




Speech by
John Grant

MEMBER FOR SPRINGWOOD

Hansard Friday, 14 September 2012

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

 **Mr GRANT** (Springwood—LNP) (3.59 pm): While today I would like to speak predominantly about our budget focus, I simply cannot proceed without first reminding the House of the poisoned chalice that Labor forced upon the people of our state after having filled it for many years with ever-deepening deficits and denial that debt had become a dead weight on families' backs. Many are suffering acutely now because Labor got it so wrong.

I was particularly incensed by the words dished out in an opposition speech in reply to the budget yesterday when the Leader of the Opposition had the gall to stand here and say, 'Labor stands for fairness,' and that they would immediately reinstate employment security, yet we know that behind the scenes before the election Labor were looking at significant numbers of retrenchments from the Public Service. Our Treasurer revealed yesterday that, in reality, Labor were handing out redundancies last year, telling staff that they were surplus to their needs. Labor MPs knew that they had employed too many staff. I understand that the scale of Labor's operations in this matter saw them communicating with in excess of 41,000 staff regarding termination of employment. Shame on those Labor MPs who increased the size of the bureaucracy by approximately 81,000 since 2005, just to backflip and look to 41,000 of them to accept redundancy in 2011. How cruel! Shame on those MPs who participated in that. When the Leader of the Opposition says that Labor would reinstate employment security, I ask: why would anyone believe her? Certainly no-one in this government would.

The cost of living is the No. 1 pressure on many families in Queensland at present and there is one reason for this. The one reason is Labor. Labor spent \$9,000 million recklessly on water infrastructure, much of which has not materialised. I say wastefully and recklessly because they left the spending to the last minute and paid a very high price to have work completed in a rush. Now we are paying it back. If only they had spent this money 10 years ago on a dam but, no, their vision was to take water reticulation businesses from councils only to backflip and let them be returned to councils, again at great expense. Why do I speak so passionately? Because I was in local government when Labor took \$1.3 billion worth of infrastructure off us. They took our staff and we just had to pay to bring it all back again. What a waste of state taxpayers' funds. They are the people I had to care for and did care for during my term in local government. Let me ask this question of Labor: where was your compassion for the people about whom you boast so much while you were doing all this? It has resulted in the grief that they are suffering now. Where was that compassion? It just did not exist. Labor just kept on spending—spending money they did not have employing people they could not pay. It created false security and now hopes are dashed.

The residents in my electorate of Springwood have been letting me know what has been causing them concern. Now I want to relate what the LNP has decided by applying the state budget to meet the needs of residents. Let us consider the cost-of-living concerns. Many LNP cost-saving measures are already in effect and well known, so I will not go over these again. However, additional funding of \$92 million has been provided in 2012-13 to deliver rebates of up to \$80 per domestic water connection in South-East Queensland to reduce the burden on residents. The LNP is also giving councils that are not yet

fluoridating their town water the option to not fluoridate their drinking water. An amount of \$14 million is expected to be saved from this action.

Significant funds have been allocated to assist children who cannot afford the cost of joining sports clubs. I encourage the sporting clubs in the Springwood electorate to apply for these funds. Let us consider young mothers with babies. The LNP government will provide \$28.9 million over four years and, thereby, enhance maternal and child health services to provide additional access to home visits and community clinics in the first 12 months following birth.

What of the challenge that young people face today in escaping the rent trap? By revisiting the first home owners grant, the government is targeting eligibility for that grant to those buying or building a new home to support a more supply based response to the issue of home affordability. To support housing construction, a \$15,000 first home owners grant will be provided. On the subject of housing more broadly, the Minister for Housing and Public Works, the Hon. Dr Bruce Flegg, has found seed funding for the development and renewal of both public and affordable housing. We care. We want to meet the needs of families on the waiting list and help young people purchase their first home. We want to make sure that there are more public homes built by the end of this year—unlike Labor, who were selling homes just to pay for the maintenance of the ones that they owned prior to that time.

