



Speech by

**Lisa France**

**MEMBER FOR PUMICESTONE**

Hansard Thursday, 13 September 2012

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

**Mrs FRANCE** (Pumicestone—LNP) (8.07 pm): It is an honour to rise tonight to contribute to discussions on the 2012 state budget, the first budget of the Newman government and, incidentally, the most important budget in a generation. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the Treasurer and the ministers for all of the hard work that has gone into delivering a responsible budget that promises to get Queensland back on track. I am proud to take this budget back to the people in my electorate because I know it delivers real cost-of-living relief and a focus on support services for those most in need in our communities. It is also a budget that delivers on the promises we made to the voters five months ago. This government has made a commitment to stabilising debt levels, regaining the state's AAA credit rating—lost under Labor—and returning the budget to a fiscal surplus by 2014-15. The budget announced on Tuesday by the Treasurer is wholly consistent with this promise and the first steps have been taken to secure a stable future for Queensland. This is a great budget for the people of Queensland.

This Newman government is delivering on our election promises by providing savings for a number of essential services that will lower the cost of living for Queensland families. This will be achieved by freezing electricity tariff 11, saving up to \$120 a year; freezing car registration fees; reinstating the stamp duty concession, saving an average of \$7,000 when purchasing a home; boosting the patient travel subsidy; providing for rebates of up to \$80 per domestic water connection to households; halving public transport fare increases; providing free travel on the TransLink network after nine journeys; repealing the industry waste levy to reduce the burden on business; and cutting red tape that was choking businesses and adding unnecessary costs that were ultimately passed on to consumers.

I am very pleased with the deliverables in this budget for my electorate of Pumicestone. I will now summarise how these will help my local area and get Queensland back on track. I am proud to say that in Pumicestone support services for people of any age with a disability and for people aged 60 years and over, like those offered by the Bribie Island Voluntary Community Help Association, will continue thanks to the \$192,000 allocated for the provision of the Home Assist Secure service. The Newman government has demonstrated a clear commitment to housing assistance, despite financial constraints, and I am thrilled that this vital service will remain active in our community. While funding is an essential part of this service, this group would not exist without the support of wonderful volunteers, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Greg Spencer and the team at Bribie Island Voluntary Community Help Association for their hard work and dedication to our community. It is great to see that \$398,000 is to be provided to Centacare Caboolture Services for the provision of their Home Assist Secure service for people with a disability and those over the age of 60 within the Caboolture and Kilcoy areas.

The provision of disability support services is an important issue in my electorate and to me personally, so it is fantastic to see the government's record \$959 million investment in specialist services, of which the Pumicestone electorate will benefit to the tune of \$7.957 million. This funding commitment is great news for the local community and will help fund vital services including accommodation support, community access, community participation and respite services.

**Mr Johnson:** I bet that hasn't happened for a long time.

**Mrs FRANCE:** I do not think we have seen it in a long time. Our Newman government has also committed \$15 million to assist elderly parent carers of people with a disability. This is an initiative I wholeheartedly applaud, as I know it will bring a lot of comfort to the families who face this fear of the future every day. We are also establishing the Parent Connect program to provide assistance to parents of newborns with a disability. I am proud to be part of a government that places extreme importance on the provision of support services to those people in need in Queensland living with a disability. This is a great budget for the people of Queensland.

For the people of my electorate and surrounding electorates of Morayfield and Glass House who rely on the health services provided by the Caboolture Hospital, I am pleased to see further funding commitments by our government to improve these facilities.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mrs FRANCE:** I take that interjection from the member for Nanango. It does help her area, too. After longstanding campaigns to secure additional funding for the hospital, I was absolutely thrilled to see in Tuesday's budget the confirmation of \$8.5 million to continue the expansion of the emergency department and a further \$2.7 million for the establishment of an education and skills training centre at the hospital. This is the largest Health budget in Queensland's history, with \$1.3 billion being committed to be spent on construction, expansion and redevelopment of hospitals across Queensland.

Another announcement that I am particularly excited about due to the financial relief it will offer the people of Pumicestone is the increase in the patient travel subsidy. Our government has increased the accommodation subsidy from \$30 per person per night to \$60—the first time it has been increased since 1987. It is great to see that the travel subsidy has also been increased, from 15c a kilometre to 30c a kilometre. This will go a long way to helping cover the costs associated with having to travel to seek medical care.

These firm financial commitments to Caboolture Hospital will go a long way to addressing the needs of our community, as will the other Newman government initiatives recently undertaken, such as the injection of \$28.9 million over four years to enhance maternal and child health services, to provide additional access to home visits and community clinics for the first 12 months following birth, to establish the local hospital boards, the recent addition of a 43-bed mental health unit at Caboolture Hospital, and the increased number of medical, nursing and allied health staff on the weekends to speed up processing times. The funding and improvements proposed for Queensland Health will be a positive step forward in the journey to restoring Queenslanders' faith in their public hospital system, left devastated by Labor's appalling management.

