




Speech By  
**Yvette D'Ath**

**MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE**

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

 **Ms D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (8.09 pm): I rise to speak to the appropriation bills 2014. This is the third budget for the LNP government and it is the last budget before the general election due early next year. This budget is a reflection of this LNP government. It lacks vision, it ignores the views of the people and it reflects arrogance.

The government claims that it is all about strong choices, tough choices. We recently heard similar views from the LNP federal government. It is true to say that governments have to make tough choices, but it is the choices they make that define them. Cutting jobs, cutting services, privatising and selling are choices that Liberal governments make. It is what they do. In contrast, Labor governments invest. They invest in jobs, in training and education, in health and disability services. Labor supports those most in need in our communities instead of abandoning them. Labor governments invest in human capital.

Budgets and policies must have vision. That vision cannot simply be sell and then spend. Unfortunately, we now have Liberal governments at a state and federal level. The people of Queensland are waking up to the reality that we have governments that are more focused on pursuing their ideologies than acting in the interests of the state and its people.

For 2½ years the people of Queensland have been subjected to the full force of the Newman LNP government. The fact is that the Newman LNP government has abandoned the battlers of Queensland. Many of the achievements that the LNP has sprouted over the past two years are projects or programs funded by the previous state and federal Labor governments.

What we see when we get state and federal LNP governments is cuts. All of the ribbon cutting and bragging about achievements in health and education and early childhood education are coming to an end for the LNP because this government is not investing new money. It is not investing in new infrastructure. We are now actually facing health and education cuts from their Liberal colleagues in Canberra.

Campbell Newman sought to rally his troops in February 2014, in the lead-up to the Redcliffe by-election, saying, 'This is the year that it all comes together.' In fact, it is the year that everything gets sold off. After the Redcliffe by-election the Premier claimed that they got the message and will be listening to the community unlike those on the other side. The LNP government then engaged in a \$6 million PR campaign in an attempt to convince the public that they genuinely want to hear the views on assets sales.

This week we have seen the Treasurer bring down the third budget of this LNP government. As part of that budget speech—

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Miss Barton): Order! Members, I am struggling to hear the member for Redcliffe.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members! The member for Redcliffe has the call.

**Ms D'ATH:** As part of the budget speech, the Treasurer, on behalf of the government, sought to push the LNP's asset sales agenda. The fact is that this was not a budget speech but a sales pitch. It lacked vision and fails to deliver for the people of Queensland.

The next election will give voters a clear choice. The LNP will sell state assets and Labor will not. Labor will have a plan to invest in our future—in jobs, infrastructure, innovation and education. In contrast, the LNP offers sales that will result in reduced services, increased costs and fewer jobs—a future Queensland cannot afford.

Education is one of the most important investments a government makes. It is important because ultimately it is about the future. It is about the future of our society. It is about the future of our economy. It is critical we as a state get it right and we do not cut corners.

The state delivery of education should be about getting the fundamentals right not glossing over it with slogans. The state government should not short-change our children's future. Again in this budget we have seen the state government underspending by another \$117 million in education this current financial year.

The Newman LNP government's slash and burn approach to public services has been replicated by their federal counterparts, already hurting Queensland families with the Abbott coalition federal government threatening to end the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education. This threat to funding has adversely impacted on the state government's delivery of early childhood education and care with a fall in the budgeted amount for delivery in this service area of 15.9 per cent from the same figure in last year's budget.

This reduction in funding will hurt young children from disadvantaged families the most. Only 79.9 per cent of eligible Indigenous children are enrolled in an early childhood education program. Only 85.5 per cent of children in disadvantaged communities are enrolled in an early childhood education program. Cuts to funding for the early childhood education program will only increase the incidence of disadvantaged children missing out on vital early childhood education.

The Treasurer, in his budget speech, acknowledged that the previous Queensland and federal governments, both Labor, in 2008 provided universal access to kindergarten programs delivered by qualified teachers. These programs are delivered to approximately 60,000 children in kindergartens and day care centres.

We are told by the Treasurer that he is seeking urgent clarification from his federal coalition counterparts about the future of the National Partnership Agreement on Universal Access to Early Childhood Education. However, we all know the advice this government has given to its federal counterpart. Campbell Newman told Tony Abbott to 'copy us'. Tony Abbott and the federal coalition government took Newman's advice. The federal coalition government has cut education funding—

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Ms D'ATH:** You are not interested in the \$30 billion cut out of state education. I hope that those on the other side tell their constituents that they are not interested in the \$30 billion federal funding cut from the education budget.

