




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

Record of Proceedings, 5 June 2014

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

 **Mr MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (3.42 pm): ‘You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today’, so said Abraham Lincoln all those years ago. Indeed, the Newman government is not shirking its responsibility and I rise in this chamber to make my contribution to the 2014-15 budget that was handed down by the Treasurer on Tuesday. Restoring the state’s finances was never going to be an easy job, however with our plan to grow a four-pillar economy, revitalise front-line services, significantly invest in health, education and infrastructure, significant progress is being made. Due to Labor’s reckless drunken-sailor spending on the Queensland credit card, there is no other option except to reduce the \$80 billion debt and its subsequent exorbitant interest bill. Presently, as we all know, Queensland taxpayers pay \$4 billion a year in interest alone, which is essentially dead money. When an individual like myself is in this privileged position of being an MP, it is crucial to treat every taxpayer dollar like it is your own hard earned money. It is not our money, we are simply the custodians of it on behalf of all our shareholders—Queenslanders. This government is conscious that money does not grow on trees, nor that there is an endless supply to fritter away. Therefore, it has been essential that we use it wisely and strategically in a long-term way.

If you were to apply the ALP’s financial logic in the private sector, they would very quickly find themselves unemployed due to their lack of direction and wasteful attitude. If the private sector does not find financial irresponsibility acceptable then why should the taxpayers of Chatsworth? Without the burden of this astronomical interest bill, Chatsworth residents may have been able to benefit from much needed investment in a new high school or the widening of Old Cleveland Road to ensure that buses and cars are able to move faster and more efficiently. By continuing to spiral into more debt under Labor, Queensland and, from my perspective, the residents of Chatsworth would not have had a glimmer of hope of receiving the infrastructure and services they deserve that will enable my local community to prosper.

When I am conducting my regular listening posts throughout my Chatsworth electorate or attending local community events, the main priorities that I hear day in, day out from constituents are health and education, along with law and order. Therefore, I am proud to place on record that my constituents will benefit from a six per cent increase in health funding. Whilst I do not have a hospital within my actual electorate boundaries, residents will surely benefit from the increased investment in services to the metro south area. Already in just over two years this government’s initiatives have ensured that Queensland has the lowest median wait for elective surgery in Australia. More importantly, it has decreased ambulance response times by 66 seconds in 90 per cent of code 1 cases. Some of the health improvements that my constituents are now experiencing are phenomenal, such as the number of long-wait dental patients being reduced by 98.5 per cent in the last 14 months—simply outstanding.

What about other choices to reduce debt by at least \$25 billion? If we chose to reduce services instead of making the strong choice to sell or recycle assets, Chatsworth residents would run the risk

of being caught up in the 10,000 fewer hospital admissions that would occur, have public transport fares again go up through the roof and potentially lose up to 30,000 public sector jobs, including teachers, doctors and nurses. Another alternative to reduce debt by at least \$25 billion would be to increase taxes, which would require a doubling of state taxation which would simply paralyse the economy.

As I mentioned before, alongside health, education is a major priority of the community that I am proud to represent. In this budget local schools in the Chatsworth electorate are big winners, with significant funding to further support teachers in educating the future generation within Chatsworth. I have been only too happy to fight for the additional \$1.2 million funding for local schools to participate in the Great Results Guarantee initiative. Belmont State School will receive \$258,000; Mayfield Primary School will receive \$107,000; Tingalpa State School will receive \$117,000; Whites Hill State College will receive \$144,000; Gumdale State School will receive \$258,000; whilst Camp Hill Infants and Primary School will receive \$217,000 to implement strategies to improve the formative years of education for children. I am very pleased to say my old primary school, Carina State School, has received \$100,000 to nurture the bright young minds of prep to year 3 students. In this day and age there is no excuse for our children being unable to reach acceptable numeracy and literacy levels. It is essential that teachers are not only funded adequately but also have the skills and resources to implement strategies to capture children at that all-important formative stage. Knowledge is power and we should be empowering even the youngest of minds to embrace learning, as they will be the powerhouses of Queensland's future. As a local member of parliament and, more importantly, member of the local community, I am determined to ensure that Gumdale State School's much needed master plan is continued. Therefore, I am delighted that \$1 million has been allocated for the completion of the school master plan and stage 1 which will focus on the new oval. The Gumdale-Wakerley area has young families flocking to it, therefore it is essential that the government responds to this demand and continues to ensure that the facilities meet the local community's expectations.

Within my electorate I am very honoured to have the Belmont Rifle Range which has received in this year's budget \$800,000 to progress the development and construction of the complex, especially in the lead-up to the all-important Commonwealth Games in 2018. This funding will improve the facilities not only for the games; it will be a long-term investment for the sport within my electorate. However, I was even more delighted to lobby hard so that the rifle club will benefit from \$50,000 to implement electronic target systems to support full bore rifle shooting. As vice patron of this wonderful organisation, I have lobbied for this funding under the Get in the Game initiative as it has been something that is much needed for the progress of the complex. I know for certain that news of this money will be extremely welcomed the next time I visit the club to watch a round of shooting with the rifle club members.

Even though it was an honour to be elected as the member for Chatsworth in March 2012, I was also given the additional honour of being the Assistant Minister for Public Transport. Therefore, I would like to touch on a few achievements that I have been a part of, together with my colleague the Hon. Scott Emerson, Minister for Transport and Main Roads.

Together we have been working to improve the public transport system to make it more efficient and affordable for commuters. The former government's plans included year in, year out 15 per cent increases in public transport fares and yet they acted dumbfounded when patronage numbers actually dropped. Compare and contrast: the budget just handed down reveals any annual change to public transport fares will not be above inflation for the next three years. This delivers on our election promise to lower the cost living. Within my electorate, I have seen the Carindale bus interchange grow to become the second busiest public transport hub, which has been a direct result of the construction of the much-needed Carindale park-and-ride. It has been pleasing to see a 34 per cent increase in the patronage of individuals benefitting from the better use of the vacant land that remained dormant for years under previous ALP members. Even though some Chatsworth residents may not catch public transport on a regular basis due to circumstances, they will more than likely benefit from the flow-on positive effects of an efficient public transport system. My constituents can now have faith with on-time running of more than 95 per cent, as opposed to less than 85 per cent a mere two years ago.

Some Chatsworth residents may not be entirely happy with the choices that have been made by the government in framing this budget. I am fully aware of this. However, I ask those people: what plan does the opposition have? What plan do they have to pay down the debt that will enable better roads or a new high school to be built? The Bligh government said they would not sell off assets. As we all know, they snuck back into power and then did a reverse flip only weeks later. Ironically, the opposition is quick to criticise our government on our strong plan for a brighter future for Queensland.

However, it is important to note that, as of today, they have still not released any detailed substantial policies. In fact, to quote the member for Mulgrave, Queenslanders should be—as we all know on this side of the ledger—patient, have a Bex and a good lie down. The people of Chatsworth do not have that degree of patience.

The Treasurer has put together a strong budget that encompasses strong choices for the betterment of this great state. Instead of being patient, Chatsworth residents need to educate themselves on the ramifications of no action and join us in our fight to spend the taxpayer dollar more respectfully and wisely. I am indeed very proud to be part of a government that is continuing to deliver a strong plan for a brighter future. I commend the Treasurer for making the strongest and smartest choices that are necessary for a brighter future for residents in my Chatsworth electorate. The current generation deserves no less. Well done, Treasurer.