




Speech by

Ian Rickuss

MEMBER FOR LOCKYER

Hansard Thursday, 13 September 2012

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

 **Mr RICKUSS** (Lockyer—LNP) (12.39 am): I rise to say a few words about the Appropriation Bill. This is an important appropriation bill. It is actually the first appropriation bill in the nine years that I have been a member of the parliament that I have had some confidence in. It is an important appropriation bill because the LNP government's budget is for Queensland's future. It is an important appropriation bill because all of a sudden Queensland can look forward with confidence. The budget will save Queenslanders an average of about \$120 on electricity bills. Every householder in Queensland requires electricity. Every person in Queensland uses it at some stage. It is very important to Queensland. This is where Queenslanders will really save some money. The \$80 rebate on domestic water supply for people on town water is important; there is \$7,175 for buying the family home; and \$15,000 for new homebuyers. I see the member for Logan sitting in the chamber. This is important for Greenbank, Logan, the villages of Gatton and Laidley—

Mr Cox: Thuringowa.

Mr Trout: Barron River.

Mr RICKUSS: I will take those interjections. That is where we will get these new houses being built that will create jobs and stimulate the economy. That is what we want happening here.

A government member: And jobs for tradies.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. Jobs for tradies, jobs for everyone. We have hospital boards in place. I am sure we can get improvements out of the Toowoomba, Gatton, Laidley, and Logan hospitals through better management. As was stated earlier, the health minister is doing a great job. You would not trade him in for quids. Let us ensure he does a great job. This is what the LNP is about.

Mr King: The Minister for Agriculture is doing a great job.

Mr RICKUSS: Let me get there. The Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme is important to rural and regional Queenslanders who have been neglected forever. How many patients fly down from Cairns on a regular basis?

Mr King: Thousands.

Mr Cox: Too many.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. It does not cover all their costs but it goes a long way to assisting them. It is something that has not risen in 20 years. South-East Queensland catchments in my area have done a great job with creek and riverbank stabilisation. I see the minister nodding his head. He has visited my electorate and had a look at some of the great work happening around one of the schools. That is the sort of asset we have to protect. We must stabilise creek banks so that the school community at Peak Crossing is protected. That is what it is all about. The \$200 million for Advancing Our Schools Maintenance will be a great scheme. For the unions to come out and say this will be a dodgy deal done by P&Cs is a shame. I am waiting to hear the members on the other side criticise the union members about that statement. It is

a disgrace. We have all supported our P&Cs. They work extremely hard and they are doing it for the children in the community. Let us ensure that they have some funding out of this project.

The payroll tax threshold is a great boost to small business. I know that there are some unscrupulous small businesses out there that have a number of companies to pay staff so they do not have to pay so much payroll tax. There are a few of them around. I do not know of too many. I am sure that this will encourage people to pay their fair share because it is less than it used to be.

There are issues that we need to highlight. The Toowoomba second range crossing is an integral freight corridor that needs to be managed. The Warrego and Cunningham highways need to be looked after. Unfortunately the feds have let us down badly on these projects.

Mr Cox: Labor in this state, too.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. They have let us down badly. Funding for the Bruce Highway and all the major highways has been disappointing. This morning I heard the contribution of the Leader of the Opposition. I did an examination of her speech. As you start going through it she talks about a cruel hoax. This is a cruel hoax of Labor's spin and deceit. She continues further on about there only being a \$24.92 billion debt. That is almost a delusional way to look at this debt. No-one has denied that there was a \$65 billion debt, but somehow the member for Inala has managed to bring it down to \$24.92 million.

Mr Cox: Would that be the Leader of the Opposition?

Mr RICKUSS: It would be the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Shorten: And former minister.

Mr RICKUSS: And former minister. That is the delusional accounting system that they work on. We had the highest unemployment figures since the 1930s under Labor during the global financial crisis. This is the mob that went broke in a boom. How could they go broke in a boom? Even the member for Rockhampton has to shake his head at that.

Mr Cox: No, he was asking you to spell 'boom'.

Mr RICKUSS: Is that what it was? One could not imagine how they could do it. In the next paragraph she blames the disasters. She says because of the disasters we were out of production for six months and that is why we have these billions of dollars worth of debt. It was also the worst global financial crisis. They forget that Howard left them billions of dollars worth of buffer so that they could get themselves over the hump.

Mr Shorten: \$50 billion.

Mr RICKUSS: I take that interjection.

Mr Cox: He left them with a debit card instead of their usual credit card.

Mr RICKUSS: Yes, that is right. He left them with a debit card and they still did not know what to do with it. There are complaints about LNP members cutting ribbons. Labor represents less than nine per cent of the state. Of course we are going to cut ribbons. We represent 91 per cent of the state. I think we should cut a few ribbons. Who is going to open it? Those opposite would not have enough time to open anything.

Mrs Scott: If you are opening it, we built it.

