




Speech By
Hon. David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

Record of Proceedings, 5 June 2014

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. DF CRISAFULLI** (Mundingburra—LNP) (Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience) (3.12 pm): I rise to speak in support of the 2014 budget. With the indulgence of the House I intend to deal with it in two parts: the first is in my most important and valued role as the member for Mundingburra; and the second is the role I am very privileged to have, which is the Minister for Local Government, Community Recovery and Resilience. I will begin as the local member. What I am particularly pleased with about this budget is that it truly deals with the big four issues that we have in our city of Townsville, and that is roads, health, education and law and order. I will address some of those highlights and then I will talk about some of the challenges for the future.

In terms of roads, one of the great things that pleases me—and it is wonderful today to have not just the Treasurer in the House, but also the Minister for Transport and Main Roads—is the excellent announcement that the Woolcock and Pilkington Street roundabout will be done. It is yet another road project that we saw sit idle for far too long, and I intend to speak about that briefly in a moment. I will continue to fight hard for roads in my city. I am very passionate about roads; it is one of the reasons I chose to come to this place. Looking into the future I see the duplication of Stuart Drive as being very important. I also see the next intersection down, Woolcock and Duckworth, as being a major project, and I will continue to lobby hard for that.

I am very pleased with the \$768 million funding for the Bruce Highway. It shows that if you are prepared and you have the ticker to put forward a clear plan, you can get benefits. That is what we did. We said that we would contribute over and above our contribution despite the fact that it is a federal road. To the great credit of the federal government, they have answered the call with the infrastructure funding in this budget. Projects like stage 4 of the ring-road and the continuation of the duplication of Vantassel Street are great projects. They are great infrastructure, they are job creators and they are very good pieces of future mitigation for our great city.

I will now turn to health. Since we have come into government we have seen an increase in the order of about 13.5 per cent. But judge a government not on its ability to write cheques; judge it on its ability to get results. The local health and hospital boards have truly been a great success, and the turnaround in Queensland Health has been because of discipline, some tough decisions and local boards making local decisions. An additional \$41.2 million for the hospital expansion is fantastic; \$10.4 million to complete the Townsville Medium Secure Rehabilitation Unit; and extra money for the cancer centre.

It is a great shame that the Manager of Opposition Business has left the House, but I just want to talk about the \$14.3 million which is going towards the establishment of the Australian Institute of Tropical Health and Medicine at James Cook University. Today we have heard the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Mulgrave talk about the future being in innovation. To my mind this is the future and it is innovation, and I am very, very proud to live in a city that has a university which

wants to take itself to the next level when it comes to tropical research. I pay tribute to the James Cook University for doing a remarkable job.

Mr Johnson: What outstanding results that university has!

Mr CRISAFULLI: I must take that interjection from the member for Gregory, who is a great friend of regional Queensland. Indeed it has been a great university which has produced great results, and in recent years it has taken a great focus on tropical medicine.

To hear the nonsense that came out of Canberra today from Senator Kim Carr is an absolute disgrace. I say to those opposite: you have an opportunity to do what you did not do when it came to the carbon tax and to do what you did not do when your Labor mates took \$102 million out of our Health budget, and that is to stand up and call it for what it is. The comments today from Kim Carr are an absolute disgrace. Please let me paint the picture for members. Senator Carr is referring to the federal government's decision during the estimates process to match our \$42 million funding to create that wonderful tropical research hub at James Cook University. I am going to quote from their higher education spokesman, Kim Carr, who said—

I suppose you're going to tell me that because it's in the tropics ... therefore it must be good at tropical (research)?

Then he followed by saying—

I would have thought we'd be looking for the best location for our research ... based on excellence.

The mocking continued.

