




Speech By
Rob Molhoek

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (9.27 pm): I rise to make my contribution to debate on the Appropriation Bill 2013, the Newman government's second budget for the people of Queensland. The 2013-14 state budget is a demonstration of the commitment we made on March 24 last year. We promised to get this great state back on track and I am pleased to say that we are well on our way. Our children and families deserve better services and they should expect better services. This is a long-term task, a journey we must embark on. Rebuilding the state's finances will ensure we can deliver better services and better government for all Queenslanders.

After another summer of disasters we are also focused on building resilient communities for the future. Making sensible decisions around rebuilding damaged infrastructure will ensure we are making our communities more resilient for the future. This is a budget for a strong Queensland, for growth, rebuilding and resilience. Yesterday the editor of the *Gold Coast Bulletin* Peter Gleeson had this to say about the Newman government's second budget—

Premier Campbell Newman and his Treasurer Tim Nicholls have handed down a difficult and challenging budget, but it is a responsible document at a time when governments are simply never going to win a popularity contest.

Australians need to understand that the days of everybody winning a prize in state or federal budgets are long gone. Austerity is the new black for governments and with Europe continuing to do it tough, and the United States economy far from being resurgent, this trend will continue for some time.

Paying off the state's debt is Mr Newman's priority. And so it should be. Queensland's economy needs back its AAA rating and the projection is we will be back in surplus by 2016.

This is not a glamorous budget. We have made no headline-grabbing, big-spending promises without thinking about how we will fund them, unlike my colleagues in the Labor Party. This budget builds the framework for the next generation—not the next election. This is not an irresponsible budget; this is not a Labor budget. We are a pro-growth government focused on rebuilding our damaged economy still recovering after two decades of Labor waste. We are cutting red tape, reducing the burden on business and changing the way we do government. For the people of Queensland, the Gold Coast and my electorate of Southport, there are plenty of good-news stories in this budget.

Commendation must go to the Treasurer and his team for striking the right balance between stabilising debt and investing in better services for all Queenslanders. This budget will inject into our health services record funding of a massive \$12.3 billion, up 4.5 per cent from last year. This is a clear commitment from the government to better services, better infrastructure and better delivery of healthcare for the people of Queensland. The Gold Coast Hospital and Health Service, chaired by Ian Langdon, who has done a fantastic job of managing the delivery of the city's health services, will receive a \$964 million share of this record spend. That represents an increase of some 16 per cent on last year's \$827.8 million for the Gold Coast. That is close to \$1 billion worth of investment into Gold Coast health services.

This is a government with a proven track record of delivering on promises for a better Queensland health system. I congratulate Gold Coast Hospital staff and the health board chair, Mr Ian Langdon, on their 20 per cent improvement to waiting times at Gold Coast emergency departments in the past six months. In September this year, the new Gold Coast University Hospital in my electorate will become operational. This year's budget includes \$63.5 million for expanded services including cardiac surgery, trauma services, radiation oncology and neonatal intensive care. Gold Coasters will soon have access to world-class healthcare professionals and five-star facilities. With the opening on 19 July of the new Griffith University's health centre just across the road, health students will be part of and have access to one of the biggest and most modern university teaching hospitals in the southern hemisphere.

The education of our children is one of the most important investments we could ever make. This year, the Newman government has increased its education spend by 6.6 per cent to \$11.4 billion. This includes \$537 million for the Great Teachers = Great Results plan, which is a set of practical initiatives focused on improving educational outcomes and recognising and encouraging our state's teachers. On the Gold Coast, \$34 million will be directed towards schools as year 7 joins high school, a successful trial of which is currently running at Southport State High School in my electorate.

This budget reaffirms our government's unwavering commitment to law and order, with spending up \$129 million to \$4.1 billion. Funding will continue for the Gold Coast police helicopter with another \$3 million committed to deliver that essential service for our city. Last year the Gold Coast received an extra 24 police officers, an increase of 27 per cent. This year we will also share in 267 new police officers committed as part of our promise to deliver more front-line services. The Newman government is getting tough on crime and helping to clean up our city's image as we re-establish ourselves as the tourist capital of Queensland. The initiatives that our government has introduced over the past year, including tougher anti-hooping laws, tougher penalties for sexual offenders, new tough child exploitation laws and boot camp trials for young offenders, are just some of the examples of the Newman government's commitment to getting tough on crime.

