



Speech by

Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr BLEIJIE (Kawana—LNP) (5.31 pm): I rise to add my support to the deliberations made by the honourable Leader of the Opposition and the honourable shadow Treasurer in relation to the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill, the Appropriation Bill and the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill. Queensland is in need of a change—a change of focus, a change of direction, a change to fiscal responsibility, a change of government. The only party that can deliver these changes that Queenslanders crave is the LNP. The people of Queensland have been badly let down—let down by this Premier, let down by this Deputy Premier, who cannot even pay our great nurses and doctors, and let down by a Treasurer who thinks fit to make comical jokes about the names in the asset fire sale and who is determined to send Queensland even further broke.

My warning to the people of Queensland is this: if you think you have seen the worst of this government, if you think your living expenses will flatline or go down under this Labor government, do not be fooled. Each morning when you wake up, this Labor government in its determination for absolute control over your lives, continually adds financial and administrative pressures to your normal day. It is time for an LNP government—time for Queenslanders to have their Queensland back where our health system can again be the envy of all other states.

This change started yesterday with the Leader of the Opposition announcing that in opposition we care and we will keep the government accountable, but in government we will act and we will turn the tide in Queensland. Our LNP MPs in this place will speak with pride and conviction about their areas. We have seen 30 to 40 government members today and yesterday who cannot bring themselves to stand in this place and speak on one of the most important debates of the year for more than two minutes. They are all incorporating their speeches after a short few minutes. They do not have the intestinal fortitude to stay here past dinner. They all agree to incorporate their speeches so they can go home to bed and leave this place early. It makes a mockery of this place and it makes me sick in the stomach to think that this is what Queensland politics has come down to—a lazy government full of lazy Labor Party MPs.

Government members interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I can understand the interjections when I refer to them as 'lazy Labor Party MPs'. What was exciting about this week was the budget reply by the honourable Leader of the Opposition, where he gave the following commitments to Queensland: we will reclaim our cherished AAA credit rating; we will stop the Labor fire sale of assets; we will introduce a debt repayment strategy; we will put a stop to the super mining tax; we will put a freeze for our entire first term in government on the registration cost for cars, light vehicles, recreational boats, trailers and horse floats; we will increase the electricity rebate by 30 per cent for seniors and concession card holders; we will make sure government pays its bill to small business within 30 days, not 90; and of course we will make our government open and accountable to public scrutiny.

The government members all yell out, 'Show us your policies.' In fact, I heard the member for Keppel earlier today say, 'Look, no policies.' Well, I have mentioned some of the LNP policies, but what

about the constituents in the electorates of, in particular, Chatsworth, Everton, Broadwater, Cook, Barron River and Mount Isa? Let us talk about the Mount Isa constituents and the mining tax. I can tell you—

Mrs Kiernan: Oh, tell us about it.

Mr BLEIJIE: Well, you certainly have not told us about it so someone has to tell your electorate. Madam Deputy Speaker, I will refer to the member by her title—that is, the member for Mount Isa. I can tell the member for Mount Isa that her constituents will be particularly looking at our policies and initiatives very carefully and quite positively.

On behalf of the Kawana electorate, I would like to state my tremendous disappointment at the state budget that was delivered by the Treasurer on Tuesday. It is a budget that offers very little to the people of the Kawana electorate and not much more to the Sunshine Coast in terms of service provision and infrastructure investment in what is one of the fastest growing regions in Australia. While the Labor government and the Premier label this budget as one that invests in jobs for the future of Queensland, quite clearly the opposite is in the detail. When you get through the spin and the interjections, this is a budget with very little in substance and vision for Queensland.

There are two very large infrastructure projects that are earmarked for the Kawana electorate, but, as each year passes and each state budget is delivered by the Labor government, these projects continue to remain as earmarked—an indication that this government has neglected my electorate and the Sunshine Coast region in general. The neglect is paramount to a Labor government that is tired, out of ideas and broke. Labor members are showing a complete contempt for the good people of the Sunshine Coast.

