



Speech by

Michael Crandon

MEMBER FOR COOMERA

Hansard Thursday, 10 June 2010

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

Mr CRANDON (Coomera—LNP) (8.55 pm): The 2010 Bligh Labor budget has given very little that is new to the state seat of Coomera apart from talking about planning for a new ambulance station. If the six years it took to build the new Nerang Fire Station in the Gaven electorate is anything to go by, we might see the Coomera Ambulance Station opened sometime in 2016. The old story of reannouncing things that are already underway is there. The TAFE college and the primary school are testament to that as are the funds allocated for Ormeau Woods State High School.

All of those projects are absolutely essential for a region that is growing at the pace the Coomera area in particular is. What is needed though is a serious commitment from this government to big building projects in the area, not just for the growth in the region but for another very important reason. The building industry on the Gold Coast is in dire straits. We need certainty regarding investments on the northern Gold Coast.

I am talking now about the Coomera town centre. This is a development that could employ many hundreds if not thousands of Gold Coast workers in the construction phase which would be for around two years. We need a commitment from this government to ensure this development goes forward. We need funding commitments for exit 54 to give the developers certainty that their investment is viable. This budget provides nothing to give that certainty. This government talks about infrastructure investment and says supporting jobs is a top priority. It appears that is not the case for the northern Gold Coast.

Here is an opportunity for this government to give the building industry a boost in the northern Gold Coast region, but it is an opportunity lost. If this government committed its share of the funds to duplicate the overpass at exit 54 and the other works that need to be done, it would give the developers of the Coomera town centre commercial and retail precinct far more certainty, resulting in a boost for the building industry at a time when it is desperately needed.

When we talk about the Coomera town centre we are not just talking about retail shops. Of course there are shops a plenty. I am told a principal tenant is Myer as well as large supermarkets and other department stores. This is the centrepiece of a town that will incorporate a large commercial precinct as well as community facilities being planned by the Gold Coast City Council.

As well we have areas set aside for high-density living and traditional residential development. I am told the total area is twice the size of the Brisbane CBD. It is the equivalent of Robina town centre or if members are not familiar with Robina perhaps they know Southport. This is the third and last of the areas on the Gold Coast regarded as the principal business areas. This one is in the heart of the Coomera electorate—the most northerly electorate on the Gold Coast.

This budget delivers additional funding to fast-track the rail line to Springfield and deliver the rail line two years early. This is to provide a rail link for 18,000 residents. It is a commendable thought to provide

this rail link. Some \$646 million has been allocated to deliver this rail link. That is on top of \$400 million already committed.

Let me put this in perspective. This government is spending \$646 million to build a 10-kilometre extension to service 18,000 residents in addition to \$400 million already spent. The Treasurer must know the northern Gold Coast area will have an additional 18,000 residents in the next 18 months—that is, an additional 18,000 residents by December 2011. What is this government doing about increasing trains on the Gold Coast line to accommodate these additional residents? Absolutely nothing! We have the 'Bombay Express' that is just going to get worse. So the government plans to build the 10-kilometre rail link to Springfield for \$646 million more announced by the Premier in 2013 to accommodate 18,000 residents, although it is interesting to note the Premier only says 'could' be opened in 2013. There are no guarantees there. On the other hand, the transport minister in her press release says that the line 'would' be open by 2013. This is an example of the Premier and the minister being out of step yet again—a bit like that little matter last year about Queensland Rail not being for sale and then we heard, 'Oh, okay, it's for sale.' Whatever the case, by 2013 we will have something like 30,000 new residents who will not be properly catered for by public transport in the northern Gold Coast region. When will we have some respite? At the very earliest 2017—that is, if all the ducks line up and we get a new under Brisbane River rail link, and by then we will have something like an additional 48,000 new residents in the Coomera area.

I turn now to the issue of bus transport. There are other transport imperatives in the Coomera electorate. Our bus service is in dire need of an upgrade. Route 10 is too long for one bus route and does not achieve desired outcomes. The planning for the northern area needs to be fast-tracked to provide a better service for this fast growing region. I have spoken to TransLink on numerous occasions but with no positive outcomes at this point. I am told budget constraints mean there is nothing on the horizon for a revamp of services—a revamp that is desperately needed. If the Gold Coast gets the Commonwealth Games in 2018 and the tunnel is delayed, we will be up the creek without a paddle. The Gold Coast rail line, as well as the bus services, simply will not cope.

I mentioned earlier that the Premier and the Minister for Transport were out of step with their press releases—the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing. The same could be said for the Premier and the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. The canelands area in the northern part of my electorate is a case in point where the government is just throwing out comments about things with no substance. The Premier recently put out a press release about 'green wedges'. She then referred to them again in another way in this place on Tuesday of this week. On the other hand, the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning does not know anything about it as evidenced by comments from an ABC Radio commentator and *Gold Coast Bulletin* journalist who cannot get any comments out of the minister which have not already been espoused by the Premier. He has nothing to say because he knows nothing more than the Premier has announced. This is a major area in my electorate. There has been a press release put out by this Premier and there is nothing to be added by the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning. It is the same old story: it does not matter what they say now; they are not even singing from the same song sheet. We cannot believe a word from Bligh and Labor given their track record of untruths and excuses.

I have been in this role for just a short while, but in that time I have gotten a very real sense of the frustration out there in the community. In the electorate of Coomera there are so many diverse needs—some big issues and some not so big, but very few of them are being resolved by this inept government that has plunged this great state into huge debt through inappropriate spending. Where is the debt repayment strategy? The Treasurer's claims that debt is going down are just plain wrong. Debt will rise year on year from \$42.6 billion to \$51.6 billion and is forecast to reach \$83.5 billion by 2013-14.

Queenslanders are facing ever-increasing cost of living expenses—rego and petrol costs, electricity, water, tolls. Every time Queenslanders turn around, they are paying more thanks to Bligh and Labor. The untruths are compounded by the suppression of reports. Evidence is the transport minister's suppression of the Q1 passenger load survey due out weeks and weeks ago. In past years the Q1 survey has been out religiously in the early part of May, and here we are in the middle of June and no Q1 passenger load survey. What is the minister hiding? Where is the current TransLink Tracker? Again, that is weeks overdue. Bligh and Labor are still going ahead with privatisation. They still will not listen to Queenslanders who oppose these asset sales. As the Leader of the Opposition said in his speech—

Queenslanders have a choice between the LNP, which has a plan to reduce the cost of living; or Premier Bligh and Labor, who believe in higher fuel prices, higher electricity prices, higher water charges, higher council rates and Labor's higher road charges.

And all of the spin that goes along with it. The right choice is obvious. The LNP in government is the only way this great state of Queensland will ever be brought back to prosperity.