



Speech by

**Jo-Ann Miller**

**MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA**

Hansard Thursday, 13 September 2012

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

**Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (10.40 pm): This is a budget that is a fraud on the people of the electorate of Bundamba in my home city of Ipswich and the people of Queensland. Following the LNP's first budget after it has been in government for six months, today Fitch Ratings has downgraded Queensland's credit rating from AA plus to AA. The LNP has failed its first test. The LNP is a joke in terms of economic performance. It gets a D for dunce.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Watts): Order! We will hear the member, please.

**Mrs MILLER:** Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. They get a D for dunce, they get a D for decapitating jobs and services, they get a D for being dills and they get a D for being drongos.

The assessment that was given by Fitch Ratings on 26 March this year stated—

Queensland's new government has pledged to address the challenges of budgetary recovery and debt growth. Its ability to do this successfully will be an important component of our assessment of the state's rating ...

They do not like the budget. Two days later, they have given the government the thumbs down, and every member opposite is going to have to cop it.

One has to wonder how they drafted the budget. For heaven's sake, was the Treasurer watching Plucka Duck on *Hey Hey It's Saturday*? As the ducks went around he pulled down the duck that said that 14,000 public servants had to go. He pulled down another duck that said services had to go. Then he pulled down another duck. For heaven's sake! It is just like Plucka Duck. What we have seen here today is Fitch Ratings making a fool out of the state of Queensland through this Treasurer and this LNP government.

Where once I proudly reported to the electorate in previous budget speeches year in, year out about the great work undertaken by Labor in government to supply the infrastructure and fund the community programs needed in our growing community, this government has decapitated the services and the jobs in our area and has hoodwinked the people. The only announcements that this government has made are ones previously announced by our Labor government. They are hanging their hats on things already put in place by us. There has been nothing new at all, except for the sacking of 14,000-plus permanent public servants and even more temporary public servants and contractors, including those on the front line—doctors, nurses et cetera.

In my last budget speech, on 17 June 2011, I announced the construction of a new fire station at Ripley. The current minister, the hypocrite that he is, bagged the expenditure. But then he had the hide to turn up in Ripley to turn the first sod for the building works. He did not mention that it was a Labor budget item. He is known more as 'Sack 'em' Jack Dempsey.

**Mr Minnikin** interjected.

**Ms TRAD:** I rise to a point of order. If the member for Chatsworth wants to interject he should go back to his own seat.

**Mrs MILLER:** There is no new funding for Blackstone—not one single dollar. They are taking away the old, historic Blackstone school site. They are selling it off, in spite of it now being used as a community centre. This will rob the Ipswich Historical Society, the genealogical society—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members will cease interjecting.

**Mrs MILLER:** Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. This will rob the Ipswich Historical Society, the genealogical society and the Bundamba subsection of the naval association of their home. The residents are outraged at this decision. Swanbank gets nothing and there is no new funding for the Bundamba community.

In my last budget speech I thanked QBuild workers for their hard work during the flood recovery effort in helping Bundamba State School get back on its feet. Those dedicated workers are now being sacked by the LNP government. Ebbw Vale has no new funding. The LNP government obviously does not know that this suburb exists. There is no new funding for Dinmore. Just like Blackstone, the Dinmore school is being sold from under the community. This robs the Tofa Mamao A Samoa Samoan Advisory Council of its home base and robs Dinmore of a community centre. Like Blackstone school, Dinmore school was available for community use. This is putting profit before people. It is typical of the LNP.

There is no new funding for Riverview. Labor spent millions improving the suburb of Riverview—improving the homes, schools and community facilities—to help residents. Tens of millions of dollars have been spent on community renewal, urban renewal, State Schools of Tomorrow, rebuilding Riverview State School—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members on my right will not pass comments across the chamber.

**Mrs MILLER:** Riverview State School gets nothing—zilch. There are cuts to the number of public housing homes and cuts to the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program, which got hundreds of people back into the workforce. Sadly, it looks like the police beat is going to be shut down. Riverview Neighbourhood House funding will be cut, as will all the employment programs.

