



Speech by


**Hon. Jarrod Bleijie**

**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

Hansard Thursday, 13 September 2012

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

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (12.31 pm): It is a pleasure to rise to speak to the 2012 state budget handed down by the honourable Treasurer, the member for Clayfield, supported by the Premier and the Deputy Premier. I endorse the comments of the Treasurer, the Premier and, of course, the Deputy Premier. In my contribution I will not speak about the rural fires. I believe the Deputy Premier has covered that sufficiently and adequately and made the point of the government. I thank this Treasurer for delivering this once-in-a-generation budget. I cannot offer anything but a glowing endorsement of the member for Clayfield for his financial ability and responsibility to get down and do the business of running the state in terms of the budget.

This budget sets Queensland up for a prosperous and bright future. If we had proceeded the way of the Labor Party and nothing had changed we would have seen the same financial situation we found ourselves in when we came to government. As we look across the chamber at the opposition leader who just delivered her once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the Labor Party to get it right, she had a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to follow Her Majesty's honourable Treasurer and get it right for Queensland, but they did not. They had 60 minutes of opportunity to set out the Labor Party's vision for the future and they did not. It was an opportunity lost. It was lost because they do not know what to do. They do not know how to think. They know nothing about financial accountability and responsibility and they have no plans for the future. Instead, all we heard come out of the mouth of the opposition leader was reinstating a couple of programs that have been scrapped by this government. That is the best they could do. There was no great financial strategy on how to pay down the debt incurred by the Labor Party, just that they were going to reinstate a few programs. Is that not the Labor way? There is no discussion on how they are going to pay for it. There were millions of dollars coming out of the mouth of the opposition leader, reintroducing programs that have been cut by this government, but no strategy of how they are going to pay for it. That is what got us into the trouble we are in in Queensland. For the last 14 years they have spent and spent; they did not save. They spent more than we earn. As every Queensland family knows, we have to budget. We have to get rid of things in our lifestyle. People stop going to the movies, they stop sending their kids to sporting events on Saturdays to save money because they understand they have to have a family budget. That is what the Labor Party do not understand. It is all politics and populism for them. All they believe in is the popular policies to get them out of the political wilderness without any regard to the financial responsibility.

This budget is a positive budget for the future of Queensland. It is a once-in-a-lifetime, once-in-a-generation budget for the future of Queensland—the future of the children of Queensland. It is a positive budget for their future. When we look at what the Liberal National Party has delivered in this budget I think that it is fair to say, particularly on behalf of the ministers, that we had to make some tough decisions. It has not been an easy ride in government for the last five months. We have had to look through our own departments at what we can no longer afford to do. We have done that. We have got the hard decisions out of the way in this budget, but we have also rewarded Queenslanders for their hard work in terms of long-term policy strategies that we are looking at to get Queensland back on track. Members only have to

look at the election campaign where we talked about the four pillars of the economy: resources, agriculture, construction and tourism. For far too long in Queensland we have relied on one particular cog in this wheel of economics above the rest. When we have been concentrating on one particular pillar of the economy we have let the others down. We have let agriculture down. We have let construction down. I am from the Sunshine Coast. I have seen reports that up to 14,000 people have left the Sunshine Coast to get construction jobs elsewhere in Queensland. I am glad that this budget will ramp up construction on the Sunshine Coast. The \$15,000 first home owner construction grant is great news for the people of Queensland and for young Queenslanders wanting to buy and invest in their first home in Queensland. It is not relying on a market that is led by residences that are already built. It is encouraging growth and opportunity. It is encouraging young people to own their own home. We know that the more homes that are built the more growth we have in the sector and the more affordable homes become. That is what this policy does. The Labor Party will never understand that if you keep doing the same things over and over you get the same result. That is why we had the same result in Queensland for 14 years with the Labor Party—firstly because they were clueless and incompetent and, secondly, because they did not have any regard to the cost of living pressures that they were putting on Queenslanders.

**Mr Symes:** They still don't.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take that positive interjection. They still do not understand it. They still do not get it because they are economic illiterates. In relation to the four pillars of our economy, our Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and his department are tackling those issues. I thank the honourable minister for the decisions that he is making in that regard. We have a huge problem in Queensland that the honourable Treasurer has tried to get across in this budget and that, of course, is debt. We have to work out a way to pay down the debt. Queenslanders understand that if you do not balance your budget and you keep running at a loss and spending more than you earn you lose your AAA credit rating. Just as Queensland did. Queensland families get a bad credit rating if they do not pay their debts. The Labor Party will never understand that maintaining a AAA credit rating means something. They do not care. We have seen the South Australian Labor Party lose its AAA credit rating. Labor parties do not care about that, but it means something. It means that there is borrowing capacity to keep construction and industry going in Queensland. We place an enormous amount of importance on getting back and maintaining our AAA credit rating. That is why the government has had to make some of the decisions it has had to in this budget.

