



Speech by


**Michael Crandon**

**MEMBER FOR COOMERA**

Hansard Friday, 14 September 2012

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

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (6.39 pm): I rise to contribute to the cognate debate on the Appropriation Bill 2012, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2012 and the Fiscal Repair Amendment Bill—very solemn words. That is what this budget is all about. In preparing for tonight's contribution, I took the time to look at last year's budget debate in *Hansard* and, in particular, my comments in that debate on Friday, 17 June 2011. It was quite an exceptional speech. It was almost like I was foretelling the future and foretelling this budget. At that time I was critical of the abolition of the principal place of residence concession that cost homebuyers up to \$7,000. I also said that I was concerned about the impact of the hike in stamp duty on people buying property. We have reinstated that entitlement. Back on 17 June 2011 when the previous Labor government was scrambling to try to save something—and, to be honest, I do not know what they were trying to save—we were committed to turning things around for Queensland in 2012. We have reinstated that entitlement.

I went on to say that electricity prices would continue to increase under the Labor government as would car registration. Once again, we have turned that around by freezing tariff 11. If I had the time tonight I would enjoy giving honourable members an update about the Energex-Origin issue. I would like to say that Origin has been out to conduct an audit on my property as promised. I point out that promise was made not because I am an MP but because that is part of the service. When I called them to arrange that audit I was told that the person who was meant to do it was on holidays. Lo and behold, they said she would be in touch with me when she returned. That was about three weeks ago and I have not heard back from them. I have not had my audit yet.

**Mr Crisafulli:** Getting back to the budget—

**Mr CRANDON:** Getting back to the budget, honourable members should remember that in 2012-13 we are freezing tariff 11. In so doing, we got into a bit of a bunfight with Origin over what it thought it was going to do. We won the day for the people of Queensland and the people of South-East Queensland in particular. We are also freezing car registration for family cars for the next three years. So we have removed those cost-of-living pressures that affect Queenslanders each and every day.

In relation to health, I also said that I constantly receive complaints from constituents suffering severe pain whilst they are stuck on waiting lists. That is one of the tragedies of a waiting list for a waiting list—the waiting list that you are not even allowed to be added to. It is not just about having an operation; it is not just about having some really serious, important medical procedure; it is about the pain that people suffer while they are waiting. I speak about hip replacements which I know about because my wife has had one. I know the pain that she went through before and after the surgery.

**Mr Berry** interjected.

**Mr CRANDON:** I take the interjection. I do not know about prostate pain, but I am sure it is painful. The people on these lists write to me and to my colleagues every day talking about the problem they have

in just getting on a list. This government is turning that around. We are fixing that by implementing strategies to reduce waiting lists.

During that speech last year I said that a major issue was the ramping of ambulances that occurs at hospitals. How many times have we seen the photographs of ramped ambulances in the paper? I know a few ambos. One in particular keeps in touch through another friend. He often sends me a text telling me how long he has been sitting ramped outside a hospital, whether it be a hospital in Brisbane, Logan City or wherever. I have to tell honourable members that it is usually hours and hours. We all know that there is a cost associated with that. Part of the cost is those people having to wait in ambulances in order to receive medical attention at our hospitals, which is concerning.

The other cost is in the fact that those ambulance officers cannot just up and leave their patient; they cannot go along and find a wheelchair for them or some sort of gurney, put them on it and say, 'Righto, mate, see you later,' and take off. They have to stay with the patient. There is a cost associated with that because those ambos are then not out on the road doing their job. Instead, they are outside the hospital or inside the emergency area trying to keep the patient happy whilst they are waiting for hospital staff to take over. Once again, we are fixing that. Come 2013, we will be implementing strategies to ensure that the ramping issue will disappear or be drastically reduced, and we will continue to work on that. I know that the Minister for Health is determined to resolve that particular problem.

I said also in that budget reply speech in 2011 that public transport fares increased 20 per cent in the previous year and they were going to increase 15 per cent in each of the following years until 2014-15. They were going up by 15 per cent each year. The good news for the people of South-East Queensland is that we fixed that by reducing the increase to 7½ per cent this coming year. We have also reduced that ridiculous policy of providing free trips only after 10 trips that the previous government put in place. Now commuters will get free trips after a logical nine trips. That means that genuine regular commuters can enjoy a 10 per cent cut. They might hop on at Coomera Railway Station and travel into the city. With a bit of luck, they might even have a seat to sit on. Once they have done that nine times they will find that their next trip will be free. They can also then travel for free on the weekend as well. It makes sense. It gives a direct 10 per cent discount to those regular commuters who travel twice a day, five days a week—in and out, in and out—

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr CRANDON:** I do not take that interjection! The net result is a 10 per cent discount.

Do honourable members remember the \$10,000 Building Boost grant for new homes? During my speech last year I made the point that it was likely to provide a short-term boost to the housing and construction industry. I also said—

I worry that it is just not enough, certainly in terms of the length of time it is being made available, to make any lasting difference.

If members remember, the length of time that it was to be available was something like six months. It was expected that so many people would take advantage of this \$10,000 grant that we were going to spend \$140 million in a six-month period. It was all rush, rush, rush and it was thought that everybody would be trying to get a hold of this \$10,000. It was helter-skelter and it drove people crazy. At the end of the day, it was a failure. I know it was a failure because I was on the committee that examined that bill before it was rushed through the parliament. Hello! Bills were rushed through just like we are having to do currently. Being a new government, we have to get some bills through the parliament quickly. That bill was rushed through the committee system and I was a member of the committee that considered it. When that program failed, we then had to rush through an amendment to extend the length of time for which that boost was available. It is not very nice, but I think 1 April—April Fools' Day—was the last day. I am not sure; I might be wrong. The point is that everybody was in a rush.

