




Speech By
Ros Bates

MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (9.16 pm): I rise this evening to make a contribution to the debate on the Appropriation Bill 2013. This budget strikes the right balance between ensuring a strong financial future for Queensland and investing in better-quality services and infrastructure for all Queenslanders. Our government is investing heavily in giving children a better education, injecting record funding into health care and increasing support for people with disabilities and their carers. An amount of \$8.2 million has been allocated for disability services, child safety and social inclusion in the Mudgeeraba electorate. This is the second responsible budget delivered by Treasurer Tim Nicholls in difficult fiscal times and it sees a 16.5 per cent increase in health funding for my local area.

As a healthcare professional and registered nurse, this additional funding will go a long way to ensuring that people in my electorate have access to first-class health and disability services. An amount of \$96 million has been allocated towards completing the Robina Health Precinct and more than \$7 million has been allocated towards the expansion of the Robina Hospital. There can be no more solid evidence against the campaign to scare residents regarding the future of the hospital than a significant investment from the government in this budget.

Robina Hospital is not closing. Recently, there has been a particularly nasty, unfounded and scurrilous attempt by the Queensland Nurses Union to scare nurses and other health professionals into believing that an LNP government is either closing down public hospitals or privatising them. That is false. Robina Hospital is not up for sale and nor is the government closing its accident and emergency department or closing the hospital entirely. Robina Hospital is here to stay and in state hands. It is a vital part of my electorate's local infrastructure.

The new university hospital is a great addition to the Gold Coast's health infrastructure, but it is no replacement for a hospital that is on our back doorstep, which is beneficial not only from a convenience perspective but also from a safety perspective. It is time the QNU came clean and told nurses that a percentage of their union dues funds Labor Party campaigns. This is the same union that remained silent while nurses were not being paid during the \$1.2 billion Health payroll debacle that occurred under the watch of Anna Bligh and her Labor government. The QNU should acknowledge this government's significant investment, and continued investment, in Robina Hospital and, indeed, health services across the Gold Coast and abandon this campaign. If the union was truly interested in disseminating the truth to its membership, it would be ensuring that all of its members were well aware of this investment in Gold Coast health services.

This budget continues the Newman government's commitment to Queensland's roads. This government, in the short period since the last election, has built a significant track record in this regard. In my electorate of Mudgeeraba alone we have had some big wins in local transport over the past six months. The first sod was turned on the M1 upgrade between Exit 77 and 79 in March. The additional two lanes that will be added over the next 18 months will be of great benefit to motorists

and I appreciate their patience whilst construction continues. This budget outlines an additional \$40 million to ensure that construction continues. As the member dubbed 'member for the M1', I welcome the Newman government's continued commitment to much needed road upgrades, which traditionally were ignored by Labor governments for many years.

The Old Coach Road roundabout in Reedy Creek takes an extraordinary amount of traffic and is a significant bottleneck for motorists. Following an approach to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, funding has been allocated to improve the traffic flow and the Department of Transport and Main Roads, in conjunction with council, are in the planning stages for a solution. This will most probably involve the installation of traffic lights and the addition of an extra lane.

The sound barriers at Encamp Street in Reedy Creek are now in the consultation phase. Residents of Encamp Street have been fighting for a solution to the increasing noise coming off the M1 for years now and it is great that we are finally seeing some action from the government for the benefit of these residents, residents who were ignored under the Labor government. People deserve to enjoy their homes in peace and quiet. It took the election of an LNP government to deliver for these residents, as sustained campaigning by myself and local residents fell on deaf Labor ears.

Within the year we will see the stabilisation of the landslip above Beechmont Road between Bottletree Lane and Nerang-Murwillumbah Road. The design is close to completion and includes cleaning the slip face of loose debris before installing over 100 self-drilling rock anchors in the upper sections of the slip area. Drainage will be installed to channel water away from the site and the slip face concreted to reduce the risk of debris working loose in future wet weather events. Site and weather conditions permitting, the Department of Transport and Main Roads expects stabilisation works to start in mid-2013 and to finish in late 2013. Under Labor, the residents of the hinterland were either ignored or punished by the government. The Newman government continues to demonstrate that we are fighting in their corner.