Let us look at lowering the cost of living. When was the last time that we had a Queensland budget that gave something back to the people? We have given a water rebate of \$80. When was the last time we had a budget that talked about concessions and taxation relief? The Labor Party knows only one thing: tax more, tax more. That is all it knows how to do. They sit over there and say, 'We are fighting for the working class and we are fighting for Queensland families,' yet for the past 14 years all they have done is to ask Queenslanders to put their hands in their pockets and tip them out until they are bare bone dry of money. That is not what we are on about. We want to create opportunities for investment in Queensland, so that people can grow and be successful and prosperous. We want every Queensland to be prosperous and successful, because we know that then they can have sustainable family environments in which they can afford some of the luxuries of life that they might not be able to afford at the moment.

When was the last time we talked about concession taxation relief for stamp duty? I remember the last time we talked about stamp duty in this place was when we debated the last budget, in which Andrew Fraser got rid of the principal place of residence concession on buying a home up to \$450,000—getting rid of a \$7,000 concession for the average person buying a home in Queensland if they were going to live in it. As is obvious from the address given today by the Leader of the Opposition, we live in a world where the Labor Party thinks we should be consistent with New South Wales and all the other states. We know that before a conservative government took over in New South Wales, its economy was an absolute basket case. In one term of parliament, they went through four premiers. We know what New South Welshmen think of the Labor Party, and it is what Queenslanders thought of the Labor Party on 24 March. Queenslanders wanted things to be different. Queenslanders wanted a change. They wanted something to come back to them. Therefore, the honourable Treasurer has immediately given the \$7,000 principal place of residence concession back. That will help every Queensland buying a home in Queensland. It will help my constituents in Kawana buy and invest in property in Queensland. It may encourage someone to sell their house and buy a bigger one or have a bigger family, create a bigger home and get a better tax concession from the state.

We have made a great investment in the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme, which puts money back into the pockets of Queenslanders. We have frozen car registration charges. How can the Labor Party say that this budget does nothing for Queenslanders when every Queensland will get an \$80 rebate on their water bill, we have frozen car registration charges and we have frozen the tariff 11 electricity prices? We had the guts to take the fight to the electricity companies. We have seen policy changes from those electricity companies, because Queensland now has a government that will stick up for Queenslanders.

I turn to my own portfolio of Justice. It is an exciting portfolio, as it ensures that Queenslanders have access to justice. This morning I spoke in the chamber about the \$6 million commission of inquiry to make sure that Queensland is the safest place to raise a child. That is why we will not hesitate to introduce the laws that the community wants us to introduce, such as our two-strike sex offender policy. We will do that because the community expects nothing less of us. Over three years we will give \$750,000 to the Women's Legal Service. Victims of crime support groups will have an additional \$2 million at their disposal over the next four years, which is an additional \$500,000. From this sector we know one thing: the Labor Party underfunded them nearly to extinction. They will now have access to \$2 million that they did not have previously. Last night I was at the Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law to attend the AGM of PACT, Protect All Children Today. They were very excited that they will now have the opportunity to apply for up to \$200,000 in the rounds of funding for victims of crime support services. I thank that group for what they do to support young victims of crime in our courts.

Let us look at youth justice, which is a particular passion of mine. This government moved that area from the department of communities, where it was getting no attention from the former Labor Party minister. We have put it into the department of justice and we are giving it the attention that it deserves. In Queensland, we have a problem with juvenile justice because we know that 32 per cent of young offenders have served five times or more in detention. I know that a lot of civil libertarians are out there attacking government policy as being too hard. For 14 years they have had the ear of the Labor Party, but if their ideas were so hot and so great, why haven't they implemented them? Why did nothing work in the past 14 years? We are making the decisions.

We are setting up a boot camp at Cairns and we are setting up a boot camp at the Gold Coast. We want young people to get out of this 'college of crime'. We want young people to be able to grow and have a contributing positive influence on their families and society. We do not want kids locked up in detention for the sake of keeping them there. We want to turn their lives around, which is why the boot camp policy is so important. It is being trialled over the next two years. It will be great when we start the boot camp trials in Cairns and on the Gold Coast next year. If there is an opportunity and if they are working, next year we may look at expanding the scope of the boot camps across Queensland.

