Speech By

Jeff Seeney

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 29 October 2015

PRIVATE MEMBER'S STATEMENT

Royalties for the Regions

Mr SEENEY (Callide—LNP) (2.50 pm): The Royalties for the Regions funding program was the best thing that has ever happened to country towns and country people across Queensland. We put in place the Royalties for the Regions funding program when we came to government as a multichannel funding conduit despite the fact that we had inherited a horrific financial situation where we were heading towards $100 billion worth of debt. A lot of those projects under Royalties for the Regions are now coming to fruition, and we are opening a lot of them across regional Queensland. It is no surprise that within the current Labor government attempts are being made to discredit the program.

We have heard the minister come in here and talk about a range of projects that supposedly were not properly assessed. We have heard comments about the projects not being properly administered. It is no surprise that this government would seek to discredit and discontinue what has been one of the most successful programs for country towns and country people. On the department's website—the minister's own website—the evidence is there. Royalties for the Regions funded 64 road projects totalling more than 282 kilometres of road. RFR funded 23 bridges and intersection upgrades. It funded 16 regional airport upgrades, and they are desperately trying to criticise the airport upgrade in my own electorate even though it was one of 16, including one at Lockhart River, which gave access to that community.

The program funded 35 water, sewage and waste management projects across Queensland. It funded 20 flood mitigation projects and it funded 18 diverse community infrastructure projects, and some of those were very gratifying. We aim to fund projects that could not be funded any other way. We aim to fund projects that could not receive funding through the normal departmental prioritisation program—things like two childcare centres in small country towns; a new purpose-built medical centre in Dysart; the replacement of a commercial wharf at the Innisfail boat harbour, and what a great job that one was; revitalisation of the Yeppoon foreshore; and my personal favourite, the swimming pool for the kids in Karumba. It would never pass a value for money test, but anybody who wants to criticise it needs to stand in front of the kids at Karumba and tell them they cannot have $1 million for their swimming pool despite the fact that they have been part of the resources industry for so many years.

I confidently predict that we will hear more from this government trying to discredit Royalties for the Regions. We will hear more from that lot over there trying to bring into disrepute one of the best funding programs that country towns and country people have ever enjoyed.