




Speech By
Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; BETTING TAX BILL**

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (6.08 pm): Labor's budget luncheon lasted longer than the Treasurer's budget speech in this parliament. I think that might be a record. We saw a Treasurer of this state bring in a budget in 25 minutes flat.

An honourable member interjected.

Ms SIMPSON: She could not wait to get out of here. I think that tells us everything. For this Labor government, parliament is an inconvenience. The members opposite prefer to schmooze people at a luncheon and suck up to their mates. When it came to the important issue of explaining to this parliament this government's economic plan and how it was going to spend the hard-earned cash of the taxpayers of Queensland, this Treasurer did not want to spend the time doing that.

It is incredible that this government is bringing in new taxes that are going to whack Queenslanders by more than \$2.3 billion. This government did not want to explain how large those taxes would be. During the last election campaign, this government misled Queenslanders. In the last 48 hours before the election, during the media blackout, this government tried to quietly release some of the new taxes. We are now finding that not only are those taxes far larger than what the government released at that time but also it did not release the waste tax.

This waste tax is a doozy. This waste tax is not about stopping the trucks travelling from New South Wales and dumping waste illegally—or legally in the case of this government's mates in the Ipswich City Council who made a business out of waste. They said, 'Please give us your trucks of waste,' and they made money out of it. No, this waste tax is about a government wanting to reach into the pockets of Queenslanders and take out every last dollar they can by way of a new tax. At least one-third of the revenue generated by this waste tax that this government is introducing will go back into general revenue. It will not go into the recycling industry.

We have heard the Labor government try to justify this waste tax. The one thing I have learned about Labor in this state is that, when Labor says it wants to give people a hand, it means it wants to put its hand into their pockets. This waste tax is going to add about \$1,400 to the cost of every new house in this state. Thanks to this Labor government, those people in North Queensland who do not have a problem with the Labor Ipswich council making money out of its superdumps are going to get whacked with this waste tax. That is \$1,400 on a new build in Queensland.

I think Labor has become so used to imposing taxes that it thinks that people will not notice. People are going to notice the additional cost that is put on a skip bin when they renovate their house or do other work. The ridiculous thing is that there are people in this state who have been able to create a recycling industry and, as good business operators, have done very well. I use the example of those who collect fat from fish and chip shops, recycle it and sell it as biodiesel. This waste tax is just another rip-off of Queenslanders.

When the LNP was in government, it released policies that helped small business, not hurt small business. The former Labor government had a waste tax. The LNP government removed it, because it recognised that it was not doing what the former Labor government said it would do. That tax was penalising Queenslanders. It was a waste of Queenslanders' money. Under this Labor government mark II, here we go again. It has doubled the Bligh waste tax.

The LNP recognises the need for important policies for small business. Recently, with the Leader of the Opposition, Deb Frecklington, I was delighted to announce our fair pay policy. During her budget reply, our Leader of the Opposition asserted how much the LNP values small business. Labor's response to small business is to put out glossy papers and say, 'We value small business,' but its actions are very different. That waste tax is one example. We asked this government whether it even bothered to talk to its Small Business Advisory Council before it announced this waste tax. We did not receive an answer. The government did not say, 'Yes, we have.' It said, 'We're going to consult with people now in regard to the impact of the tax on small business.' That is not good enough. That is why we know that this is an unfair way to whack a tax on people.

The LNP's fair pay policy announcement is significant. Small businesses should not be the bank of government. Under our fair pay policy, in the terms of government contracts up to \$1 million in procurement, the fair pay policy will mean that small businesses will get paid quicker. Perhaps those members of the Labor Party do not understand that business, and particularly small business, should not be bankrolling the government.

Under our fair pay policy, the terms of payment is 20 days instead of 30 days. That means the money flows quicker into the community. That will unlock jobs and opportunity. That is what has happened in places where the government has led the way in regard to fairer terms for business, particularly small businesses. That has significantly helped those small businesses to be able to compete. The big guys at the big end of town have deeper pockets, but those operators at the smaller end do not. For them, cash flow matters. In terms of this policy, we would like to see people in industry follow the lead of the LNP.

We have also announced targets with respect to regulatory reform. This is a significant policy. Once again, under an LNP government we have shown that we can do it. We not only reformed WorkCover that saw a reduction of 17 per cent of the average premium, which helps small business, but also attacked the regulatory burden. We independently audited those regulations and saw more than \$400 million in savings in regulatory reform for business, predominantly small business, which is about 97 per cent of those businesses that operate in this state.