Mr RICKUSS: Labor represents nine per cent of the state. Just remember that is all you represent. Labor recorded budget surpluses in seven out of 11 years. They forget that they actually went into deficit in four years of a boom. They paint it the other way: they were good for seven; they did not go too bad for seven of those 11 years. Can members imagine any small business saying they have done all right in seven years but the other four years they went broke in?

The Leader of the Opposition stated that the amount of money spent on Queensland interest payments when expressed in share revenue is also low relative to international peers. Labor wants to look at the basket cases and say they did really well because they were not quite as bad a basket case. It is like looking at the worst house in the street and saying you only have the second worst house in the street, I am doing well.

Mr Cox: That's Labor logic.

Mr RICKUSS: The old Labor logic, that is right. After 10 years of growth, they still went broke. The Queensland economy went from \$178 billion to \$258 billion.

Mr Cox: How much?

Mr RICKUSS: It was \$178 billion and rose to \$258 billion; that is what the economy grew by. They had 10 years of growth and they still managed to go broke. How did they do that? Through real skill! They had the best Treasurer in the world, although he is not here any more. How much do they represent, again? Nine per cent of the state. Now that this government has lifted the royalties, all of a sudden they are siding with the big mining companies. They have to help out Xstrata and BHP and Rio Tinto, although they are a bit underresourced and cannot help themselves out. Probably those companies could have paid off

some of Labor's debt if they wanted to try, but they did not want to do that. The Leader of the Opposition criticised Liberal politician Peter Costello. She seems to forget that Dr Doug McTaggart and Professor Sandra Harding also signed off on the report. They have real credibility.

Mr Nicholls: I think Costello got two credit rating upgrades to AAA, if I recall correctly.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. While criticising the Liberal politician Peter Costello, the Leader of the Opposition omitted to mention Professor Sandra Harding and Dr Doug McTaggart. The omission is the greatest lie and, unfortunately, that is what has happened. The Leader of the Opposition went on to talk about the \$24.92 billion debt. It is voodoo economics that they come up with.

Mr Nicholls: How did that AAA credit rating get lost again?

Mr RICKUSS: I do not know. This is voodoo economics. Then we bring in one of the voodoo doctors, Professor Quiggin. We have a bit of voodoo magic coming in there with Labor debt at more than \$20 billion. They are saying that we are still growing the Labor debt and we are, but it is their debt.

Mr Nicholls: You can't turn the *Queen Mary* around on a dime.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. It just goes on and on. The Leader of the Opposition spoke about generational infrastructure. They were in power for 22 years. That is a generation. Of course they have to build some generational infrastructure.

Mr Ruthenberg: Where is the infrastructure?

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. It was all delivered late and over budget. None of it was delivered on time. It went on and on and on. Governments have to take some hard decisions and, unfortunately, that is what the Treasurer has had to do.

Mr Nicholls: I am happy to do it, member for Lockyer. I am happy to do it.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. At times, you have to do it. The opposition talks about federal responsibilities.

Mr Nicholls: Do you have a speech in there somewhere?

Mr RICKUSS: I think so. They say, 'The feds have let us down again.' The Queensland economy was projected to grow the fastest in the nation. They seem to have forgotten about Western Australia. The Western Australian economy has been out-performing Queensland—

Mr Nicholls: Hold the telescope to the blind eye. That is what they will do, like Nelson at Trafalgar.

Mr RICKUSS: That is right. Again, the omission is the greatest lie. It just goes on and on. The Leader of the Opposition talked about society maximising the shared potential. It is the old socialist commie spin where everyone else has to pay for it. But who will pay for it?

Mr Cox: Not Bill.

Mr RICKUSS: No, not Bill. Everyone else has to pay for it. Over the border we have the O'Farrell government. Greg Withers is down there worrying about that for us. He has to worry about O'Farrell. The Labor Party wants our society to be one in which every Queenslanders has a fair go, but who pays? Labor values debt. That is all it values and that is about all it can do. The opposition leader continued on with false Labor promises, such as the NDIS. There was no funding for it. The feds will set it up and we are supposed to fund it. That is another false promise from Labor. We will not deliver false promises, particularly to the people the NDIS is designed to help. We will not give false promises; that is just not on.

The opposition leader then said, 'Our party was founded on the important principle that everybody deserves a fair go in life'. That is the bad joke. They took every poor punter in Queensland down for hundreds of dollars a year and thousands of dollars a year. It was just a bad joke. We have to make some long-term hard decisions. The LNP government is the only government with the fortitude to make those decisions. I congratulate the Treasurer for making some of the hard decisions. I congratulate the Minister for Agriculture, whom I am sure will support the campus of UQ in the Lockyer Valley by providing a bit more funding and will work out what we are going to do with the AACC.

Mr Nicholls: The Lockyer Valley is the food basket of Queensland.

Mr RICKUSS: It is the food basket of Queensland. I am sure the minister will assist me and the Minister for Education in solving that problem. With those few words, I congratulate the Treasurer on a well delivered budget.