

Question on Notice
No. 117
Asked on 17 May 2012

MR WELLINGTON asked the Premier (MR NEWMAN)—

With respect to the plan to duplicate the railway line from Landsborough to Nambour—
Has the Minister raised this project with the Federal Government for priority funding and if not, when will the Minister raise it for priority funding?

ANSWER:

Since the election, about 12 weeks ago, the Government has not raised the Landsborough to Nambour railway duplication with the Federal Government.

Likewise, the Member for Nicklin has not directly contacted me about this matter.

As the Member would be aware, the former Labor government made many unfunded promises. The former government's commitment to duplicate the rail line between Beerburrum and Landsborough is just one example of Labor's unfunded promises.

The interim report of the Independent Commission of Audit, released last week, details the alarming state of the Queensland's financial position, public sector service delivery and infrastructure program. It shows that State debt is now expected to top \$100 billion by 2018-19, unless something is done to bring the budget under control.

The interim report notes that since 2005-06, the State has been "living beyond its means", with expenses growth significantly outstripping revenue. It states that public debt interest has been the fastest growing expense of the Queensland Government over the last decade; and that "...general government sector, gross debt has increased more than tenfold in the past five years; and that interest costs to service this debt are running at \$3.5 billion in the total government sector in 2011-12, climbing to \$5.3 billion or 9% of revenue in 2015-16."

In a sober warning, the Commission notes that this debt situation "...will severely limit Queensland's budgetary flexibility and divert scarce resources away from core service delivery priorities."

As the person who initially helped to install Labor into office, the Member for Nicklin must take a fair share of blame for this dire situation.

My Government is committed to delivering better infrastructure. That is why we will deal with Labor's debt and work to ensure Queensland's credit rating is not downgraded further.

As the member knows, Queensland deserves its fair share of infrastructure funding from Canberra. That is why my Government would be happy to work with the Member for Nicklin to secure priority funding for projects across the State, including the Beerburrum to Nambour track duplication. We would also been keen to hear any suggestions the Honourable Member might have regarding savings that might be made within the Queensland budget, to help fund this track duplication.