Mr Hathaway interjected.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Indeed it is, member for Townsville. It is a world-class university. My city will not be mocked by some southern based senator. My city will not be knocked by some guy who wants to make political mileage out of picking on a small regional university, because it is very good at what it does and it is damn proud of where it is located. This tropical research centre is something that we are very proud to have backed. He refers to it as being some sort of pork-barrelling. It is not pork-barrelling; it is what good governments do. They look for opportunities to find niche markets. They do not look for opportunities to build infrastructure that does not work. They do not look for opportunities to create payroll systems that do not pay. They look for opportunities to deliver jobs, outcomes and future niche markets, and that is what this is. I am very, very proud of it, and I am proud that this budget makes a contribution towards it.

I will briefly touch on education. It is wonderful to see the increase in Great teachers = Great results. It is wonderful to have over 700 additional teachers and teacher aids state-wide. We will be fighting for our fair share. Between the member for Townsville, the member for Thuringowa, the member for Hinchinbrook and the member for Burdekin, we will continue to hunt as a pack for our fair share. Extra money for the maintenance fund is tremendous.

Finally, the fourth point is law and order. The extra police which will come to our city through the police hub are a wonderful initiative and something of which I am particularly proud. We have now seen 60 additional police come into the Townsville police area in the two years since we have come to government.

I am going to very briefly touch on this contribution now, because I am moving into the next phase of the campaign and that is 'into the future'. In recent days quite rightly there have been some good comments and some bad comments about the budget, and quite rightly people have been pointing out what they see as strengths and weaknesses. That is what should always happen because we live in a democracy where people can put forward their points of view. But I would say to my local newspaper that I look forward to them assisting us when it comes to delivering through the Smart Choices infrastructure program. I do not see this as an 'us and them' situation; quite the contrary. In fact, at the invitation of the newspaper I addressed a business breakfast about a month ago, and I issued a challenge to the city: put forward what you see as the opportunity for this infrastructure fund and then put us to work.

What is refreshing is that, unlike what we have seen in the past, there are no underhand deals. The community knows what it is going to get. It is going to get a government that is going to pay down debt—and we have to pay down debt and I support the ratio of 75 per cent in terms of paying down debt—but we also have an opportunity to create a golden era for infrastructure delivery in this state and people are going to know what they are voting for. They are going to know what is going to be delivered. I say to the newspaper: rather than take this opportunity to say, 'What sort of guarantee will

there be?', the joy for our community is that it will be able to look and it will be able to judge. I look forward to that, because we are here as servants of the people and we should be judged on our results—as we should when we said to the community two years ago that we would not take the issue of juvenile crime lying down, and we fought very hard in this place to make changes to the Youth Justice Act which were opposed by a number of different sectors. We said that we would fight hard for extra police, and we got them. We said that we would finally build some roads in our city, and I look at Blakeys Crossing that has started that they said would never happen. I look at the Dalrymple-Banfield intersection that they said would never happen and the Woolcock-Mather intersection that they said would never happen. They are all either done or in the process of being done and, given the Minister for Transport is here, we have another one on the boil and maybe a couple more into the future. So I look forward to being judged on my results because that is what I get paid to come into this place to do.

In the very short period of time left I turn to my portfolio. I am very pleased to see the Treasurer's allocated funding between councils and Main Roads to continue the flood recovery. Yes, Tropical Cyclone Ita could have been far worse for us, but judge us not on what the damage bill will be but on how we respond, and the way that we have seen the turnaround in disaster recovery in this state is something that we should all be very proud of. It is now a partnership and having the Department of Transport and Main Roads delivering as it is and having councils delivering with us in my mind has been a huge step forward. In closing, for the first time we will also work with local governments to pay a greater portion of their grants upfront. We do trust them. We have seen slowly but surely a turnaround in the way that they deliver their funding. We will continue to support things like graffiti initiatives and show grants, because we believe at the heart of every good community is a good local government. In conclusion, the budget does deliver across our big four areas for my home city of Townsville and my electorate of Mundingburra. But more importantly what it does is it sets up a challenge—a challenge for the future, a challenge for infrastructure delivery for the part of the state that I am so passionate about, and a challenge that I look forward to accepting with my colleagues in the north.