



Speech by
Jon Krause

MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT

Hansard Friday, 14 September 2012

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

Mr KRAUSE (Beaudesert—LNP) (11.58 am): This is the budget of a generation. The Treasurer has said this. I agree. But it is also the budget for a generation, and that is my generation. It sets out a road to set Queensland free from the debt addiction of the former government, and it is people of my ilk and my generation who have suffered the most from that debt addiction through ever-increasing costs of living such as water, power, rates, fuel and the list goes on.

In this budget the government has recognised, as Treasury did in its incoming government brief, that the fiscal position of Queensland is unsustainable and it must be remedied urgently in this term of government. I think it is worth recalling the following remarks of another Treasurer made some time ago—

In periods of growth we must put away savings for the downturns. But far from saving, the previous Government kept ratcheting up our debts—spending money it didn't have.

Our predecessors had Australia on a path of deficit and debt to the next century.

Make no mistake, this path would only make future choices harder, future possibilities bleaker and rob Australians of the future opportunities they deserve.

Our Government could not stand back and ignore the problem. Although we did not create it, we will take the responsibility to fix it.

Peter Costello's words in the Commonwealth budget of 1996—a coalition budget handed down after another 13 years of Labor government—apply equally to Queensland now as it did to Australia then. Australia was left with a massive \$10.3 billion budget black hole by Labor and history has repeated itself here in Queensland. We have been left with a budget black hole. We did not create it, but we will fix it.

Members of the opposition—both Labor and the 'north-west branch of the Labor Party', the Katter party—claim that Peter Costello's participation in the independent Commission of Audit makes it a political document set up to promote predetermined outcomes. That is absolute rubbish. If there is any person in the length and breadth of this nation who knows a thing or two about prudent fiscal management it is Peter Costello. He delivered 12 coalition budgets

Mr Cripps: Doug McTaggart was on it.

Mr KRAUSE: I will take that interjection. Doug McTaggart was on the Commission of Audit as well. Peter Costello delivered 12 coalition budgets in the Howard government—12—and guess how many of those budgets were surplus budgets? Eleven. Peter Costello delivered 11 surplus budgets and a decade of prosperity for Australia.

By contrast, after being left with a \$20 billion surplus in 2007 by Howard and Costello, how many surpluses has our esteemed Treasurer Swan from Queensland delivered? None. Labor just does not get it and it never will get it. It cannot manage government finances, because debt and deficit is in its DNA. Yet the opposition members deny it. They are debt and deficit deniers because, as they see it, it is simply their job to spend, spend, spend and then tax, tax, tax the people of this state to pay for their waste.

While I am talking about the members of the Katter party—the member for Dalrymple and the member for Mount Isa—let me make this point: it is very easy to sit back and argue from the sidelines. It is very easy to snipe from the sidelines that this program should not be cut or that project should go ahead or

that this, that or the other is right or wrong. Anybody can do that, but it is quite another thing to work as part of a team to obtain constructive outcomes for your electorate. That is what I am doing for the Beaudesert electorate. That is what all members of the LNP team are doing for their electorates. The members of the Katter party representing regional Queensland are failing their communities by focusing on scoring cheap political points at a time when they should be rolling up their sleeves and working with the government in a constructive, mature fashion. But it seems to be beyond them. Yesterday in this place we had the member for Dalrymple taking up the cudgels against some parts of the budget, including the public sector changes. He claimed that these changes were made to pursue a political objective. I say to the member for Dalrymple that if he thinks that running a balanced budget, reducing the cost of living for all Queenslanders and bringing the Queensland economy back to an even keel free from \$65 billion or more of debt around our neck and \$500 million a year of interest, which has to be paid for by all Queenslanders, is a political platform, then I put my hand up for it. The member for Dalrymple and his fellow travellers show that they just do not get it. They must support higher taxes for all Queenslanders, like these Labor people over here.

Balancing the budget, getting our economy back on track and cutting the cost of living is what decent, hardworking people in small businesses and farms throughout the Beaudesert electorate know in their bones to be the right thing to do. That is in their DNA. They know that tough decisions will be made, but they expect us to make the right decisions. We are sorry that people have lost their jobs. But let there be no doubt that the fault for that lies at the feet of Labor, which allowed Queensland's finances to deteriorate so much that these decisions have to be made.

I refer to the remarks of the credit rating agency Fitch concerning Queensland's debt position over the past three to four years, noting that general government debt doubled in three to four years. That formed part of its reasons for shifting Queensland's credit rating. One would think that such comments from the credit rating agency Fitch would make members of the opposition sit up and take notice. One would think that it would make them realise that their government had set Queensland on an unsustainable path and that they were out of control. One would think that they would recognise, belatedly, that urgent action is required to stop Queensland's credit rating further deteriorating. If our credit rating is lowered, we pay more interest and if we pay more interest, there is less money to go around for schools, teachers, doctors, police or public servants.

But that would be too much to expect from the debt and deficit deniers in the opposition. They cling to the policies that have brought Queensland's finances to its knees. What would they do to ease the cost of living? Nothing. They would continue to spend, tax and borrow. But Queensland cannot afford that. Queensland cannot afford interest expense to increase faster than health spending. People in Beaudesert cannot afford more debt, more borrowing and more spending. After electricity price rises of 60 per cent over five years, massive increases in vehicle registration and other licence fees, water costs, other costs and charges, Queenslanders have had enough. Their pockets are empty. The cupboard is bare. Many families are living on the financial brink, yet members of the opposition stand up in this place and argue for policies that will continue to gouge people's wallets, sending us further down the tube. It is a disgrace and the people of the Beaudesert electorate know that it is a disgrace. This is the budget that Queensland had to have.