I turn now to the subject of looking after families and caring for those with disabilities. This has been the single biggest issue brought to my attention by families visiting me since the election. They would come to my office with their child in the wheelchair and demonstrate how tough life is. I am very pleased to be able to say that in this budget the Hon. Tim Nicholls has put aside an extra \$26 million over four years to provide extra respite for people with high-needs disabilities aged between 16 and 25 and their carers, and to establish Parent Connect to provide assistance to parents of newborns with a disability.

I now would like to talk about the Elderly Parent Carer Innovation Trial. We care so we have allocated \$15 million to assist elderly parent carers of offspring with disabilities to have certainty and security about who will care for their adult children with a disability after they no longer can. The trial will invest in or contribute to projects that provide new community living spaces, mixed disabilities and aged-care developments, home modifications and grants to elderly carers to assist in the transition to new care arrangements. The Springwood electorate will benefit from grants totalling \$4.057 million provided for disability services.

Now let us consider our youth in early schooling. Some \$10.9 million over four years has been allocated to provide 30 speech-language pathologists in state schools to assist students facing learning challenges.

On the subject of law and order, additional funding of \$146.9 million over four years is provided to the Police Service, \$4 million over four years for the Neighbourhood Watch and Crime Stoppers programs, and \$2 million over two years to deliver a boot camp program to young people at high risk of reoffending. The program will include physical activity, intervention measures and family support. Also, \$8 million over four years has been allocated to assist local governments with graffiti removal.

I move on to education. The government will provide \$31.3 million from 2012-13 to 2014-15 and \$22.3 million ongoing from 2015-16 to roll out the equivalent of full-time teacher aides to an additional 150 prep classes each year in areas of greatest need. From 2013 this funding will support an additional 2,341 teacher aide hours a week, and by 2015-16 it will support an extra 9,000 teacher aide hours per week.

Up to \$160,000 will be available for each state school in the electorate of Springwood for maintenance purposes where required. I can tell members that it is widely required in Springwood. I was amazed to walk through Springwood State High School and see downpipes completely rusted apart, glass windows cracked and just glued up and a dire need for painting and tidying up. It was appalling to see the state of those buildings—certainly not compliant with building regulations. The government will also provide additional funding of \$1 million over four years to support schools with access to chaplaincy services. I am grateful for this support for our young people.

I turn my mind to the environment and heritage protection, specifically koala protection. The government is providing increased funding of \$4 million over four years with a focus on habitat connectivity for koala preservation and a further \$17.1 million over three years towards the acquisition of koala habitat. I have already been active in attempting to see some of these funds used in my electorate.

I am very happy to announce some details with regard to road safety expenditure in my electorate. Approximately \$400,000 has been allocated for upgrades at particular intersections in Springwood. The intersection of Sports Drive and Springwood Road, which has been a terribly dangerous intersection for many years, will receive a traffic lights upgrade; the intersection of Belbora Road and Bryants Road will receive a traffic lights upgrade; and there will be an upgrade at the intersection of Cinderella Drive and Fitzgerald Avenue.

We have a program of providing flashing lights in school zones. Deaths and injuries have occurred in school zones in or near my electorate. We have allocated \$7.5 million over four years to provide

flashing-lights speed-limit signs in priority school zones. My constituents, sadly, have to be patient because assessments have identified dangerous locations more deserving of our attention this year than Springwood Road State School. However, I will continue to pursue lights for this school as vehicles often speed through this zone.

Now I turn my mind to the M1, a major part of my electorate. Virtually everyone in the Springwood electorate experiences delays on the congested motorway. I am pleased to emphasise that \$12.8 million has been allocated for the upgrading of the M1, with an additional lane between Fitzgerald Avenue and the Aranda Street precinct. Springwood residents will also benefit from \$10 million budgeted in this financial year for asphalt overlays in the area on the M1 motorway.

I sincerely thank the Treasurer and Minister for Trade, the Hon. Tim Nicholls, all cabinet ministers and the Premier for the budget that has been prepared. Many have received much needed support. While others have to persevere until we can get them the help they need, we have made the unpopular decisions so that we can deliver the greater good to the greatest number in a sustainable manner. I commend the bills to the House.