As of Tuesday, we have completed the work on Beechmont Road, with residents finally receiving the road infrastructure they deserve. It has been a long journey to reach this end, and I would like to thank Better Roads for Beechmont for their support and commitment to this project. They supplied the people power needed to get this done and have campaigned with me for years now to make Beechmont Road a better and safer road. No longer does Beechmont Road hold the title of the worst state controlled road in Queensland. This is an investment of more than \$11 million in our roads infrastructure.

Speaking of significant commitments, the Robina interchange has been delivered and continues to improve in regard to traffic flow with the continued monitoring of the Department of Transport and Main Roads. The department will soon start installing fixed-road hazard signage on Beechmont Road and Gold Coast-Springbrook Road to increase safety during road closure events such as landslips or flooding. The signage will also improve driver and traveller information for those roads most at risk of closure. The signs will be almost three metres wide and panel hinged to allow the message to change from 'rock fall area' to 'road closed ahead' and fitted with lights that will be set to flash when a warning is necessary or a closure is activated. Installation of the signs is expected to start shortly and take about four weeks to complete. This project is on the back of a suggestion I received from a constituent. Only weeks later the project was approved by the minister and set to go ahead. This is in such stark contrast to what was happening under the previous government, with petitions, letter writing campaigns and ministerial representations making little difference to their actions. The best solutions come from the people affected. We have demonstrated that we are listening and, not just that, that we are getting things done.

After four years of campaigning and a tragic fatality, we have delivered on flashing lights for the Somerset Drive school zone. Parents and residents have literally begged the former government for these to be installed. It took a change of government to get it done. The program to roll these lights out across the state, saving lives and putting parents' minds at ease, continues to be funded in this budget.

The Newman government's Fixing Our Schools Fund has wiped the maintenance backlog of eight Mudgeeraba state schools since its establishment in last year's budget. Ten Mudgeeraba schools received a total of \$946,948 in funding towards fixing existing maintenance issues inherited from the previous government. The continued funding in this budget for the Fixing Our Schools Fund will ensure this good work continues. Robina State High school has been allocated a further \$341,000 in this budget for much needed refurbishments. I know the community will appreciate our continued support.

We continue to support our local community groups so important to the fabric of a community, especially those a bit more remote than others, sporting groups like the Gold Coast Mountain Bike club which received funding for the next stage of their track at the Hinze Dam and groups that run significant events that bring our community together like the Mudgeeraba Show Society. Organisations designed to help our at-risk youth, like the Bornhoffen PCYC, have been supported significantly to improve their facilities.

It should not be forgotten, however, that some of the things that affect communities the deepest are not necessarily big-ticket items. For the community of Springbrook, for instance, we have removed the shackles and cut through red tape so that the Gold Coast City Council can finally install markers along Springbrook Road to improve local safety. We have given the same community a chance to name the local and historic bridges, an initiative bizarrely held up for what seems like decades despite community efforts. Even things like ensuring that a school has a permanent principal rather than the revolving door policy that operated under the previous government where principals would have a brief hinterland excursion before heading back down the mountain never to be seen again or having the opportunity to make a huge difference. They do not cost a single extra dollar. We delivered that in Springbrook this year and it will make an enormous difference to the school, an institution that is at the heart of that small community.

Our commitment to cut through bureaucracy and red tape is not just rhetoric. We are delivering commonsense solutions to often simple problems, but problems that have lingered for no decent reason other than they have been made without real people in mind. We are delivering on a very personal level for people who really just wanted government to give the okay, get out of the way and lend a hand, not necessarily deliver grand funding announcements. We have the runs on the board regarding listening and delivering for our local communities. We will continue to do so and this budget enables us to do so. We maintain our commitment to delivering front-line services for Queenslanders, supporting our health system, looking after our most vulnerable and delivering on infrastructure, all while delivering in a responsible manner. I congratulate my good friend the Treasurer, the Hon. Tim Nicholls, on his second budget and look forward to continuing to work with him and our government to make this once more a great state with great opportunities. I commend the bills to the House.