




Speech by

Hon. Campbell Newman

MEMBER FOR ASHGROVE

Hansard Thursday, 13 September 2012

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; FISCAL REPAIR AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. CKT NEWMAN** (Ashgrove—LNP) (Premier) (11.56 am): We have just heard from the Leader of the Opposition in a speech that went for well over the time that the Treasurer used—about 56 minutes by my reckoning—but we saw a few things. We saw a lot of motherhood, a lot of slogans, a lot of statements about values and a broad brush, but we did not see any substance. In particular what we did not see was any plan whatsoever to turn this state around. We did not hear a plan to deal with the debt that they had incurred, which the Leader of the Opposition acknowledged was at least \$60 billion—at least that was acknowledged today—but there was no plan to reduce that debt.

The previous Labor government sold assets contrary to election commitments, saying that debt would come down, but it did not; it went up. Today was the opportunity for the Leader of the Opposition to stand up, make a clean breast of it and actually say that they got it wrong and articulate clearly and unambiguously how they would do it better if they got another go. The opposition did not. This was an opportunity to tell the people of Queensland how they would do that. If they are about compassion and about caring and sharing, then how would they get the budget situation under control? Would they have put up taxes? You can admire an opposition that has the integrity and the guts to come in here and tell people that they put up taxes because they wanted to save jobs. We have said to people, 'We don't think \$1,000 per man, woman and child'—I note there are school students today in the gallery. The message they should take home to their families this evening is that the Labor Party way, because they want to save every single one of these jobs, would have been to say to every one of these kids and their families, 'Each member of the family needs to pull out \$1,000 from the bank account and hand it over to government this year alone to balance the books. What we also did not see today was a response to what the Treasurer revealed, that they had a secret plan to actually lose over 40,000 people from the Queensland Public Service. That was contained in a document from the Public Service Commission which sets out the actual numbers that they were targeting under their so-called compassionate Voluntary Separation Program.

Why was that not dealt with? The Labor Party set their course on tram tracks, and if those tram tracks take the engine and the caboose over the cliff then, like lemmings, they will go over the cliff into the grand canyon—where they were taking the finances of this state. This budget that we have handed down is a once-in-a-generation budget to turn Queensland around and put us back on a path to prosperity. It is a U-turn in direction. Labor had been taking Queensland in a direction of inefficiency, debt, deficit and decline.

The independent Commission of Audit report set out the huge fiscal repair task ahead, to turn around a projected debt of \$100 billion and return the budget to surplus by 2014-15. Some difficult decisions have had to be made to deliver a better deal for Queenslanders. This budget sets us on the road to recovery—to better, more efficient services, financial responsibility and security, better infrastructure and new opportunities for businesses and jobs that Queenslanders deserve in the future, real jobs. It leads us back to our AAA credit rating to save Queenslanders an estimated \$1.2 billion in interest alone on the forward estimates.

It is time to get Queensland moving again. My goal is to deliver for Queenslanders the best, most efficient government in the nation. We will provide the best services possible at a cost that represents value for money. We can and will do more with less. I know that I am speaking in a completely foreign language to those opposite. They just do not get it because they are members of the Labor Party. It is not in their DNA to understand that. This budget targets spending to provide the right services at the right time to the right area and to the people who need them.

Mr Pitt interjected.

Mr NEWMAN: The member for Mulgrave should stop interjecting. He is the shadow Treasurer; he may learn things if he listens to the budget debate.

Our doubling of the patient travel subsidy—the first significant increase for years—at a cost of \$97.7 million, is a prime example of what we are about. We have received strong endorsements from the Cancer Council and the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland for taking such action. A new \$15 million Elderly Parent Carer Innovation Trial will help ageing parents of people with a disability to start addressing an issue that has been ignored for too long. What did the Leader of the Opposition say to that? She was very, very quiet.

The government will provide \$200 million over two years in grants to state school P&Cs—up to \$160,000 per school—to help fix Labor's \$300 million maintenance backlog. So much for caring about the kids! When you go to Mitchelton State School, as I did yesterday, you see that the paint is peeling, the trip hazards are there, the gutters are rusted out and the downpipes spurt water horizontally when it rains. It was good to go to that school yesterday with John-Paul Langbroek. That school has a maintenance backlog of around \$400,000—a disgrace left by the former Labor government. What has Roger Sheehan, the principal, said—

... the funding injection is very welcome and will allow us to further enhance facilities at our school which will in the long term assist with improving student learning outcomes.

Despite criticism from the Queensland Teachers Union, which thinks parents are in P&Cs for personal gain, we have received positive feedback from both P&Cs and the Queensland Association of State School Principals. I wonder when the people opposite are going to condemn the QTU for its unwarranted, outrageous attack on the mums and dads, grandparents and community members in P&Cs. They should hang their heads in shame. Their heads are down; they must be ashamed about this terrible attack.

This budget will grow a four-pillar economy. To support our long-neglected tourism industry, we are providing an extra \$20 million for tourism attraction and \$2 million to attract tourists from Asia. This supports our vision to increase overnight visitor expenditure in Queensland to \$30 billion by 2020 and return Queensland's tourism industry to the No. 1 position. Our tourism plan has strong support from QTIC, the Tourism and Transport Forum and the Accommodation Association of Australia.