The key education initiatives for 2014-15 announced in the budget are merely a continuation of existing programs. The key education announcement in the Treasurer's budget speech was the reannouncement of the \$64 million second tranche of the so-called Great Results Guarantee totalling \$131 million. The funds for this program are solely attributable to the federal funding and equates on average to an additional \$51,200 per school. This is only marginally larger than the current underspend by the department this year. But even with this fig leaf of an announcement, how much longer will it be before the LNP cuts and runs from this program?

The Newman government has made much self-congratulation on building new schools. We have been repeatedly fed recycled press releases about the new Queensland schools public-private partnership program that will build 10 new schools. The LNP government has promised these schools over four years, with two being delivered for the start of the 2015 school year. With money only flowing to these two schools in the 2014-15 budget, it will be very interesting to see if this government delivers.

Considering additional schools are also supposed to open at the start of the 2016 year, I fail to see how that could be achieved when no money is allocated in the 2014-15 budget for their construction. This means that construction will not start until after 1 July 2015. It is unrealistic to think that if money is not allocated until the 2015-16 year that these schools would be opening for the 2016

school year. Furthermore, the actual investment in the education department capital program has fallen by 26 per cent since the last financial year.

While the Newman government makes slow going in opening new schools, over the past two years it has closed schools and sold the land. The LNP has a secret hit list of 47 schools identified for closure.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Nanango, that is an unparliamentary term and I would ask you to withdraw.

**Mrs Frecklington:** I withdraw.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I call the member for Redcliffe.

**Ms D'ATH:** Minister Langbroek has refused to name those schools so parents and entire communities can only guess if their local schools will survive another LNP term in office. Next year the LNP government plans to push ahead with their extremely unpopular rankings, bonuses and contracts for teachers. I am struggling in my discussions with teachers and schools to find support for this scheme and call on the Minister for Education to start listening to the sector on this important issue.

We all acknowledge that we want to attract and retain great teachers, but it must be in a way that is fair and balanced and brings the education sector with us. The government needs to rethink this strategy before implementing it next year. A far more responsible course of action is to make sure that Queensland schools have enough teachers and teacher aides to meet the growing student population in Queensland schools.

The Treasurer has stated that there will be an allocation of 761 additional teachers and teacher aides in the 2014-15 budget. However, this allocation falls short of what is actually needed. The Queensland Teachers Union has stated that an extra 800 full-time equivalent teachers are needed in 2014-15 in addition to the reinstatement of the 272 resource teachers sacked in the 2013 budget. The Newman government is employing 311 teachers fewer than is required.

On the issue of funding maintenance in our schools, the government needs to be honest with the schools and the broader community about how this is actually being funded. The LNP went to the last election stating that they would not undertake any assets sales but promising extra money for school maintenance. What is clear from the government's own documents is that the maintenance funds are coming from disposal of lands owned by the department of education and that continued disposals and revenue are expected to be collected for forward estimates. So once again the opposition asks the minister to release the list of schools that they intend to wholly or partially dispose of. We know by the government's own admission that they have disposed of \$38 million of school assets in 2012-13 and have budgeted to raise \$30 million each year for the next four years and have a hit list of 47 schools for closure.

**Mr Watts** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Miss Barton): Order! Member for Toowoomba North, I am struggling to hear the member for Redcliffe over your interjections. I call the member for Redcliffe.

**Ms D'ATH:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The government claims it is not in the public interest to release this list. However, the reality is that it is not in the government's interest to release this list.

This government heaps scorn on previous Labor governments, but when it comes to disabilities this government should be grateful for the historic decision by the federal Labor government to introduce the NDIS. This LNP government did everything to not sign up to the NDIS, consequently leaving Queensland without a pilot program. Sadly, this LNP state government is using the preparation for the NDIS now as an excuse to outsource vital tasks the state government performs in this sphere.

The National Disability Insurance Scheme is being introduced across Australia to provide individuals with disability choice over what services they receive and through whom they receive these services. Somehow the Newman government has interpreted 'choice' under the NDIS to mean we need to privatise disability services in Queensland. This mode of thinking focuses solely on cutting costs and saving money, not on the provision of quality services by experienced and hardworking staff.

Another area in which the Newman government is short-changing Queensland is training. The Newman government is systematically dismantling our TAFEs by cutting staff, reducing courses and significantly increasing fees. The LNPs decision to turn our public VET providers into commercially focused organisations with fully contestable funding ensures the long-term demise of our TAFEs. This

government has washed its hands of its community service obligations and no longer considers it important to deliver life skills to those most disadvantaged in our communities.

