




Speech By  
**Ray Stevens**

**MEMBER FOR MERMAID BEACH**

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE AMENDMENT AND TRADE AND INVESTMENT QUEENSLAND BILL**

 **Mr STEVENS** (Mermaid Beach—LNP) (10.59 am): I rise to speak on and give my enthusiastic support to the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2013 and the Appropriation Bill 2013. First and foremost, I want to congratulate the Treasurer for handing down a budget that will ensure the future prosperity of Queensland. He is in the unenviable position of fixing the legacy of Labor's 20 years of governing which resulted in debt, deficit and mismanagement. This is an enormous task and he is doing this effectively one step at a time, because the Treasurer and the LNP government have a genuine concern for the future economic wellbeing of each and every Queenslanders. With the dynamic Premier, 'Lord' Newman, steering the good ship Queensland in the right direction, we are in good hands for economic reform, economic development and delivery of services which will ultimately result in Queenslanders benefiting from the good economic management decisions that the government has made in this 2013 budget.

The current economic position of the state's finances have incurred a \$1.2 billion revenue write-down, with revenue income that has fallen off a cliff—less GST revenue with GST receipts expected to move down by \$531 million over the forward years, less coal royalties, loss of gaming revenue, less land tax receipts and the high Australian dollar. These have all had a major effect on the Queensland budget outcomes for 2013-14. Not borrowing as much, like the former Labor government, and controlling expenditure is the direction that the LNP government is taking, but this is going to result in short-term pain unfortunately for long-term gain to get Queensland on track for a prosperous economic future.

There are other things that are out of our control like the enormous take-up of the feed-in tariff of 180,000 households and the carbon tax, along with the natural disasters with the terrible flooding and cyclonic weather that has seen so much destruction to our communities and a drain on the resources of the state government. There will be no flood levy, which was mooted, to help pay for the cost of recovery, but it will be paid for by delaying the rise to the tax-free threshold for payroll tax for two years which will be a saving of \$235 million, which will help pay for the 2013 natural disaster expense. The LNP government is committed to rebuilding Queensland and making our communities more resilient. We are Queenslanders and work together and the LNP government is committed to the rebuilding, flood-proofing process.

The Queensland Competition Authority recently announced and has determined the price rise for house electricity will be set at 22.6 per cent which, by the 2015-16 year, will be an extra \$276 per household per year. This pressure on electricity prices has happened, as the Treasurer has said, partly because of the disastrous implementation of the federal Labor government's carbon tax. We promised at the last election to keep the cost of living down, and we have done this by freezing rego, reduced public transport fees, a \$7,000 stamp duty concession on the principal place of residence and the First Home Owner Construction Grant of \$15,000. These are the ways the LNP government is dedicated to helping the people of Queensland.

It is the LNP that has been given the job to fix up the mess and the debt legacy of the former Labor state government. It will be the LNP government that has placed the budget in the right direction to head to a surplus as soon as we can—I think 'going forward' was a famous term—without compromising government services. It is the LNP government that will restore, eventually, Queensland's AAA credit rating, but we cannot do these things until we stabilise the debt which came out of the Commission of Audit report into the state's finances. Labor's politically motivated decisions over these years have hurt Queensland, but we will make the hard decisions for the good of the Queensland economy to see Queensland back on track forever. We understand that there will be some decisions that will not be favourable to the electorate, but they have to be made and the blame needs to be laid at the feet of the former Labor government. Every disastrous decision we have to make—such as the public servants of yesterday and maybe assets sales in the future—is fairly and squarely at the feet of the Labor government for the past 20 years, and in particular the last 10. Overall, Australia's economic position has seen the mining sector go off the boil, and Queensland, as we know, is very heavily reliant on the mining industry for both jobs and income for the state budget, although mining investment still amounts to twice as much as all other sectors put together. This said, the Australian economy is moving into a transitional stage, moving away from mining and into other non-mining sectors which will require economic decisions that support this transition and the industries that the economy is moving to.

The Reserve Bank reduction of the cash rate to 2.75 per cent recently and its decision to keep rates on hold on Tuesday of this week has indicated a great caution with the Australian economy, and rightly so, with this move acknowledging stimulus of industry needing a much needed boost. We are in a period of fiscal repair and we need astute fiscal management to see Queensland through this tough economic period that was again created by the former Labor government. The LNP government is focused on economic growth. By working together, we are ensuring Queensland remains a great state with great opportunity and opportunities that will be developed to ensure Queensland's future prosperity for all Queenslanders to reap those benefits in the future.

The recent federal budget has let down Queenslanders again and basically ignores Queensland's needs. The concoction of incompetence that is Labor, Green and Independents in the federal parliament put together a budget which is out of touch with the Australian community and it is only with an Abbott government on 14 September that we will see astute, smart and intelligent economic decisions made for the betterment of the Australian economy. With a Liberal National Party in federally, I am sure we will see support for Queensland to develop further and grow economically again. As Queensland is the leading great state, it will open the door for greater opportunities and it is this federal change in government, along with the Newman government's focus on economic recovery, which will achieve economic prosperity that only an LNP government can deliver.

The other budget initiatives will change the fire levy to an emergency management fire and rescue levy. This levy will increase by 6½ per cent from 1 January, which will unfortunately be an additional \$11.20 for a metropolitan household. The Treasurer has said that the government will still spend about \$136 million in 2013-14 to assist Queensland pensioner and concession holders. I bring to members' attention this wonderful Concessions Statement which highlights how the LNP Queensland government is looking after seniors and disadvantaged people throughout Queensland.

As the Leader of the House and Manager of Government Business over this year we have passed a lot of legislation across-the-board. We have seen legislative reform in the areas of health, education, infrastructure, transport, agriculture, tourism, police powers, criminal law, public housing, local government, mining, racing, sustainable planning, water and waste reduction, weapons, youth justice and cost-of-living reforms. We are full steam ahead with our four-pillar economy of tourism, agriculture, resources and construction for Queensland's future. The Queensland parliament has run smoothly over the last year and I thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, and Madam Speaker and every member of parliament and all staff members of the parliament for their hard work and blistering speed of legislative reform that the Newman government is beginning to be renowned for. Our committee system is working well and reforms to the parliament of Queensland have seen further cost-saving measures.

The global financial situation is not stable. As we look to Europe, we witness the failure of markets, GDP and inflation lowering and yet unemployment rising. As we know, debt is on the rise all over the world. The United States continues to struggle against the brunt of debt, inflation and unemployment. While we take a moment to assess the situation overseas, we must look to our own situation. We are fortunate to share our economy with the current powerhouses of the South-East Asian community and we are fortunate for the mining boom and that our land possesses a great wealth of resources.

Caution is needed and we must step carefully towards reinvigorating our economy. The election of an LNP federal government on 14 September is the only way that that can happen. There is a predicted slowdown in China that is going to weigh down our exports. So there is a need for us to have an accommodative monetary policy to help stimulate the non-mining sector.

In conclusion, this year at the Premier's behest I have been involved very much in the e-government process. It is a pilot project for Queensland, which I am sure will deliver sound economic benefits and will be part of the economic recovery of Queensland from years and years of Labor decline, debt and mismanagement. To that end, in finalising my reply speech, I advise the Treasurer that it would be in his very great interest to help the debt position of the Queensland government to back Solzhenitsyn in tomorrow's Stradbroke Handicap.