important that we make sure that we keep the capacity to keep power affordable. It would be interesting if the member for Shortland were interested in making sure that the coal industry kept going and supported the coalminers in the Hunter Valley. Instead of yawning, he should be supporting them. He should be standing up for those coalminers and for those AWU workers and CFMEU workers. It will be interesting to see if the member for Hunter wants to stand up for the coalminers of the Hunter Valley. I suppose he might. The member for Shortland just sits there. He used to say so much, but now he has gone mute. He has gone quiet on his people. He does not have the ticker to stand up.

We are going to continue to turn around the agricultural sector. We have had the biggest turnaround in the history of our nation in this sector, bringing real wealth back to our nation. (*Time expired*)