



Speech by

Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR STAFFORD

Hansard Thursday, 10 June 2010

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

Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE (Stafford—ALP) (Minister for Infrastructure and Planning) (9.28 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to support the appropriation bills and the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill before the House. Firstly, I would like to congratulate the Treasurer on his third state budget. Last year we promised Queenslanders a strong economic plan for the future and this year's budget delivers on that promise with lower deficits, lower debt, high growth and more jobs. But importantly we have also ensured that it provides more services, core Labor services, in areas such as education, health and disability services. I am confident, and Queenslanders should be confident, about the strength this budget will give our great state and the job security it will provide.

The Australian Labor Party has a proven track record of keeping this great state strong in adverse economic times. During the 1930s, beset by challenging economic conditions, the then Premier, William Forgan Smith, led a Labor government which made Queensland the envy of a struggling nation. Seventy-five years ago he commissioned the Story Bridge, Somerset Dam and Mackay's artificial harbour and also announced that the state government would build a new University of Queensland campus at St Lucia. Of his infrastructure building program, Forgan Smith said, 'In addition to creating assets of value to the community, the utilisation of funds for these purposes relieves unemployment in a most effective manner.'

Like the Forgan Smith government, the Bligh government understands that planning for growth and jobs needs a commitment to a strong capital works program. Our plan was to again hand down the nation's biggest building program, and we stuck to that plan—with a \$17.1 billion infrastructure spend to protect 106,000 Queensland jobs.

Speaking of jobs, I should note for the benefit of the House that, as of last month, the Coordinator-General had been charged with assessing 37 projects with a potential total capital investment of more than \$110.9 billion and more than 72,000 jobs—an important role the Leader of the Opposition apparently cannot understand. During his budget reply, the Leader of the Opposition stated that the Coordinator-General was limited in his capacities because of his position with the Department of Infrastructure and Planning.

In the last financial year alone, the Coordinator-General declared nine more projects of state significance. These developments have the capacity to generate more than \$26 billion in capital expenditure and 18,500 jobs. When the facts are made clear, the member for Surfers Paradise's ramblings simply emphasise his lack of leadership and understanding.

I would like to dissect the LNP's alternative budget and policies now, but sadly the opposition have not provided any clear direction on how they intend to manage the state. They have no policies—except for harking back to the last election, when they promised to slash our building program and make 12,000 Queenslanders 'de-necessary'.

One alarming aspect of the opposition leader's speech that sent shivers down my spine was the suggestion that under a Liberal-National government the role of the Coordinator-General would be

changed to 'report'—I emphasise the word 'report'—to the Premier. The Coordinator-General position is established as an independent statutory role. Do the LNP want to destroy this independence? Do they want to manipulate and mutate that important role so the dysfunctional party opposite can then use the Coordinator-General as their 'play thing'?

I would prefer to focus on the positive aspects of the Bligh government's plan. Across Queensland, this budget represents a boost to front-line personnel, delivering an additional 1,200 clinical health staff, 75 ambos, 203 police officers, 24 firefighters, 316 teachers and teacher aides and 35 child safety officers. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*. I have the permission of the Deputy Speaker.

Leave granted.

For the people of the electorate of Stafford, we will invest millions of dollars improving community infrastructure, community safety, public transport, roads, health, education, and energy and water delivery.

Specifically, we have allocated:

\$115.13 million will continue to make our contribution to the delivery of the next stage of construction on the Airport Link project—at \$4.8 billion it's Australia's largest infrastructure project and will create up to 10,000 jobs.

As much as possible we're using local contractors and suppliers to support local jobs.

Our investment in transport and roads will continue with \$11 million dedicated to the concept stage of the Northern Busway—Kedron to Chermerside project, at a total estimated cost of \$20 million.

Local emergency services will benefit from a \$2.2 million refurbishment of the Chermerside ambulance station—the busiest ambulance station in the whole state, with a great crew and an enthusiastic LAC.

We're committed to making our great local schools even better with more than \$700,000 for General Learning Area Renewal at Stafford State School.

\$1.2 million will be spent to complete construction of twelve, one-bedroom apartments in Stafford at a total project cost of \$2.16 million—again a great boost to local employment.

\$780,000 will go towards accommodation and support services for women and children escaping domestic and family violence.

Labor has stared down the global recession by putting in place an economic plan and having the courage to implement it—without losing sight of the issues that matter most to Queenslanders.

We will keep Queensland Strong through the nation's biggest building program and continuing to offer Australia's lowest payroll tax rate.

This will keep Queenslanders employed as we fight our way towards economic recovery.

We will keep this great state fair for all, by providing discounts for pensioners, the disabled and low-income earners to cut their electricity costs.

And we're still going green: slashing power bills by up to one third through the solar rebate program, to ease the squeeze on Queensland families.

This budget has been designed to deliver more jobs, higher growth, lower deficits and lower debt as we chart the course back to a AAA credit rating.

It secures a strong, robust economy for all Queenslanders.