The contrast is that Labor taxes, while the LNP recognises that the best people to manage the dollars of this state are those who employ people—and that is predominantly small business. Obviously, a significant role of government is to provide services and deliver infrastructure, but it has to make sure that it does not burden the small business sector, which predominantly carries the burden of taxation.

This Labor government talks big about apprenticeships and training, but since 2015 there has been a 14 per cent freefall in apprenticeship and traineeship completion rates. That is a shocking situation. We want to see these young people well trained, but, under Labor's watch, that fall-off in training has occurred. Under this Labor government, there are 3,650 fewer Queenslanders completing their apprenticeships and training than there were under the LNP in 2015.

We are committed to ensuring that young people receive the training and get work. Under this Labor government, which talks big about jobs, we have seen a continuing increase in youth unemployment in so many areas across this state. That is unacceptable. The LNP is committed to fighting youth unemployment and supporting those who create jobs. I want to mention the operation of TAFE under this government. Although apprenticeship and traineeship completion rates are in freefall, this year Labor has chopped about 52 jobs and will cut another 106 jobs from Queensland TAFE. That should be highlighted, because it is contrary to what the government says it is doing. We want to see training supported in our state to ensure that people are skilled so that they are well placed to get the right job.

In regard to my electorate, I was pleased to see \$3.5 million set aside this financial year for Maroochydore State High School. I have been advocating for that funding and committed that an LNP government would provide that funding. I am pleased to see the Labor government fund those new classrooms for Maroochydore State High School in this budget. There are some great new expansions of schools on the Sunshine Coast and I welcome that. We need to make sure that we have the space and the modern facilities to cope with a growing cohort and the changing needs of our schools.

I support the back to basics policy that the Leader of the Opposition, Deb Frecklington, has announced. I support, in particular, recognising the value of parents and professional teachers having input to ensure that we get the best outcomes that support young people. We are also very much in support of independent public schools that are being shown to empower local communities, parents and the professional teachers who are together involved in delivering those outcomes.

I am disappointed in the infrastructure delivery in this budget. Unfortunately it follows on from a \$3 billion cutback during this Labor government's first term per year. It has created a—what did we hear the Treasurer say?—crisis in infrastructure delivery. The Treasurer did not want to take responsibility for the fact that it was her government that cut infrastructure spending in this state. The LNP, in real terms as a proportion of the state's finances, invested in infrastructure. As a result we saw a new hospital commenced on the Sunshine Coast.

I am delighted to see \$390 million from the federal government for the Sunshine Coast rail. This is the first time we have had federal funding towards a State Infrastructure Plan. In 2009 Anna Bligh promised to duplicate the Sunshine Coast rail and then after the election pulled it off the table. That was a travesty. I am urging this Treasurer to get on board, to embrace that \$390 million contribution that we have never had from a federal government because it is a state infrastructure project, and ensure that the state contribution is there. People want to see this built.

I have previously stood in this House and said that sections of the Sunshine Coast rail line only allow trains to travel at 50 kilometres an hour. I was wrong. In one section the train actually gets down to 30 kilometres an hour. A very fast cyclist, as the transport minister knows, could go faster than some of our trains on the Sunshine Coast. This situation is ridiculous when one considers that over the next 20 years we will see an estimated 200,000 extra people between Moreton Bay and the Sunshine Coast. We must see this rail duplicated. It will unlock the public transport network for the Sunshine Coast. That rail spine is vital to a truly integrated Sunshine Coast public transport network that will get people off the Bruce Highway, get them back and forth across the region and to integrate other public transport networks that need to be built and augmented so that we can see true mass and rapid transport links across the Sunshine Coast.

I see there is some funding in the budget for design work on the Mooloolah River interchange. I welcome that funding but we need to see more from this government. Under the LNP most of the houses that were along that corridor were acquired to commence that project. The department undertook a preliminary redesign to enable that to be staged. We need to see this government get on board. It is about safety. We need to see the Sunshine Motorway upgraded and those black spots dealt with. It is a tragedy that people are facing a life and death situation.

I want to also speak about the Sunshine Coast Entertainment, Convention and Exhibition Centre, which is vitally important to deepening the economic base of the Sunshine Coast. The council has an application in through the Maturing the Infrastructure Pipeline Program to help facilitate the business case. It has done a lot of work to re-scope that project and I am certainly keen to see that business case completed and funded and a submission put to government so that we can see this centre built.

I want to also talk about the need for rehabilitation for ice addiction and back our policy to see drug rehabilitation across the state.

(Time expired)