Having already announced the reinstatement of the stamp duty concession that will save homebuyers an average of \$7,000 and also the scrapping of the sustainability declaration, I am pleased to take back to my electorate yet another win for homebuyers with the announcement of the new first home owner construction grant. This gives first home buyers of new homes a \$15,000 head start and will also provide a much needed boost for my local construction industry. Our construction industry has been hit hard by the downturn in the property market over the past few years. I look forward to this initiative bringing back truck loads of trusses to my area, and hopefully this will mean that everyone—from the Davos, the Brenos, the Boogsies, the Raymonds and the Franceys right through to the bigger builders like the Mancorps and Glendale Homes—will be able to find work again in our local area. An additional benefit to business that has been outlined in this budget is the increase to the payroll tax exemption threshold from \$1 million to \$1.6 million over six years that will help 20,000 businesses and support thousands of jobs in Queensland.

In another big win for my electorate, public schools will now be eligible for up to \$160,000 each to help clear the backlog of maintenance. This will mean local parents making decisions to use local tradies and businesses to finally get on with fixing Labor's accrued backlog of maintenance in our kids' schools. I have two high schools and six primary schools in my electorate of Pumicestone, and I know that this will have a significant impact on the schools, helping to create a safer school environment, while providing an injection of new business into our local area.

I was thrilled to recently welcome our Premier and our education minister when they came to meet the delightful prep students and teachers at Tullawong primary school. We took this opportunity to launch the provision of an additional 150 teacher aides for prep classes in areas of greatest need. This initiative was welcomed by parents and teachers alike and will deliver great benefits to our children's education and development.

Our Caboolture TAFE campus and its students will also benefit enormously from this budget, with \$1.832 million set aside to upgrade the library. This is a much needed addition to our TAFE, and I am proud to be able to deliver on this for my community.

The admirable work of the Queensland Police Service has been acknowledged in this budget with \$146.9 million committed to delivering an additional 1,100 new Queensland police officers by 2015-16. This, I know, will be welcomed in my area by the hardworking and overstretched police officers, who do a fantastic job keeping our community safe. The importance of community safety and the role that the QPS plays can never be underestimated, and I am proud to be part of this government, committed to supporting our Police Service and ensuring the safety of Queenslanders around the state. I am also proud to see in our Queensland budget the allocation of \$750,000 over three years to the Women's Legal Service to support vulnerable women in Queensland.

With regard to sport, not only is our Newman government running the Get in the Game program that will provide financial assistance to clubs to ease the burden on fundraising for big-ticket items and subsidise kids' fees to try new sport; my local area has also received \$157,000 to employ a coordinator to support AFL and cricket clubs, a coordinator to support netball clubs and a dedicated coordinator to establish a network for people with a disability that will encourage involvement in sport and active recreation. These are wonderful initiatives focused on getting our young people active and outdoors.

The Newman government is committed to addressing the social housing crisis and allows for \$456.5 million to expand and improve social housing services across the state. I am pleased to be able to say that my electorate will be receiving \$4.233 million in this budget to complete the \$26 million worth of works currently in progress. This will result in 87 units on Bribie Island, with priority given to those in the 55-year-plus age group, and 13 new units in Caboolture. This is a great addition to our area that will see many families in safe, good-quality accommodation.

Funding has also been provided for roadworks projects in our area, with \$3.42 million set aside for Bruce Highway works and a further \$277,000 for works associated with the Burpengary-Caboolture Road. Unfortunately due to the dire financial situation left to us by the former Labor government, a feasibility study for the duplication of Bribie bridge is not included in this year's budget. This is something I will continue to fight for and look forward to delivering on once the state of Queensland's finances have improved. I am proud to say that our state government is working very closely with our local governments to address the damage and repair works that have been left after the 2011 floods. In this budget we have allocated \$20.3 million to go towards Moreton Bay Regional Council to assist in the reimbursement and reinstatement of flood damage. This is a perfect example of local and state governments working together and I thank my councillors—Gary Parsons from division 1, Peter Flannery from division 2, Greg Chippendale from division 3 and Deputy Mayor, and Mayor Allan Sutherland—for their ongoing commitment to working together with Wyatt Roy, the federal member for Longman, and me to deliver on the needs of our community.

I have recently met with environmental and community groups to outline brilliant new environmental initiatives—the Everyone's Environment grants and the Keep Australia Beautiful initiative. These initiatives support community groups working to the beautification and protection of our environment. These grants can provide funding for a number of activities, including tree planting, restoring degraded lands, community clean-ups of land and water, water quality programs and works to enhance natural beauty. Individual grants range from \$2,000 to \$100,000 and community groups such as Rotary, Lions, P&Cs and environmental groups are eligible to apply, and I look forward to fighting for my area to get its fair share of the available funds. I am pleased to see that \$150,000 has been allocated in this budget for stormwater management and wetland restoration planning in Pumicestone.

This budget is a historic and critically important budget for Queensland. The Treasurer has been faced with a monumental task—repairing a state budget so deeply damaged by a Labor government that Queensland was faced with the possibility of a \$100 billion debt. Not only has this government laid the foundations to return the budget to a fiscal surplus and stabilise debt levels; we have also managed to deliver a budget that contains real cost-of-living savings for everyday Queenslanders and a strong commitment to community safety and support services. I thank all of the small business owners, the parents, the passionate community groups and all of the police, teachers, health workers and concerned citizens who took the time to write to me, to call me and to meet with me to have their say on what they wanted to see delivered in our local area. As they can see from this budget, their input is valuable and I greatly appreciate their support as we work together to get Queensland back on track. This is a great budget for the people of Queensland, and I commend this bill to the House.