




Speech by
Bill Byrne

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Hansard Tuesday, 19 June 2012

MOTION: BUDGET STRATEGIES

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (6.17 pm): I rise to support the motion moved by the Manager of Opposition Business. As someone with a bit of a thirst for military history, I am familiar with the saying that history is written by the victors, but after listening to tonight's debate I can say that the Liberal National Party has taken this to a whole new level. We have seen history being rewritten by the Newman government. If you listen to government members you may think that nothing good happened during the period of recent Labor governments. But as all sensible people know, that is patently untrue. When you look at the major state responsibilities such as education, transport and community services, you see that the previous Labor government had a strong record of delivering improved services and vital infrastructure.

Labor's policies helped provide and protect jobs during the most challenging of economic times. The GFC never happened, if you believe the LNP. And what would they have done if they had been in government at the time, when private sector confidence had virtually collapsed? One thing is for sure: they would not have kept Queensland working. The workers of this state have been able to retain their jobs and provide for their families because of the tough decisions that were made by Labor governments in recent years.

And unlike the new government, previous Labor governments were not focused solely on South-East Queensland. We made sure the regions were looked after as well. Let us take this financial year's Capital Works Program for example. In my area of Central Queensland the average capital expenditure per person in 2011-12 is \$4,585—well above South-East Queensland's average of \$2,849. In North and Far North Queensland the average spend per person is more than \$3,700 in each region—again, more than in the south-east—while in the north-west the average is \$6,139.

But in case there are claims of pork-barrelling, let us look at the two areas represented predominantly by LNP members in this chamber—central-western Queensland and south-western Queensland. In the central west the average spend is more than \$10,000 per person while in the south-west it is over \$11,000. In fact, more than 58 per cent of all infrastructure spending this year—the funding planned before the LNP started cutting projects and jobs—was due to be spent outside the Brisbane statistical division. Labor has always supported our regions, and Central Queensland is no exception. It was Labor that laid the groundwork for the LNG industry which is now proceeding at substantial pace on Curtis Island at Gladstone. This industry is developing because Labor governments put in place the appropriate policies and legislation to allow it to thrive. This is an industry that will deliver a new era of prosperity for Queensland, delivering 18,000 new jobs, \$45 billion worth of new private investment and \$750 million each and every year in new revenues for this state.

There has been plenty of other new infrastructure built in Central Queensland over the last 14 years, and I pay tribute to the hard work and the representation of the previous members for Rockhampton, Keppel and Fitzroy in securing these projects. The list is long but includes the redevelopment of the Rockhampton Hospital, the construction of the Yeppoon Hospital, the redevelopment of the Rockhampton river bank, the upgrade of facilities at Rockhampton Showgrounds, the construction of new aquatic centres in Rockhampton and of course significant upgrades to schools throughout the entire region.

Labor's support for the regions extends beyond my patch in Central Queensland. Labor delivered numerous infrastructure and transport projects throughout regional Queensland in recent years such as the new bridge at Innisfail, the upgrades of Dairy Farmers Stadium in Townsville, new traffic bridges in Mackay, the Bundaberg ring-road, the Darra to Springfield rail line and upgrades to both the Pacific Motorway and rail infrastructure on the Gold Coast. And then there is the extra social infrastructure that Labor has delivered. Labor added an extra year of schooling, providing all teachers with the classrooms needed to deliver prep year, and improved education in Queensland schools. Labor provided a massive boost to the support provided for people with disabilities and their families. We had started rolling out, in conjunction with the federal government, the plan to provide every Queensland child with access to a kindergarten. Every time Queenslanders drive over a new bridge built by Labor or receive in-home support for their disabled child or their aged relative or send their child to school, they will be reminded of the extra services provided by Labor governments. The LNP's constant blame game is wearing thin and it shows that it is more interested in gloating than governing.