In the department of justice we are getting rid of court backlogs. We have appointed a Central Coroner, David O'Connell. It will be of interest to honourable members in the region from Caloundra to Proserpine to know that every square inch of Queensland will now be covered by a full-time coroner. The Labor Party underfunded coronial services and the magistrates had to do all the coronial work. Every part of Queensland will be covered by a coroner because we saw a deficiency there. We saw that we needed it, we got on with the job and we did it within a relatively short period. I thank the member for Whitsunday who was in the region on the day of the appointment of Mr O'Connell as magistrate and Central Coroner.

I thank the Treasurer for investing in the appointment of a Supreme Court judge for the state of Queensland. The Treasurer fully appreciates and understands why we need more economic activity in the legal profession. That is why we are investing in an additional Supreme Court judge, to make sure that the commercial backlog is cleared and that people know that Queensland is a jurisdiction for this type of work. That exciting announcement will be made in a relatively short period. I thank the Treasurer for that. We are also readjusting the acting magistrate arrangement, thereby freeing up a little bit of money to appoint three additional full-time magistrates across Queensland, one in Southport and another two places to be determined by the Chief Magistrate and me. We talk about the judiciary and Queenslanders wanting more from their courts. This government is getting on with the job of delivering on that.

I now turn to my great constituents of Kawana. For years, we have talked about the delay of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital.

**Mr Nicholls:** Not now.

**Mr BLEIJIE:** I take the interjection from the honourable Treasurer. In 2009, 2,000 constituents of Kawana and other areas of the Sunshine Coast turned out to a state march and sang the chant, 'Hospital delay, no way.' Now they sing in the streets, 'Hospital delay no more.' That is because of an LNP government. I am particularly pleased at the announcement in this budget of additional money for that hospital. The signing of the contract to get the Sunshine Coast University Hospital off the ground will really drive investment in that area. We know that in a 1.5-kilometre radius around the Kawana town centre, 10,000 jobs will be created in the next 10 years. That is the investment that the Liberal National Party is putting into the Sunshine Coast. You cannot do more than a \$2 billion investment.

I recall the Treasurer saying at a business function on the coast that other than the incoming government briefing, one of the first briefs he received was on the Sunshine Coast University Hospital, to make sure that we understood the vital importance of that project. When it commences it will be one of the biggest projects in Queensland and Australia, right next door to the Ramsay private hospital. The project will create 10,000 jobs in 10 years. The Sunshine Coast thanks the government for that investment and we are particularly pleased to be able to deliver it. Years ago, a constituent of mine, Mr Brian Ginn, said that his dying wish was to see the Sunshine Coast University Hospital come out of the ground. I hope that we

will be able to honour Brian Ginn's wish. He has not been particularly well lately and is on oxygen. We are hoping that he will be able to come down to the hospital site to see it start to come out of the ground.

We look at our great schools and our great investment of P&Cs. I condemn the Labor Party and I condemn the Queensland Teachers Union for having such a slanging match against our P&Cs. Up until I was a minister I tried to get to every P&C meeting every month in eight schools in my electorate. I think they are fine workers of our community, upstanding people representing businesses but also supporting the schools because they have a direct connection with the schools through their children.

Our principals love our P&Cs. For the Queensland Teachers Union to come out and condemn our P&Cs and say that they cannot financially comprehend \$160,000 I think is a shameful act and it is supported by the Australian Labor Party. Do they not ever go to their P&C meetings? What do they think of their P&C meetings? If they are anything like the P&C meetings in other electorates, I think they would have fine, upstanding citizens. To be criticised like they have by a union thug I think is despicable and disgraceful, and it is disgraceful of the Labor Party for sticking up for the Queensland Teachers Union.

If there is something we learnt out of the federal BER project, it is that if we had the P&Cs and schools administering the funding we would have saved a lot more money. With all due respect to my honourable colleague on my left, I am glad that schools will have the capacity to hire local mums' and dads' businesses rather than QBuild to do the work in the electorates. I do apologise to my honourable colleague to my left, but I think it will be great for schools to have the capacity to do that. I am excited by this budget. It represents a shift in Queensland. It represents a shift to a bright and prosperous future that our children can live up to. I am proud to be a part of a government that delivers it.