There is no new funding for Redbank. The flood hit suburb of Redbank is another to feel the cuts of the Newman LNP government, with the only news in the budget being that the police beat at Redbank Plaza is likely to be shut. There is no new funding for Goodna, which is still finding its feet after the long, hard struggle after the floods. This Newman decapitating LNP government has slashed and burned the funding for programs and facilities in Goodna, with Child Safety moving to Springfield. Goodna Neighbourhood House, another community organisation delivering services, can expect massive cuts in funding to their much needed services. There is no new funding for Redbank Plains and Bellbird Park. Under Labor we extended the train line from Richlands to Springfield, with the next logical step of extending it to Redbank Plains. It is something on which I campaigned during the election after hearing loud and clear from the community that it would vastly improve public transport in the region and provide much needed construction jobs and economic stimulus. The LNP refuse to even contemplate extending the railway line to Redbank Plains. There is no new funding for a new school at Redbank Plains despite the growth—something earmarked by us, by Labor. Sadly, the LNP has ignored this and the other needs of residents in Redbank Plains, another suburb that loses out under this LNP government.

There is no new funding for Collingwood Park. The much needed funding for the growth suburb of Collingwood Park has dried up, with no plans for the subsidence area and no plans to increase the school facilities except for what we in Labor committed to under the contracts for Woodlinks State School. Labor looked to the future in suburbs like Collingwood Park to provide the certainty it needed after subsidence brought ambiguity. There is no money for the filling-in of mines and no money for rehabilitation. There is no new funding for Brookwater or Augustine Heights except for what was already committed by the previous government. As planned under Labor and through its contractual arrangements, Augusta State School will be expanded.

The Newman LNP government has no vision and no empathy for residents in these suburbs who desire a safe and happy community to back their investment in their homes. For Springfield and Springfield Lakes there is no new funding, except what was contractually committed by the previous Labor government. Again, this LNP government has cut and pasted the previous Labor government's commitments—things I fought long and hard for. But there is nothing new from the Tories, this disgraced LNP government. The budget items are a continuance of what we had in place and our contracts for Springfield Central State High School and Springfield Central State School. And they had to continue the Springfield railway line or get filthy dirty tearing out the construction work already started.

The LNP government have shown that they are incapable of planning for future growth in my area. They do not care about our young families or their future needs. Just this week residents asked me why things had not been occurring in Springfield and the lakes area at the blistering pace they had under our Labor government. Labor delivered the schools before time, the police station before time, the ambulance station before time, and community facilities like the hall at Springfield Lakes before time. We delivered on

the train line and we delivered on the bus services. But under this LNP government we are going backwards. The LNP government does not even recognise Springfield as a growing community. At the same time, right across Ipswich it is rehashing announcements previously made by the Labor government.

Residents who protest-voted and wanted change by voting LNP are shocked and dismayed. These are not the changes they were told of. It is not the change they expected. This is not the change they voted for. Those who voted LNP were conned. Many of them were sacked because they were public servants and they were told untruths. They were sickened by the service cuts and worried about their future. And now they are in our community and they are depressed and disillusioned—all because of the LNP government. From the tenants advocacy service to cuts to Ipswich Hospital funding, 14,000-plus job losses if you count in the temporaries and the contractors, the slashing of community organisation funding and the stopping of successful employment and training programs, people are embarrassed that they ever voted LNP. Of course, the LNP axe still hangs over the Bremer Institute of TAFE as this government is following the lead of other LNP administrations in cutting training programs across Australia at a time of skills shortage.

This budget and the actions of this LNP government of course make no sense—no sense unless you are a private provider or a contractor making a profit out of providing public services. They claim that debt is bad, but we all know that you need debt to buy a house and to get ahead in life, just like Labor borrowed to deliver the railway lines and the road infrastructure so that our community can get ahead.

People are now seeing through that deceit. This is an ideological purge of the Public Service. What did we see on Tuesday afternoon? We saw genuine, dedicated, hardworking public servants being sacked by email and being sacked by text messages. How disgraceful is that? What we are seeing now is economic activity turn down. Of course, the Fitch Ratings agency today downgraded Queensland's credit rating to AA. And what is increasing under this LNP government? Unemployment. By their own figures, unemployment will rise. And do they care about the people without jobs? No. Tories never have. Labor is the party of service delivery in our area. The LNP is the party of misery and slash and burn. Labor delivers for the future needs of our community, like the Springfield railway line and all of our new schools and halls. You borrow now so that for generations residents will have access to public transport.

This short-sighted LNP government thinks you govern from election to election, whereas we in Labor govern for the future and for the long term. Newman will be known—here he comes; cop it sweet—as the Mr Magoo of Queensland politics, stumbling and bumbling his way through the budget, slashing and burning at random, on the way sacking many good people thus forcing them out of their homes to be sold. Kids will be pulled out of school and standards of living for many Queenslanders will be reduced. While the Premier is in the chamber, I say: Can-do, you've done it again! Queensland's credit rating has gone from AA plus to AA. He has made Queensland the laughing stock of Australia.

