



Speech By  
**Hon. Tim Nicholls**


**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

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Record of Proceedings, 6 August 2014

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL**

**Finance and Administration Committee, Report**

 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Treasurer and Minister for Trade) (4.16 pm): This budget confirms that the government has a strong plan for a bright future for Queensland, that we are well on the way to repairing the state of Queensland's finances and that we are locking in the gains we have made since the election of this government in 2012. We undertook the fiscal repair that was needed to stabilise the patient. Expenses had been growing at almost nine per cent a year and, whilst revenue was coming in and rivers of gold were flowing into the coffers, under the control of the Labor Party they were flowing out even faster. Therefore, we have taken steps to make sure that our expenses growth, at 0.2 per cent in 2012-13 and 2.2 per cent in 2013-14, is the lowest rate of expenses growth since accrual accounting was introduced in Queensland. It is probably the lowest ever; certainly it is the lowest since we can find figures for it.

We are getting on with the job of strengthening the economy and growing the four pillars of agriculture, tourism, resources, and property and construction. We are working hard and making sure that we have the fastest growing economy in the nation. In fact, in 2015-16 we will have a nation-beating six per cent economic growth. According to the Treasury forecasts, we will continue to grow at about four per cent a year after that. We are doing that while we are continuing to deliver on vital front-line services, whether it is in education where we are putting extra money through or even doing things such as streaming through the additional funding from the Commonwealth without taking a brass razoo for administration or bureaucratic expenses; whether it is in the health sector, where we are continuing to deliver health services to reduce things such as the category 1 and category 2 long waiting lists; whether we are doing it in things such as clearing the lists of people who have been waiting too long for a cochlear implant or eliminating the list of those people who have been waiting for more than two years to see a dentist, reducing the numbers by more than 60,000 to zero. Those are the things that an LNP government that is focused on getting the finances right and getting the service delivery right is doing for the health and benefit of Queenslanders.

We are also building the infrastructure that a growing state needs. In this budget, we have put money aside to build Toowoomba's second range crossing. That had been promised by Labor for 20 years but was never ever going to be built under Labor. We are putting more money into upgrading the Bruce Highway so that in eastern Queensland we have a vital eastern artery that will carry much traffic, commerce and tourism through the state. We are joining with our federal counterparts to do that. Again, that is something that Labor was never able to do. Ten new schools are being delivered under a public/private partnership, because we are willing to engage with the private sector. We are harnessing the power of the private sector to deliver that. The first of those schools will open in 2015.

We are making major investments in our hospitals. These are things that Labor could do. When it comes to health Labor has had and will have no answer. They are the people who burdened us with a Tahitian prince who walked out the door with \$16½ million. They are the people who burdened us with \$1.2 billion worth of expenses to fix up a failed health system that did not pay people, paid them

too much or, in fact, made no attempt whatsoever to pay them, and caused us to spend billions of dollars fixing up the problem. We are fixing that. This budget shows that we are getting on with the job of building the economy, delivering on front-line services and keeping taxes down for Queenslanders.

In the short time that is left, I want to deal with a couple of matters. Firstly, I want to thank the member for Gladstone for her comments in respect of the time for questions. I also want to acknowledge the fact that, notwithstanding that my voice was going, the member for Gladstone did provide me with—and I do not know whether I should say this—a hot cup of tea and some lozenges which I used to get through. We did have more than double the time normally spent answering questions. So we had double the amount of time answering questions, but, I have to say, we did not have double the intelligence in terms of the questions. It became an endurance test rather than an intelligence test at that stage of the proceedings. I do thank the member for Gladstone for asking pertinent questions relevant to her area.

It is interesting to note that, after banging on about employment or unemployment or participation in the state of Queensland for a long time, there was not one question from the shadow Treasurer on that. The party that is supposed to represent workers had six hours to ask questions and there was not one question about employment or unemployment. It shows how much they care.

When it comes to the statement of reservations, I clearly put on the record that we will be clearly disclosing the costs of studies and work. Those opposite did not do so. Their 2009-10 paper which was put out after they sold forestry plantations did not detail scoping studies. They simply said, 'This is how much we have spent.' This is a good budget and well delivered. I am sure it will be well appreciated by the people of Queensland.

*(Time expired)*