These two vital projects are of course the Sunshine Coast University Hospital and the multimodal transport corridor. While these two projects are listed on completely separate government departmental expenditure sections in the budget papers, they are as important to each other as they are to servicing the needs of the region. For far too long the Sunshine Coast has been let down by the Labor Party—in fact, so much so that the only time the Premier could bring herself to visit us was once at the Peregian Springs State School, which the government is not even paying for. And then who could forget when she rode on the coat-tails of young Jessica Watson's success? In fact, many questioned at the time whether we should have erected a sign on the Bruce Highway stating, 'Premier, Sunshine Coast, turn right.' She has shown a complete contempt and neglect for the Sunshine Coast.

This week marks the first anniversary of the Bligh government's announcement that the 450-bed public component of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital would have its opening delayed from 2014 to 2016-17—a delay of some two to three years. While this delay may not look significant from afar, the situation in health services that are currently provided on the Sunshine Coast illustrates the reason this hospital ought to be brought on sooner and certainly not later as this government has done.

The Sunshine Coast is, as I stated previously, one of the fastest growing regions in the country, yet the services that are offered to its residents and many tourists who visit each year are deplorable. The depth of the health crisis on the Sunshine Coast has been illustrated by the horror stories of recent months, such as people being treated in storage cupboards and patients dying in ambulances waiting to even see a doctor. These stories have been all too regular for Sunshine Coast residents.

Nambour has the worst emergency response times in the state, and ambulance ramping is a problem which not only impacts on those waiting in the hospitals to see a doctor but obviously impacts on those waiting to get into a hospital in the first place. The picture is very grim. It shows how Labor governments in this state have continued to neglect health services on the Sunshine Coast in the boom real estate era of the last decade.

While the government is happy to take the increased revenue of stamp duty with one hand, it ignores its obligation to provide adequate services required with the other. What the residents of the Kawana electorate, and indeed the Sunshine Coast, contribute to the state's revenue is certainly not matched with the expenditure that is delivered through infrastructure, and this budget is just more of the same.

The people have voted at the ballot box. There are no government seats between Pumicestone and Rockhampton. Some 2,000 people marched as one against the delay in the hospital in November last year. To date we have received over 25,000 signatures on paper and electronic petitions on the hospital's delay, and the number keeps growing. My constituents are fed up and this government has simply given up on them.

While we have people dying at the Nambour emergency department, nurses and doctors not being paid, ambulance officers ramping, we have a Premier and a Deputy Premier coming in here each day taking cheap political swipes. Why do they do it? Because they just do not care.

While the Treasurer states that 22 hospitals are being built or redeveloped across Queensland, there was one thing missing that would have had the greatest impact in terms of service delivery and that is the 450-bed public component of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. For those members who do

not know where it is—and I understand that one may not know where it is because it is still a vacant block of dirt—it is located on a large site on Kawana Way, Birtinya. So much is this government's commitment to this hospital that it has failed to even erect a sign on the hospital site.

Let us talk more about the government's commitment to the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. If one goes on to the government's new website it launched after the Treasurer's budget—buildingqld.premiers—it has this great interactive site where one can find projects in one's area. So I went onto this site. I went to the first page that has the projects list. I searched 'My community'. I will table a copy of that.

Tabled paper: Copy of Building Queensland web page, printed 10 June 2010, in relation to building and infrastructure projects across the Sunshine Coast [2433].

The next page is 'Find projects in your community'. So I went from Queensland down to the Sunshine Coast. I table a copy of that.

Tabled paper: Copy of Building Queensland web page, printed 10 June 2010, providing a map of Queensland identifying community projects [2434].

On the third page I went into the Caloundra-Kawana area on the Sunshine Coast specifically. I table a copy of that.

Tabled paper: Copy of Building Queensland web page, printed 10 June 2010, providing a map of the Kawana area identifying community projects [2435].