I turn now to specific elements of the budget—a budget setting up Queensland for a brighter future. This budget lays the foundation of the government's commitment to stabilising debt levels, returning the budget to surplus by 2014-15 and regaining the state's AAA credit rating. The budget sets out a path for Queenslanders to save up to \$500 million a year on interest and those funds can be better used to deliver local services and infrastructure such as roads, hospital services and projects such as the Beaudesert bypass in my electorate. This budget puts all Queenslanders first.

We are delivering up to \$160,000 for local state school P&Cs to assist in fixing maintenance backlogs. There are over 20 state schools in the Beaudesert electorate and I know that the P&C associations in my electorate will be lining up to obtain this funding to fix maintenance backlogs at their schools. It is much appreciated that we are giving them the trust of the government to go out and fix their own issues with local tradesmen and local service providers. We do not need to funnel money through a bureaucracy into schools. We need to trust the school communities to do the best they can for their own community.

The introduction of the \$15,000 first home owner construction grant on new homes supports housing construction and supports first home buyers. I know that builders in my electorate such as Stroud Homes and the Beaudesert Roof and Truss company, Cec Miles in Boonah and other construction companies will all appreciate this shot in the arm, as will first home buyers, who have been struggling to get into the market.

The budget puts in place savings of up to \$120 on annual electricity bills by freezing tariff 11. We have also frozen the family car registration for 2.5 million family vehicles. We are providing an \$80 rebate on water bills and, overall, \$11 million for land, weed and pest management, sustainable agriculture and water quality initiatives, supporting one of the pillars of our economy of agriculture. That is a very important industry in my electorate of Beaudesert. There is \$4.8 million for research to develop Queensland as a

food bowl for Asia. As a leading exporter of pulses, that will be greatly appreciated in the Fassifern Valley and the Lockyer Valley in the neighbouring electorate of Lockyer. We have great potential in those areas to grow those industries and those businesses to export to Asia. It is great to see the government recognising that as a key pillar of our economy.

There is \$44 million to provide better access to emergency and specialist health care. I know that through the Metro South Hospital and Health Board and the West Moreton Hospital and Health Board there will be progress on the services offered in both Beaudesert and Boonah hospitals. There will be 300 new police on the beat as part of our plan to deliver 1,100 new police. I know that the Minister for Police has indicated that 100 of those new police have been designated for Logan. Jimboomba is a key area of the Logan Police District. I will be working hard with the Minister for Police and the Commissioner to get extra police for the growing area around Jimboomba, Flagstone and Greenbank.

We have delivered an increased Health budget, including \$1.3 billion to construct, expand and redevelop hospitals and \$28.9 million to put in place the Mums and Bubs health service with additional access to home visits and community clinics during a baby's first year of life. We are delivering full-time teacher aides for an additional 150 prep classes. It has been made known to the Beaudesert State School that they will benefit from that program and they are appreciative of the extra support. We are funding \$5.5 million in 2012-13 to support Get in the Game to get kids involved in sport and be active in the community. Healthy lifestyles lead to better health outcomes down the track. There is additional funding to improve social housing services and \$20 million to implement a tourism investment strategy. There are many good tourism operators in the Scenic Rim in my electorate of Beaudesert and I am sure that through local and regional tourism organisations that \$20 million will benefit their businesses.

As part of the LNP government I have been working hard to deliver for the Beaudesert electorate to ensure it receives its fair share. The government has had to make some tough decisions, but I am pleased to see that it has been able to continue investment in the Beaudesert electorate. It is an area that was neglected by the former government for many, many years. Local highlights for the electorate include a \$1.837 million investment in the replacement of Tamborine Mountain's auxiliary fire station; \$2.155 million for the replacement of Spring Creek Bridge, Telemon Street, Beaudesert; and \$105,000 for the replacement of a lookout in Lamington National Park. Tourism is key, and replacing this sort of infrastructure is exactly what we need. There is \$4.163 million for the improvement of the intersection of Beaudesert-Beenleigh Road and Tamborine Mountain Road at Tamborine. It is an interesting intersection and I am glad to see that the investment has been made to improve safety in what is a growing area. There are a lot of new developments around there. There are \$4.5 million in grants for disability services in Jimboomba and Beaudesert as part of the record \$959 million investment in specialist disability services by the Newman government. There is \$1,000 for Beaudesert and Jimboomba to assist with the purchase of AFL training and playing equipment. This again is about promoting a healthy lifestyle through sport and recreation.

Initiatives to support the pillars of our economy of construction, agriculture and tourism in the electorate are key features of the budget. As I have mentioned, the first home owner construction grant will provide terrific assistance to first home buyers and tradies. All of the state schools in my electorate will benefit from the funding of up to \$160,000 to clear their maintenance backlog. I will continue working to ensure that investment needed in the electorate is delivered in subsequent budgets, things like the Beaudesert bypass, the Boonah-Kooralbyn Road, additional upgrades to the Mount Lindesay Highway and additional public transport infrastructure around Jimboomba and Beaudesert.

I reiterate that this is a once-in-a-generation budget. Our government was elected to get Queensland back on track and should we fail to do so, my generation—those in the earlier stages of their working lives right now—and our children will suffer the most. The government has to make some tough decisions in the short term to ensure a brighter and better future in the long term. I commend the budget to the House.