



Speech by


**Desley Scott**

**MEMBER FOR WOODRIDGE**

Hansard Tuesday, 19 June 2012

---

## **MOTION: BUDGET STRATEGIES**

 **Mrs SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (5.39 pm): I rise to second the motion moved by the Leader of Opposition Business and member for Mulgrave. Labor has a strong record of building infrastructure and protecting jobs, particularly in regional Queensland. We created 100,000 jobs during the global financial crisis. At a time when every government around the world was abandoning their infrastructure projects, we stuck to ours to keep people in jobs across Queensland and it worked. Historically, Queensland's average unemployment rate has been 7.2 per cent. Under the last conservative government it was 9.8 per cent. At the election, after the global financial crisis and the natural disasters that thumped our state, it sat at 5.5 per cent. We protected jobs, unlike this government that, after being in power for only three months, has ripped jobs and services out of regional Queensland. The predictable findings of the interim audit of state finances by Peter Costello has given the Newman government an excuse for thousands of job cuts and the potential sacking of permanent public servants.

However, how many jobs will be cut is unclear with the government failing to provide a firm and final answer on how many of its own workers it plans to sack to fund its election promises. In parliament today the Premier suggested 20,000 jobs would go; previously the Premier mentioned 41,000 temporary and contract workers would go; and, in an answer to a question on notice, the Premier refers to 55,000 temporary and casual employees. All we know is that regional Queensland will be hit hard by the LNP's jobs purge and the erosion of services. Already Premier Newman has failed to rule out sacking of contract teachers despite his claims of protecting front-line service standards. Since the election we have seen staff and services cut at regional hospitals in Cairns and Townsville. Also we have seen the real possibility of job losses in the regions if Ergon and Energex are merged. The government will not say how many of RoadTek's 2,500 staff and contractors across the state will be cut from work centres as part of another Newman government jobs purge. Yesterday, the local government minister confirmed that there will be job losses in QBuild across the regions.

Despite this government's stripping of jobs, services and infrastructure from regional Queensland, it is still happy to officially open and take credit for infrastructure programs that were funded and built by the previous Queensland Labor government. The previous Labor government had a strong record on delivering the infrastructure and community services needed for the growing regions across Queensland. More than 58 per cent of the \$15 billion building program in last year's budget, supporting 93,000 jobs, was spent outside Brisbane: \$1.04 billion was spent on infrastructure in the Far North, \$887 million in Northern Queensland, \$741.5 million on the Darling Downs and \$650 million in the Mackay region. Capital expenditure per person was higher in every region outside of the south east, with the highest spending per person in the south west and central west. That expenditure kept people in jobs in regional communities, building legacy pieces of infrastructure and services across regional Queensland. That infrastructure included the Cairns, Townsville and Mackay hospital redevelopments; Mackay's single biggest road project, the \$148 million Forgan Bridge; \$121 million worth of work at the Port of Gladstone's RG Tanna Coal Terminal; \$101.7 million spent on the Mount Isa rail line; \$101.6 million spent on the Townsville Marine Precinct; the \$40 million Fursden Creek Bridge project; and \$26.6 million to upgrade the Tropical North Queensland Institute of TAFE in Cairns.

As well as maintaining our infrastructure program while steering Queensland through the GFC, the previous Labor government rebuilt after the summer of floods in 2010-11 and a number of cyclones that hit the Queensland coast dating back six years, including Yasi, Larry and Ului. We supported productivity and innovation in agriculture through a decade of drought followed by three years of consecutive flooding, to emerge with an agricultural industry in Queensland where most sectors are booming, including cotton, sugar cane and wool. Those are just some examples of the billions of dollars worth of infrastructure built and services provided by the previous Labor government that would never have been delivered by the Newman government.

*(Time expired)*