The fourth page, which I will table a copy of, is where I could find the projects in my area. This is an interactive guide to see how much the government is spending. If we look at Birtinya on the Sunshine Coast, where the government is investing \$1.9 billion to build a hospital, so much is this commitment that it has not even rated a mention on the government's building Queensland website. I table a copy of that.

Tabled paper: Copy of Building Queensland web page, printed 10 June 2010, providing a map of the Sunshine Coast area identifying community projects [2435].

That shows the negligent and contempt of this government. It does not treat this hospital seriously. It puts a \$75,000 roadworks project in there and it cannot even put a \$1.97 billion project in there. Health does not rate a mention in the Kawana electorate despite the fact that we will have this \$1.97 billion hospital.

The Premier said a few days ago that the hospital is locked in—no ifs, no buts. Would it not be good if there came a time in Queensland when we could trust this Premier. The people do not believe her anymore because there is history from this government. It said, 'Your electricity prices will not rise. No fuel tax. Queensland, you can count on me.' We all remember the words of the Premier. Queenslanders now know they cannot count on the Premier, not any more.

I say to Sunshine Coast residents: do not be fooled when the Premier, the Deputy Premier or the even the Parliamentary Secretary for Healthy Living say that it will bring beds sooner to the Sunshine Coast because it is investing in Nambour. The situation was that this Labor state government promised a 450-bed public component of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital to open in 2014. It has now been delayed to 2016. It has the hide to go to the Sunshine Coast and say, 'Don't worry, a private corporation is going to start building a private component and you will have beds earlier.'

Some 110 public beds in a private hospital does not match 450 public beds that were due by 2014. If people look at the calculation of 450 beds as opposed to 110 beds they cannot raise the argument, as this government has, as the member for Everton has on ABC radio, that it is bringing beds sooner to the Sunshine Coast because it delayed the hospital. It delayed the 450 beds.

The budget that was delivered by the Treasurer on Tuesday continues the government's head-in-the-sand approach to this issue. While the bandaid solutions are continually thrown up in the tent to alleviate the immediate issues, quite clearly what is being done is not enough.

As the legendary, famous American Revolution naval fighter John Paul Jones once said, 'I have not yet begun the fight.' In this case the 'I' is the collective will of the residents of the Sunshine Coast. The people of Kawana and indeed the Sunshine Coast will not let up over these much needed public beds. The sooner the government understands that message and reinstates the initial time line the faster health provision on the Sunshine Coast will be delivered.

I must say that I do welcome the additional spending on health at Nambour and Caloundra hospitals. This was achieved, however, after the opposition and community became a thorn in the side of the Minister for Health and the Parliamentary Secretary for Healthy Living and forced them to spend the additional money.

The other most important infrastructure project that is planned for the Kawana electorate is the multimodal transport corridor or the MMTCC. This major road and rail corridor will link the Sunshine Coast with the new university hospital and enable Kawana to be a major hub for health services on the Sunshine Coast. Included in this project is the CAMCOS rail project that links Caboolture to Maroochydore with major rail interchanges at Caloundra, Kawana and up through Mooloolaba.

CAMCOS is a project that has been spoken about since the mid-1990s. The latest, most up-to-date departmental time lines indicate that Sunshine Coast residents should benefit from public transport

infrastructure by 2031. It is said that good things come to those who wait. But waiting nearly 40 years for a rail corridor is absolutely ludicrous. This time delay indicates just how neglected the Sunshine Coast has been by Labor governments in Queensland for over a decade.

Come 40 years, we may all be flying our cars. If the government is serious about getting people out of their cars and on to public transport then bring it on. The precedent has been set. The government has brought forward the rail line to Springfield by two years. So I say bring forward CAMCOS and the multimodal corridor.

While the Premier and the Treasurer trumpet the \$17.1 billion building program this government has initiated, vital Sunshine Coast services and infrastructure have been left behind at the same time as the region's population has boomed. The MMTC fails to rate a mention in this year's budget. While the final time line for the project is still some 16 years away, strategic planning and sequencing of the \$2.1 billion project have stalled.