It is not just my electorate that is suffering. People see through everything. From my shadow portfolio activities and committee activities I know that this is right across Ipswich and right across Queensland.

The Queensland health system has borne the brunt of the Newman government's first slash and burn. Nobody, not even the Premier, seems to know how many redundancies they have forced on Queensland health workers. Like I asked yesterday, is it 4,140 full-time equivalents, as stated in Budget Paper No. 2? Or is it 2,754 full-time equivalents, as identified in the service delivery statements? If anyone had bothered to read the gibberish on budget night they would have been none the wiser. The numbers look very, very rubbery indeed. They change quicker than a bookie winding down the odds when a punter has plonked a gorilla on the dishlickers after the favourite was scratched. The minister has completed a trifecta for health: cuts in funding, cuts in staff and cuts in services. But it is odds-on that that is just the start.

We have assumed that these cuts do not include those thousands of health workers on rolling temporary and casual contracts that were already dismissed in June—thousands of people sacked, sacked, sacked. Does the minister know how many people will also lose their jobs when he cuts \$30 million in grants to community health organisations each year, every year for the next four years? If we start to talk about real individual people doing real health jobs, how many are going to lose their jobs this year? I calculate that over 7,000 people will lose their jobs in the health system alone. That is 7,000 people doing real health jobs.

This is just the beginning. This budget explicitly states that the Newman government will outsource public sector jobs in IT, HR, internal audit, radiology, pathology, catering, cleaning, security and maintenance. And they are even going to outsource the 13HEALTH telephone service. So who will people be talking to and who will be giving advice? 'Hello? Hello?' There's no-one here; they've all been sacked! Or callers might hear a voice recording: 'Sorry, they've all been sacked. Please ring Campbell Newman's office on 32244500.'

The people of Queensland need to question how the safety and quality of patient care will be maintained when the for-profit businesses tender for public health services. Corners will be cut and standards will slip. We all know that that will be the case.

In the important portfolio of housing, 'Landlord Minister' Dr Flegg has slashed funding for the TAAS that was funded by interest on tenants' rental bonds. This service helped people experiencing difficulties with rents and bonds and having disputes with landlords. They protected tenants' rights and ensured they got a fair go. They helped people go through the system. It saved time and money in the courts. By assisting those people in rental difficulty, it helped people off the public housing list. This is all about ideology. In Ipswich the local service has run successfully for years, helping those in need deal with disputes with the real estate agent or the landlord. It is the same story all over the state, where dedicated, hardworking people are now out of work and unable to supply a service that they did with such great dedication and compassion. They now find themselves in the situation where they have an uncertain future in paying their own rent or mortgage. But this service was more than just a tenants service because of the crisis intervention that they undertook. Also, how do we get on in relation to the public housing tenants groups? They have got rid of them. Scrapping the garden competition saves little amounts of money but causes great big holes in the community.

These programs spent a little but got a lot back for the self-esteem of public housing tenants in terms of their social wellbeing and their ability to have their voice heard and respected. Furthermore, this government has slashed 65 per cent of Tenants Union funding, further hampering efforts to assist people in need of funding. What do we also have here? A gross lack of compassion by those members opposite. Those opposite believe that sending out surveys to elderly people in public housing who have been long-term tenants was appropriate, and many of them were sobbing in fear. Those opposite believe that it is fine to put people on fixed-term tenancies, giving them no security of having a roof over their head. Those opposite stated before the election that they wanted to revitalise front-line services, but what is front line? And they are also going to sell off public assets without a mandate. What are they doing? They are selling off three caravan parks because turning a profit is the LNP game.

As shadow minister for mining, I can say that the worst time to be increasing taxes is when mining is under pressure from falling prices. It is clear that the ALP could only support royalty increases if economic studies showed it would not impact on jobs and impact on the mining communities—the mining communities of Blackwater and Dysart and Emerald and the other Central Queensland communities. Those people who voted LNP, many for the first time, are learning the very harsh reality that it comes with a price—the 14,000-plus people sacked from their permanent Public Service positions, the services being cut, the cuts in the community, no catering for the growth in our area, no more major roads being funded. People are going to suffer adverse affects—from the kids in the schools to the patients in the hospitals. They are now standing up for Queensland counting down the months. They will never vote LNP again!