I have not checked the figures lately, but I do know that there was a take-up rate of something like 35 per cent after nine months because people just could not, straight out of the blocks, get themselves sorted out in order to take advantage of the \$10,000 grant. It was too rushed for people to raise deposits and so on. You have to say that that measure was a failure.

This government is fixing that problem. We are implementing a \$15,000 ongoing boost for first home buyers who want to build their own house. There is no time limit on it. It is not in place until Christmas or 1 April next year; it is an ongoing promise so that people can properly plan, start saving for their future and then take advantage of that \$15,000 grant.

In my speech on the budget last year I said that cost-of-living increases were crippling those who could least afford it. We are listening to Queenslanders. We are providing a one-off \$80 water rebate to residents of South-East Queensland, in addition to the measures I mentioned earlier—that is, the freezing of car registration and electricity tariff 11.

I go back to the \$15,000 first home owner construction grant. The electorate of Coomera has a high proportion of people in the trades. I see them driving up the highway to work—on the other side of

Brisbane, in Ipswich and other places. If you go to the M1 at quarter past five in the morning, all you see are utes, vans and trucks. Tradespeople are having to travel miles to find work. A lot of those tradespeople are young people trying to get on their feet and are potential first home buyers. So there will be a double benefit from this grant: tradespeople will be earning a good income from being employed again, instead of underemployed or unemployed, and they may be eligible to receive the \$15,000 boost to their deposit, if you like, on a new home.

I refer to police resources. In my speech on the budget in 2011 I said that there is no time for our police to be proactive. I was making the point that they are flat out. I said that they were not even getting through all the calls they were receiving. I said that something like a third of calls were not even serviced, that police could not even get to the people who were ringing them for help. That is how busy they were. In 2011 I said that we needed more blue shirts and more cars on the road to catch up with the call-outs. We have listened. We all know—I will say it again because it is important for my constituents to know—that we have listened.

Some 1,100 new police officers will be provided over the next four years. In the first 12 months, 100 of those new officers are committed to areas that are of concern to me—that is, Logan City and Eagleby. The Logan Police District goes down to the Pimpama River, which takes in a big lump of the northern Gold Coast, and then there is the Coomera Police District. Although I do not have any of the Gold Coast Police District in the Coomera electorate, some of my constituents work in that area. Knowing that 100 extra police will commence in the first 12 months is great. I have lost my place.

**Mr Dillaway:** Finish it up, then.

**Mr CRANDON:** No, I have five minutes. By the way, we are pulling 200 police from desk jobs out onto the front line. So there will be a total of 1,300 additional police out in the community.

In my speech on the budget in 2011 I expressed concern for small businesses in the Coomera electorate which were hurting. I said—

... small business, the backbone of our economy, is suffering.

Once again, we have listened. Earlier I mentioned the \$15,000 first home owner construction grant, which will kick-start the building industry. I also mentioned that many of the people working in the industry would also be buyers of new homes. In 2011 I said—

... this budget is an embarrassment for the Treasurer and the government. It is a budget that has delivered little joy to the people of the Coomera electorate.

I am pleased that today I can thank the Treasurer and the government for delivering a budget that will help the people of Coomera by stimulating the broader Queensland economy and by giving jobs to those people in my electorate who are suffering.

I can outline a number of direct benefits to the people of Coomera from this budget. Some of these measures impact on the wider Gold Coast; some of them also benefit people in the electorates of Albert, Waterford and Springwood. The first is the M1 upgrade and the work on the M1 that continues to be committed to. Just the other day a few of us were talking about how any improvements will make a difference to all of the people who use the M1, not just the people in the local area.

Another measure of benefit is the long-awaited \$2.16 million for the Coomera Ambulance Station, construction of which came to a screeching halt because somebody employed somebody who went broke. There were too many situations like that during the time of the previous government. I do not think they did due diligence. The Coomera Ambulance Station will be up and running in no time at all.

I refer to the upgrade of social rental housing properties. One of the inquiries I receive the most is from people in my electorate needing social housing. They are in dire straits: they are homeless or they are about to be kicked out of a house because they have not been able to afford the rent. I see the member for Woodridge listening intently. I know that she, too, has had contact with people in similarly dire circumstances. Millions of dollars will be invested in Albert, Beaudesert, Broadwater, Coomera, Gaven, Logan, Mudgeeraba and Waterford to try and improve the situation faced by people needing social housing.

There will be some recurrent grant funds coming to Coomera. There will also be funding of \$570,000 to improve the intersection of Stapylton Jacobs Well Road and Quinns Hill Road. This is really a dangerous intersection, and I know that local people will be pleased to see some improvements.

There will be \$1.3 million for planning work related to the Foxwell Road interchange. I have already spoken about the \$10 million that will benefit all of the people who use the M1 as well as the constituents of Albert, Gaven, Springwood, Coomera and Waterford.

Importantly, about \$37 million will be going into three schools in my electorate. Some \$30 million will go to the new Pimpama State Secondary College, \$8 million will go towards upgrades at Ormeau Woods State High School and almost \$3 million will go towards upgrades at Coomera Rivers State School. Finally, about \$4 million will go to disability services in the Coomera and Logan areas.

This budget process has not been without some tough decision making. Regrettably, there is some pain, but what would people have us do? We have to get Queensland back on track and back in the black. I congratulate the Premier and the Treasurer and I commend the bills to the House.