To fire up construction we have introduced a new \$15,000 grant for first home owners buying a newly constructed home, and there will be no stamp duty on new homes under \$500,000. We have reinstated the principal place of residence stamp duty concession, which saves Queensland families up to \$7,000 when buying their home. Our construction initiatives have received widespread support from the Property Council, Master Builders, the HIA, Stockland, Dixon Homes and Fraser Coast builder Kerry Campbell, who said—

It is a boost for the building industry and also a great help for first home buyers.

Our vision is to have the best, most efficient planning system in Australia as we get the construction industry firing again.

In terms of supporting our resources industry, we are establishing a new, high-level cabinet committee to slash red tape and regulation and get approval times down. We heard the Deputy Premier talk about that this morning. And we are doing something that Labor would never do: guaranteeing the royalty levels for 10 years to provide certainty for industry. We are serious about providing investment certainty for resources in return for world-best social and environmental outcomes.

In terms of starting work to double Queensland's agricultural production by 2040, we have already established a stand-alone department of agriculture. We are getting on with the job of repairing the scorched earth and burning wasteland we inherited from the member for Mackay in terms of his stewardship of this important industry sector. The budget provides \$7.6 million for agricultural and horticultural research to increase productivity. We have introduced funding of \$4.8 million for research to develop Queensland as the food bowl of Asia, with a focus on pulse production—soya beans, lupins, peas, fava beans and chickpeas that are staple foods in growth trading countries such as India. It is important not just to produce high-quality food but also to grow the right food for growing markets. Our key agricultural industry stakeholders, AgForce and the QFF, have both made statements supporting these initiatives.

We are continuing with our plans to lower the cost of living for Queenslanders. We have frozen tariff 11 and family car registration. If those opposite care about families, if they care about people, why do they

tax them so? Because it is the Labor way: tax, tax, spend, spend. We have also halved public transport fare increases that people like the Leader of the Opposition were instrumental in gearing up for: 15 per cent, 15 per cent, 15 per cent, 15 per cent and 15 per cent. We have halved that. Plus we have provided the new deal: after nine journeys a week on go card, the remaining travel in that week is free. We are providing a \$80 rebate on domestic water connections in South-East Queensland at a cost of \$92 million.

Our work to improve service delivery will see us increase health funding by 7.3 per cent, put 300 new police on the beat this year, provide \$44 million for better access to emergency and specialist care, deliver \$28.9 million for our mums and bubs home visits and clinics, and deliver full-time teacher aides for 150 prep classes, with \$53.6 million allocated over four years. Importantly—again, those opposite do not understand this because they have not been in business—we are also going to help small business by increasing the payroll tax threshold from \$1 million to \$1.1 million in 2012-13, with further savings to come in ongoing years.

I turn now to my own electorate, the electorate of Ashgrove. This budget delivers on my and my party's commitments to the people of Ashgrove right across the electorate. This budget locks in funds to upgrade key intersections at Samford Road and Wardell Street, Glen Retreat Road and Irvine Street; install flashing school zone safety lights; provide fare relief, which I alluded to earlier, to commuters by offering free unlimited go card travel after nine trips per week; provide amenities, lighting and facilities upgrades for some of our sporting clubs; put funding into important school breakfast programs; and build teaching facilities in some of our local schools and a new sports hall at The Gap State High School.

I have already received some great feedback from constituents on how this budget is providing great things for small businesses, first home buyers and carers in my electorate. Straight after the budget was brought down, I was speaking with Phil Anderton, the President of The Gap Chamber of Commerce and a small business owner himself in the financial advisory sector. He said to me that he has already taken calls from clients wanting information on how they can get their hands on the first home owners construction grant. What a great encouraging start to this important program! It is great news for not only potential homebuyers but also the small businesses—the builders—that create that housing stock. Pat Manahan, owner of family construction business Ordanga Properties, also in my electorate, described the budget as encouraging and said, 'We need to rebuild confidence and this is a great start.' I know he has certainly welcomed the Advancing Our Schools maintenance program.

In the budget we also announced a record \$959 million investment in specialist disability services, of which I am pleased that the Ashgrove electorate will share in over \$10 million to continue the provision of services in our area. Recently I have met with several parents who have children with disabilities and I know firsthand that the Your Life Your Choice self-directed funding trial we announced will be of enormous benefit to their families. I thank Minister Tracy Davis for having the bottle—the political guts—to come in to cabinet and then this chamber and get on with this important reform.

In conclusion, this budget delivers on all of these promises for Queenslanders. This budget delivers on all of these commitments to my local electorate, the Ashgrove electorate, and it also gets us to that operating surplus in 2013-14, a year earlier than previously forecast, and the fiscal surplus in 2014-15. I say to the Treasurer and I say to the cabinet, who have worked hard as a team: thank you very much for your efforts and well done! I know that all members will share my enthusiasm for the great pathway forward that the Treasurer has laid out to get this state back on track. This budget puts us squarely on the path to a better deal for Queenslanders. The government has made the tough decisions to ensure the financial health of Queensland now and in the future, and it will return this state to prosperity.