



Speech by


## Freya Ostapovitch

MEMBER FOR STRETTON

Hansard Thursday, 13 September 2012

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

 **Mrs OSTAPOVITCH** (Stretton—LNP) (11.23 pm): I rise in this chamber to speak in support of an Appropriation Bill that delivers on key commitments to Queenslanders and, at the same time, is economically responsible—something that has not happened in this chamber for a very long time. It has been said many times this week, but I am happy to endorse the comments from my colleagues, that this is the most important budget in a generation. This budget is being called a once-in-a-generation budget because a whole generation of Queenslanders have grown up under a Labor government where they have learnt by their leaders' example to live for today and borrow money without thought of how to repay it. Indeed, what Labor did was spend up big and leave us and our children to make the sacrifices necessary to repay the debt—a debt spiralling out of control with interest compounding daily, a debt that costs Queenslanders \$200 million in extra interest compared to what New South Wales pays because they shamefully lost our AAA credit rating. How much fun it must have been for the previous government to rack up the credit card. I hope they had a good time at Queenslanders' expense. I know that most of them are still living the high life on their continued annual income while the rest of us pay for it.

On 24 March the people spoke and spoke loudly. They asked us to rein in the \$65 billion debt and get the economy back on track. They begged us to fix a life-threatening and frustrating hospital system, restore law and order and lower the cost of living. So we made these things our commitment. It was never going to be easy. We knew we were going to have to pay back the credit card, we just did not know how bad it was going to be. We will pay back that credit card but we will also keep our commitment to the Queensland people. This is an excellent budget for Queenslanders as it helps with the cost-of-living pressures that continued to rise under the previous Labor government. We have frozen car registration increases and electricity tariff 11 and will provide rebates of \$80 for water savings.

This budget addresses a problem that I hear over and over in my community and that is the agony that ageing parents of disabled adult children endure worrying who will take care of their children when they get too old or too sick to care for them. The amount of \$15 million will go towards a trial to assist them and that is a good start indeed. I would also like to focus on the two major areas of the Appropriation Bill that will have a great impact not just on the people of my electorate but on all Queenslanders—that is, education and health. Education is a fundamental cornerstone of our society. Our teachers are building the next generation of our society and we as leaders must work to ensure that today's students have every opportunity to reach their full potential. That is why this government is investing in our local schools. We are increasing the number of full-time teacher aides for an additional 150 prep classes each year over four years. Of particular interest to me and my electorate is the \$1.3 million for administration enhancements to the Kuraby State School. Kuraby State School has been desperately seeking funding for enhancements to its administration block for years. Like so many other things, the Labor government ignored them, but we are listening and we are delivering.

As the minister spoke about this morning in question time, the previous Labor government also neglected and ignored the backlog of maintenance work needed in state schools across my electorate. I am proud to be part of a government determined to not only fund and fix the backlogs but we will

empower the school communities to determine the outcome that is best for them. We will spend \$200 million over two years providing funding of up to \$160,000 to state school P&Cs to assist in fixing the maintenance backlogs left by the Labor Party. That is not where it ends. It is this government that will invest more than \$20 million into programs and initiatives to enhance Queensland students' education experience in the classroom. This includes \$6.5 million to enable principals to select literacy and numeracy programs that will improve educational standards at their school. Non-government schools will also benefit from the LNP's \$86.25 million election commitment to build better school infrastructure for our children.

Another election commitment being delivered in this budget is the provision of 20 e-tablets to every state special school for their students to use at a cost of \$3.5 million. This also includes up to 10 e-tablets to each state or non-state school offering a special education program. I know that Kuraby and Calamvale special schools are looking forward to receiving them.

Additionally, they will be just as happy to see that we have also committed \$1.4 million to expand support for students with a disability, which will see an additional 30 speech-language pathologists in Queensland state schools. There will be funding of \$1 million over four years to support Queensland schools with access to chaplaincy services and \$1 million over four years to develop a school education program to teach children how to protect themselves. High school students will get the chance to travel to Anzac Day ceremonies at Gallipoli and the Western Front with \$1 million over three years in sponsorship. We have also set aside \$3 million for 30 state schools to participate in the Independent Public Schools initiative in 2012-13 and \$2 million to establish the Queensland Schools' Planning Commission. My local P-12 college has applied to be one of the first schools to participate in that initiative. This is a solid blueprint for the future of Queensland education and will provide the resources required to improve Queensland's educational institutions and equip Queensland teachers for the challenges that lie ahead.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Watts): Order! I ask for the level of background noise to be reduced. I can hear the conversations louder than the member speaking.

**Mrs OSTAPOVITCH:** As the mother of a young doctor who works as a locum at many regional Queensland hospitals, I know that he has witnessed firsthand just how hard or how bad the situation has been for our healthcare professionals in dealing with the result of years of neglect and bungling by various ministers. Finally, we have a minister who will stand up and take action. Minister Springborg has undertaken the mammoth task of restoring Queenslanders's faith in a system that has been mismanaged for far too long. That is why state-wide Queensland Health will receive \$11.862 billion in this budget. We will be investing \$1.9 billion in capital infrastructure, technology, pathology, research, mental health, residential aged care, staff accommodation and information and communication technologies.

My local community, which falls within the Metro South Hospital and Health Service area, will receive a total budget of \$1.638 billion. The Australian government has also provided \$22.4 million towards the \$37 million Queen Elizabeth II Jubilee Hospital emergency department upgrade, due for completion in 2013. The Queensland and Australian governments will also provide \$46.2 million to continue work on the \$145.2 million expansion of the Logan Hospital emergency department, which has been a long time coming. The state government has allocated \$6.7 million to continue the \$9 million development of a new 16-bed mental health community care unit at Logan, forecast for completion in early 2013. Additionally, the HHS will receive \$22.2 million worth of vital medical equipment upgrades and improvements over the next two years. The state government will deliver 11 new emergency department treatment bays at QEII Hospital. This is great news for local residents, who can now sleep better knowing that their government is making the tough decisions so that we can cut waiting lists, open more beds and have more doctors and nurses on the front line.

This is the most important budget in a generation because it does not sweep the problems under the mat. Our cabinet has not put all our problems into the too-hard basket, as the previous government surely did. The work has only just begun and we will continue to work for all Queenslanders to ensure this state gets back on track, financially and morally. I commend the bills to the House.