



Speech by

Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

Hansard Wednesday, 27 October 2010

TUGUN BYPASS

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—LNP) (10.28 pm): Australia's most expensive road—the Tugun bypass—is likely to become even more expensive. Labelled by media and residents as an eyesore and a financial black hole for taxpayers who have to cough up for another poor decision from the Blich Labor government, it is quickly turning into an embarrassment just like the ill-fated desalination plant. Finally, over a year since I first asked him, the Minister for Main Roads has revealed just how much it will cost to replace smashed glass panels along the bypass—or has he?

According to the minister, 18 smashed glass panels have been replaced with glass at a staggering cost of \$370,000. This price is not only unbelievable but also totally unacceptable. That is over \$20,000 per panel. In reply to question No. 1408 I was told that a contract had been awarded for \$605,000 to replace about 70 more broken glass panels with an acrylic material. A Plexiglass product was selected of 20-millimetre thickness with a filament running through it to add extra strength and durability. Two weeks later in another question, No. 1576, the same minister said that he had awarded a contract for acrylic/polycarbonate panels, which shows that he has misled the parliament.

Mr WALLACE: I rise to a point of order. That is absolutely incorrect. I have never awarded a contract in my life. The honourable member should know that ministers do not award contracts when it comes to this matter.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.

Mr WALLACE: She is deliberately misleading the House. I take offence at that.

Mr SPEAKER: If the honourable member believes that the member is deliberately misleading the House, that is a matter of privilege and you should write to me about that matter. It is not a point of order, however.

Mrs STUCKEY: May I correct my words to say that the same minister said that a contract had been awarded for acrylic/polycarbonate panels, showing that he misled parliament. Industry experts say that polycarbonate loses its optical and physical properties in a few years and is a poor substitute. It was used in bridge panels in Albury/Wodonga and panels clouded in two years. Main Roads has guarantees from the suppliers that it will last 15 years, but others dispute this. Acrylic Plexiglass panels on the Kennedy Drive Bridge, Tweed Heads, installed at the same time as the glass panels on the Tugun bypass, look as new.

Speaking today with suppliers Plastral, who were contracted for the acrylic panels for this project, I discovered that a new quote has been requested by Main Roads for a cheaper and thinner acrylic product of 15-millimetre thickness without the strengthening filament. Why is the thinner, inferior-quality material now being requested? Clearly, the minister has again misled the parliament and the people of Queensland. This project is becoming a dog's breakfast.

Mr WALLACE: I rise to a point of order. I find those words offensive and ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: The honourable member—

Mrs STUCKEY: I withdraw. Suppliers Plastral have told me that they will not be quoting on the tender for the 15-millimetre acrylic simply because they do not believe it can do the job and they therefore do not want to be associated with a failure as they have so many success stories that support the quality of their product. They are also concerned that this government's bad decisions to use inappropriate products will tar all transparent barriers with the same brush. Unlike the Minister for Main Roads and the Bligh government, they have principles. Almost \$1 million extra is being spent—

Mr WALLACE: I rise to a point of order. I find those words offensive and ask that they be withdrawn. I am a man of principles and I find those words offensive.

Mr Malone interjected.

Mr WALLACE: I rise to a point of order. If the member for Mirani wishes to make that assertion, he should jump in the chair like any other member with any spine in this place would do.

Mrs STUCKEY: I withdraw. I am waiting for a reply from the minister as to whether the cost he has publicly quoted includes the removal and replacement of broken glass panels. My concerns are that more money will be thrown away. Why has it taken so long to replace these panels? Why are new glass panels sitting on the ground near Tweed Heads? Why did the government use glass panels in the first place?

(Time expired)