

Jokes about the satirical program Utopia aside, managing the rollout of infrastructure programs in Australia is a formidable task.

Infrastructure Minister Darren Chester says there is too much hyper-partisanship in Australian politics. “I think that the tone of debate in Australia has deteriorated in recent years and we’ve shown ourselves incapable of having a good, rational debate on significant issues and its lead to some poor policies.”

The challenge of projects spanning more than one term requires “making sure that there is a level of transparency in how decisions are made so that any decision we do make may withstand the change of political fortune”.

From managing road safety issues to approving major projects such as those proposed for the Northern Australia Infrastructure Fund, Chester argues there is a record spend on infrastructure. “We’re delivering everything we want to deliver, and some more.”

Chester is one of the few Nationals MPs supporting same-sex marriage. He’s super confident about the result, predicting “every one of the 150 house divisions will vote yes and I think that may surprise some”.

We apologise that the sound quality of this podcast is poor due to a technical problem.

Michelle Grattan does not work for, consult, own shares in or receive funding from any company or organisation that would benefit from this article, and has disclosed no relevant affiliations beyond the academic appointment above.

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Politics podcast: Darren Chester on the infrastructure spending spree

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