




Speech By
Mark Boothman

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2016

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; DUTIES AND
OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (4.28 pm): I rise here today to make a contribution to the debate on the Palaszczuk government's second Appropriation Bill. From the outset when I was contemplating my speech I tried to be positive, but in the words of the *Gold Coast Bulletin* this budget was 'Zombie-like', a picture of misery that splashed cash and cranked up debt. Again quoting from the *Gold Coast Bulletin*—

IN case you yawned and missed it, the State Government yesterday handed down its annual budget.

Looking more like the lead characters in a Tim Burton-inspired Gothic animated movie ...

This was certainly further highlighted by the complete lack of enthusiasm which was displayed in the chamber on Tuesday. Unfortunately, I suppose I will stay with the 'lack of enthusiasm' theme, as a lot of Queenslanders have that in their thoughts about this budget.

What does this budget mean for the beautiful electorate of Albert on the northern Gold Coast? Apart from multiple projects we fought very hard for and others which were already announced and under construction or completed, I must say that this budget does highlight one very, very important need, and that is for new classrooms for the Highland Reserve State School. The local school community and I have been passionate about this, but this budget makes no mention of additional permanent classrooms at other schools, including the Coomera Springs State School, to cater for continually increasing student numbers.

As highlighted in a *Gold Coast Bulletin* article on 13 June 2016 titled 'Labor ditches LNP future plan for building new campuses sparking crisis fear in Gold Coast's north', apart from a new school at Coomera that was already in the pipeline, this budget gives no confidence at all in this government's ability to manage the massive population growth on the northern Gold Coast. The latest research shows that Pimpama has the highest growth rate in Queensland, at 20 per cent. This unprecedented growth on the northern Gold Coast places an enormous amount of pressure on our local infrastructure. Whilst I have already mentioned some of the needs of our education facilities, there are other pressing issues facing the Albert community.

In recent times my colleagues on the northern Gold Coast, the members for Coomera and Gaven, have fought hard for additional police resources for the Coomera region. On numerous occasions we have written to the Minister for Police seeking urgent intervention for additional officers to lessen the workload and give better response times for our communities. Our priority is for a safer community for our residents and for an end to the bureaucratic nonsense we were subjected to by the minister. This is a matter we will never give up on. I am pleased to see that there was some action on this matter, but it was far from the 50 officers we asked for. I will continue to campaign—I am sure my colleagues will also—for these additional officers. The Minister for Police can look forward to many more communications on this matter.

The road infrastructure needs on the northern Gold Coast are as pressing as ever. My residents welcome the funding from the federal government of just under \$600,000 for works at M1 motorway exits 38 and 41. The member for Coomera and I have continually highlighted the precarious situation facing motorists at multiple motorway exits along this critical arterial link. Whilst funding for design works is certainly most welcome, we require action now. Extensive traffic queueing on the M1 motorway at exits 41, 45, 49 and 57 is creating dangerous situations. Vehicles sitting motionless, desperately trying to exit the motorway at these exits, are subjected to vehicles continuing their travels along the M1 at 110 kilometres an hour. This is a recipe for disaster and places lives at risk.

Beaudesert-Beenleigh Road between Stanmore Road and Shaws Pocket Road has been classed as one of the most perilous roads in South-East Queensland. Police have reported to me that between 1 January 2011 and 9 March 2013—just over five years—the following matters were reported to the Queensland Police Service: two fatal collisions, with three deaths; 26 injury collisions, with 39 injured individuals; and 17 non-injury collisions. Whilst I welcome some Safer Roads Sooner funding that installs guardrails and undertakes vegetation management, this is far from what is required to make this road safe. This road has little or no room for error. It is windy and hilly, with poor shoulders. We need action to reduce the severity of certain bends, especially the bends 800 metres south of Dunns Road and the bend near Shaws Pocket Road. Again, nothing has been done to fix these areas.

As highlighted in an article in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* on Wednesday, 15 June—I spoke about this last night—titled 'Deadweight', taxpayers are forking out for 32 extra fat-cat bureaucrats to shuffle government papers ahead of the 2018 Commonwealth Games. To make matters worse, 31 of them are based in Brisbane, with only one temporary Gold Coast hiring.

A \$46 million black hole this financial year for the Department of Small Business, Major Events and the Commonwealth Games was announced. To residents of the wonderful Albert electorate, \$46 million would go a long way towards funding major upgrades along the M1 at exits 41, 45 and 49 and would well and truly rectify the issues along Beaudesert-Beenleigh Road south of Wolffdene. The \$40 million that was spent on Jobs Queensland—I spoke about this because I was on the committee all that time ago—would have delivered a far better cost-benefit ratio if it had been used to fix up exit 41. Exit 41 is the gateway to the industrial estates around Yatala. That is an area in which we could create an enormous amount of employment. Traffic is getting stuck at those interchanges at Yatala. They cannot get the trucks and the goods in or out.

This budget contains a few token gestures that deal with very few of the underlying issues facing the residents of the northern Gold Coast. It does little to create confidence in the Queensland economy. As outlined in the *Australian* dated 15 June, titled 'Spending from a bottomless Pitt', Queensland Labor's budget strategy is risking further debt. The article goes on to say that raiding the state's super funds runs the risk of plunging the fund into deficit within four years. An article in today's *Courier-Mail*, which I found very interesting, titled 'Sponsor launches friendly fire at raid', states—

The Palaszczuk Government has been left red-faced after the sponsor of Labor's post-Budget lunch questioned the logic of raiding public service superannuation.

Ernst & Young partner Paul Laxon yesterday insisted the state's finances were "going backwards" under Labor's plan to siphon \$2 billion from the defined benefit to pay down Government debt.

He is quoted as saying—

I don't understand the logic in that because you are taking money from an investment by the defined benefit fund with a professional fund manager in QIC deriving effectively an equity return, an investment return.

It goes on—

So we are actually going backwards.

Furthermore, flooding the market with the defined benefit assets for sale will only bring down the prices of these assets, potentially reducing their value. You certainly do not need to take my word for it: Labor's own backers are pulling this budget apart.

Overall, whilst I tried to be positive in certain aspects of my speech, this budget has failed to curb Labor's spiralling debt, increasing unemployment and future higher taxes. That is certainly nothing to write home about.