I acknowledge the great work of my colleague the member for Currumbin, the Hon. Jann Stuckey. She is doing a great job growing our city's tourism industry. The new Gold Coast 'coming soon' commercial is absolutely outstanding. The Gold Coast is cementing its title as a must-see destination for foreign tourists. In the past 12 months, 173,000 Chinese tourists visited the Gold Coast. That is an increase of 34 per cent and is only just short of the record number of 180,000 Kiwis who visited the Gold Coast in the same period. Now with direct connections between the Gold Coast and Asia from airlines such as Scoot of Singapore, Air Asia from Kuala Lumpur, China Southern, Jetstar, Virgin Australia and QANTAS which is again flying into the Gold Coast, the choices are easy to make. With the second annual DestinationQ forum to be held on the Gold Coast, our government's commitment to the tourism industry is clear and intentional.

Much good is happening in Southport and on the Gold Coast. As we continue working on business and tourism for the coast, it is worth noting that the tide is finally starting to change. ABS census estimates released earlier this week show that people are returning to the Sunshine State and to the Gold Coast. According to those estimates, the Gold Coast population has grown by 10,629, which is up 2.1 per cent in the past 12 months. That is double the previous year's estimated growth and is trending towards the annual growth we became accustomed to earlier this decade. On top of that increase, home approvals are improving with 2,500 dwellings approved in the current year. The Gold Coast City Council is expecting new approvals to normalise over the next few years to around 4,000 dwellings per annum.

I am so excited about all the fantastic things that are happening in my electorate. Once again people across the coast are referring to Southport as the city's CBD. The Gold Coast City Council recently resolved to seek state government approval for the establishment of Southport as a priority development area. Fast tracking development and planning approvals ahead of the Commonwealth Games will ensure we get the best possible outcomes for Southport as we work towards 2018, when the Gold Coast takes the world stage. The heart of Southport's CBD will soon be home to a brand-new and modern Chinatown and international business precinct. Thanks to the hard work of Councillor Dawn Crichlow, Ted Fong and the Gold Coast Chinese community, my state colleagues and council, Davenport and Young streets will receive a multi-million dollar makeover to create a vibrant business and cultural destination.

This budget includes \$26 million to progress planning for the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. Another \$33 million has been allocated for the redevelopment of the Gold Coast Aquatic Centre, which is set to become a world-class swimming venue for events such as the Pan Pacific

Championships to be held next year. A sum of \$41 million has been allocated for the early works for the redevelopment of the Parklands priority area for the Commonwealth Games Village. There are plenty of other things happening in my electorate. In Southport, roads will also receive more funding with \$35 million allocated for the Smith Street and Olsen Avenue interchange and upgrades. A further \$178 million has been allocated to fund the completion of the Gold Coast Rapid Transit System, which is to be up and running by later next year.

I doubt there would be many other electorates in the state with so much development activity happening right now. But just as important as investing in our growth and economy is investing in our communities and families. This government's budget commits \$8.8 billion to be spent on community services this year. I congratulate the member for Aspley, the Hon. Tracy Davis, for her hard work in delivering better outcomes for our most vulnerable, that is, our children and young people. In Southport, social inclusion services will receive nearly \$6.5 million to continue their vital work supporting the community. Organisations providing programs such as domestic violence prevention, homelessness and youth support will continue to be funded and supported by our government, recognising the important contribution those organisations make in our communities. I have a large proportion of the Gold Coast's public housing properties in my electorate, so I am pleased that social housing on the Gold Coast will be given a boost with \$10.6 million dedicated to the expansion and improvement of properties and services.

On Tuesday, the Treasurer referred to last year's budget speech, which was themed around the notion that 'confidence is everything'. I could not agree more. The Gold Coast and my electorate of Southport are starting to buzz again. People are starting to get back their confidence. People are delighted with the outcomes of the hard decisions that this government has had to make in stabilising the state's finances. As Assistant Minister for Planning Reform, I have been privileged to see first-hand some of the many plans on the drawing board for the city and other parts of our state. It is an exciting time to be in Queensland and it is an exciting time for the Gold Coast and for Southport. Confidence, previously damaged by the global financial crisis and an obstructive Queensland Labor government of some 20 years, is definitely returning. The 2013-14 budget provides a framework for growth, rebuilding and resilience. It outlines a brighter future for all Queenslanders and is getting this state back on track. We are a great state, with great opportunity. As Assistant Minister for Planning Reform and as member for Southport, I commend this budget to the House.