The Sunshine Coast University Hospital and the MMTC are two infrastructure projects that complement each other to service the Sunshine Coast in areas of health and transport. A key component of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital is supporting this infrastructure. Despite the delay in the university hospital, and even more beds apparently by 2021, the road and rail support infrastructure will not be finished for at least another five to 10 years after the 700 public beds and 110 private beds are available to the region.

The jobs generated by these two projects, both in construction and service provision, are vital to the growth of the economy in Kawana and the Sunshine Coast region. As the government fails to deliver on its promise to create an additional 100,000 jobs, I look at these two projects and see the potential to enhance service delivery in the region in health and transport and also the creation of thousands of construction and health jobs. It is simply a matter of priority and planning.

While the budget bottom line will balloon to \$84 billion in debt by 2013-14, \$9 billion in the last year, what have the people of the Kawana received from the state government's massive expenditure? Two projects—one which has been delayed by two years and the other where planning and consultation seem to have stalled from as far out as some 16 years.

The government has racked up billions of dollars in debt. In my electorate there is very little to even show for it. Instead of investing in the state's future, Labor sent this state bust on the back of a mining boom. Debt is the key message to come out of the state budget for 2010-11. But it is clear that this debt burden is not of concern to the Treasurer or Premier. It is of great concern that the Treasurer considers a return to a surplus budget by 2016 an achievement—10 deficits budgets in succession is an achievement. Well that is the Labor legacy—spend more than you earn and rack up public debt.

This government, through its incompetence, has managed to show what the costs of fiscal mismanagement are to the state's budget and also economic investment confidence locally and abroad. The Premier and the government remind me of a famous quote by Laurence J Peter where he said that 'everyone rises to their level of incompetence'. One could argue that the Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer have certainly risen to their level of incompetence, but I would argue that they are still on the climb, as unbelievable as it may sound.

Debt levels and repayment strategies seemed of little importance until the recent events in Greece and other European countries, such as the UK, highlight why racking up massive public debt in the short term will end up costing the economic outlook and prosperity of the state of a country in the long term. The Premier's legacy is one of debt.

Because we have one of the highest taxing governments in Australia, the people in my electorate would of course expect to see things like the dangerous stretch of Bruce Highway between Caloundra and Sippy Downs immediately upgraded. It is a deathtrap and, together with the member for Glass House and the community, we will not let the government get away with sitting still and doing nothing about it. One would expect that, with the highest taxes, we would not have families living in their cars. We would expect that they would have somewhere to go to have a warm shower, and I will be making the issue of homelessness one of the key battle areas this year. I want our coast families out of their cars and into proper accommodation.

I also commit to the Kawana electorate and to the university that I will be making it one of the top priorities to get the government interested in innovation on the Sunshine Coast and truly build our knowledge based economies. The government has invested in the innovation centre, but we need real investment in the planned innovation hub. The next election will be a choice between a Labor government that has a legacy of debt and deceit or an LNP government with a plan to reduce public debt, a plan to restore the fiscal position of the state and a plan to govern Queensland in the interests of all Queenslanders.

Throughout this debate I have seen those on the opposite side in the government idolise this Premier, idolise this Deputy Premier and idolise this Treasurer. I point out to those members opposite who

do so, particularly the members for Everton and Chatsworth, who idolise the Premier, that the Premier's disapproval rating is the highest of any Premier in 30 years. It is sitting at 69 per cent—a 69 per cent disapproval rating. It is the highest disapproval rating since records were begun in 1974, yet members opposite idolise her. Treasurer, you are the most unpopular member of this place. You might even have a higher disapproval rating than the Premier!

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Members will direct their comments through the chair.

Mr BLEIJIE: Absolutely, Madam Deputy Speaker: 'the honourable the Treasurer'. When the coalition won the election in 1995, the disapproval rating of Goss was only 34 per cent—34 per cent and it lost government. And now it is 69 per cent!

(Time expired)