




Speech by

Dale Shuttleworth

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Hansard Thursday, 13 September 2012

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

 **Mr SHUTTLEWORTH** (Ferny Grove—LNP) (12.28 am): I rise in the early hours of a new day to speak about the measures which this government in its early period will put in place to deliver Queensland a much brighter future. Few Queenslanders would have argued in early March that we needed to embark upon a program of austerity to return our great state to the position of strength and prosperity we all desire for ourselves and our future generations. This government, led by Campbell Newman, was tasked with this difficult undertaking in early March.

The measures undertaken are difficult, more so because of the human factor and the impact these measures have upon individuals and their extended families. Although my colleagues have expressed compassion for the human toll that our austerity measures will take, I am sure that each will understand that, with employment expenses accounting for almost half of government expenditure, this simply could not continue. I recall a time when I was made redundant from a senior position as general manager of a local Brisbane company. I had a young family and an uncertain future, which amounted to an emotionally difficult time. I did not have a lump sum payment to provide assistance in that transition. However, with the benefit of hindsight, I am now able to look at the time as perhaps the most lucrative of my career. I know that the measures that we are delivering throughout this budget will further stimulate the economy and drive further opportunities for growth and future employment.

The budget, released by the Treasurer on Tuesday, provides a capacity for the government to deliver its stated commitment to the people of Queensland. Consistently, the people of the Ferny Grove electorate have spoken to me about their difficulty in making ends meet in their family budgets. Their cost of living was difficult to manage and they were looking to their government to deliver some relief. I have spoken previously of Paul from Arana Hills, who with his wife and three children were at best trading water while watching their assets such as their car and home depreciate faster than necessary owing to a lack of sufficient maintenance. There are many measures that are directly focused upon providing this cost-of-living relief, such as the freezing of tariff 11, the freezing of the registration cost of the family car, the halving of the increase in public transport for this and next year, free 10th trip and beyond fares each week for go card users and a one-off rebate for water costs in South-East Queensland. These measures will deliver approximately \$260 worth of savings this year alone.

Throughout the campaign I also made commitments to the people of the Ferny Grove electorate that, as part of an LNP government, we would reduce waste, strengthen our economic position by reducing debt and restore our AAA credit rating. This budget ensures that the corrective actions that we have taken will stabilise our forecast debt at \$81.7 billion in 2014-15, \$4.6 billion below the level predicted, and we will deliver a fiscal surplus of \$652 million in 2014-15. Measures such as this will ensure that we will be able in time to reduce our debt so that the fastest-growing government expense, that of interest payments, is reduced over time as we begin to pay down our debt with the surpluses that we have delivered. An undeniable fact is that the loss of our AAA credit rating is costing us an additional \$100 million per annum in interest payments, which would assist greatly in the delivery of additional government grants and programs.

There are other state-wide programs that will provide savings to individuals within the electorate of Ferny Grove. The reintroduction of the stamp duty concessions on the primary place of residence can save homebuyers up to \$7,000 on the purchase of their home. In addition, a newly announced initiative, the \$15,000 first home owner construction grant, will not simply provide financial assistance to the first home buyer but will also significantly stimulate activity throughout the construction and development sectors. Many of the 3½ thousand small businesses operating within the Ferny Grove electorate that are either directly or associated peripherally with the housing and construction sectors will be the beneficiaries of this initiative.

Throughout the election campaign I made a number of commitments and I am pleased today to be able to announce that the following commitments have received an allocation of funds. There has been \$160,000 committed to the upgrade of field lighting at the Pine Hills Football Club and \$250,000 has been committed to the planning and design stage of traffic signals at the entry/exit point of Keperra Sanctuary on Samford Road, with a further \$1.65 million committed in the 2013-14 financial year for construction. Additionally, the allocation of the following funds have been confirmed: \$73,000 for funding for the demolition of an existing pit toilet block and the installation of a replacement upgraded amenities block with improved waste management to meet the current standard for the Maijala-D'Aguilar National Park; \$120,000 as part of the Sport and Recreation Infrastructure Program for the archery lanes at Samford; \$2.2 million for stage 1 of additional accommodation at the Mount Samson State School; \$18 million for a two-year trial of 15-minute train intervals between weekday peak periods on the Ferny Grove train line; and \$11.188 million for the finalisation of the Keperra to Ferny Grove rail duplication and Ferny Grove station.

Additionally, the electorate's eight state schools will benefit through their share of the \$200 million Advancing Our Schools Maintenance Fund, with grants of up to \$160,000 for much needed and previously neglected maintenance programs. I have already received significant feedback about the benefit that this allocation is likely to provide our schools, which have in the past sourced maintenance works through local providers and have realised significant cost savings in doing so. This initiative empowers schools and stimulates local economies. It is a real win-win gemstone of this year's budget.

The budget also demonstrates through proactive and positive actions our commitment to the advancement of disability services. The Newman government has committed \$959 million towards special disability services and the introduction of the Your Life Your Choice and elderly carer programs, which will keep Queensland in step with other states and prepare for the NDIS and which will also allow us to carefully finalise processes and structures to support the eventual state-wide implementation of state directed funding in line with the NDIS in 2018.

The people of the Ferny Grove electorate will also benefit directly as a result of the additional \$800 million in health funding, specifically targeting the reduction of waiting lists and additional weekend staff. We need to look no further than the health department to explain the reasons for the measures we have taken as there is a direct correlation between the wasted funds on the implementation of a continually flawed payroll system and staff reductions. The waste and mismanagement has impacted upon the program maintenance of facilities across the state and \$51.6 million has been set aside for infrastructure maintenance in rural and remote regions of the state.

I mentioned earlier the plight of the family at Arana Hills who were struggling to maintain their assets owing to the rising costs of living and the impact that that has had on their cash flow. The actions of this family and those of the previous government were quite similar. Although the magnitude of expense is clearly different, the actions are identical. With cash flow reducing, debt increasing and no perceived way out, the maintenance of assets is put aside. We know that over the past few years the maintenance of our schools, our hospitals and our public housing assets was neglected as money was redirected into bottomless pits of payroll systems, eggs in national parks and disconnected water grids.

There is much speculation and commentary surrounding the independent Queensland Commission of Audit and the union commissioned Walker report. It is suffice for me to deduce from the actions of the previous government that it knew that the financial position was, in fact, dire. Devoid of ideas on how to resolve the issues they faced, they continually neglected the maintenance and management of our existing asset pool. After having heard some really big hints on Tuesday on how to reform our state's financial position and how to address the debt and deficit, the opposition has instead chosen to continue to perpetuate the denial and deceit.

This week we heard of the document from the Public Service Commission, where 41,000 people were identified by those opposite for potential separation from the Public Service, almost 4,000 of those from within Queensland Health. I raise this point simply to highlight the hypocrisy that the members opposite continue to perpetuate. The Leader of the Opposition stated that they would continue to work with unions, who remained remarkably silent during the much larger and more severe course of action those opposite had planned to chart.

This budget in its entirety delivers the economic outcomes that ensures the Newman government's commitment to build a four-pillar economy, to reduce the cost of living, to reduce waste and to provide better infrastructure and planning. This budget in its entirety delivers better outcomes for Queensland into the future. It will ensure that we achieve our long-term financial objectives and reduce unemployment. This budget in its entirety take steps to ensure that Queensland is, in fact, back on track. I commend the bills to the House.