Labor will continue to oppose the stripping down and the sale of our TAFEs and strongly believes in the importance of TAFE being a public provider well into the future. With the gutting of the Queensland TAFE colleges and the scrapping of future trade training centre funding for our schools by the federal coalition government, the question must be asked: where are our people going to access the facilities to do their VET training and to give them the skills needed to gain employment?

During the previous two years under the Newman government, the LNP has an appalling record on science and innovation. The LNP's first budget cut more than \$21 million from grants designed to boost innovation in Queensland, including the Productivity Hubs program, PhD scholarships and fellowships, and the co-investment fund. On top of that, almost 250 jobs were cut from the Department of Science, Information Technology, Innovation and the Arts. We know from briefing notes released under right to information last year that the government has not delivered any new science funding for Queensland.

This appalling record has continued in this year's budget. The Science Delivery Services budget has been cut by \$15 million or 13.3 per cent. Controlled grants are down from \$89 million last year to \$70 million this year. The CITEC budget has been cut by almost \$8 million this year, while the Queensland Shared Services budget has been cut by \$7 million this year. The choice not to invest in science and innovation is a choice to not invest in the future of our state.

One of the disturbing features of this budget that will have a significant impact on the local schools and community groups in my electorate is the funding source for part of the Safe Night Out Strategy. So not only has \$15.4 million for the Safe Night Out Strategy been found from internal reallocation within the Department of Education, Training and Employment, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the Department of Transport and Main Roads, Queensland Health, the Queensland Police Service and Queensland Treasury and Trade—and there has been no explanation for what that \$15.4 million is currently paying for and what will be cut in those departments—but a further \$8.8 million will be reallocated—

**Government members** interjected.

**Ms D'ATH:** And those on the other side should tell their communities this—\$8.8 million will be reallocated from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund for local boards to implement effective management strategies and to access a one-off establishment payment for each new safe night out precinct. That is \$8.8 million that will not be available to kindergartens, local sporting organisations and many community groups. These groups struggle to raise funds for the purchase of equipment and to build facilities so essential for them to deliver services to their communities. But this government has ripped \$8.8 million out of our communities.

No project has more interest amongst the people of Redcliffe than the Moreton Bay Rail Link. During my time as the federal member for Petrie I fought hard for the Moreton Bay Rail Link. After decades of disappointment, finally Redcliffe will be linked with the Brisbane metropolitan rail network.

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members! Hansard do need to be able to hear the member for Redcliffe's contribution.

**Mr Bleijie** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Mr Attorney, the member for Redcliffe has the call.

**Ms D'ATH:** However, the people of Redcliffe must now be on guard that they will be short-changed on the Moreton Bay Rail Link project by the Newman and Abbott governments. It appears in the budget papers that, despite it being two years before completion is expected on the project, the government has revised down the total budget allocation for the project.

**Mr Gulley** interjected.

**Ms D'ATH:** No. This was not done during the tender. The tender was for \$1.147 billion. This was a project for \$1.147 billion—\$742 million from the federal government, \$300 million from the state government and \$105 million from the Moreton Bay Regional Council. However, the state government's budget papers now state that this project is a \$988 million project. The Treasurer should explain a reduction of \$159 million in the budget for this project.

It is reasonable to be cynical about the LNP government's agenda on this rail link, because I know that upon being elected the state government tried very hard to convince the federal government and council to downsize the project, to scrap one of the stations and to change it to a single line instead of a dual track line. Thankfully that proposal was not supported by either the federal Labor government or the council at the time.

**Mr Gulley** interjected.

**Ms D'ATH:** You should talk to the federal minister if you do not believe me, member for Murrumba.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Member for Redcliffe, I would ask that you direct your comments through the chair, please, not to individual members.

**Ms D'ATH:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. So when I see this year's budget and a substantial reduction in the total budget allocation, it is understandable that I hold concerns about what the state LNP government and the federal LNP government are up to. To reduce the overall budget for this project before they even start laying rail line is an obvious signal that the totality of the project may not be delivered. So I ask the Treasurer where they are cutting corners and where they are cutting back on this project. It is not even possible in the budget papers to see the exact amount of state funding. There is the total figure, but not how much the state is actually putting in.

The budget acknowledges that this is a large infrastructure project involving complex design solutions. That being the case and the project being two years away from completion, why is the state and federal governments revising down the total budget? This reduces the scope of any unexpected costs arising from the most significant infrastructure project that the Moreton Bay region has seen in decades.

In asking questions to the Treasurer to explain this reduction, the Treasurer may want to further explain why the government cannot even get their own figures correct. I refer the Treasurer to the government's own glossy brochure for the Sunshine Coast in which they have redefined Redcliffe as part of the Sunshine Coast. In that brochure they state that the total project is \$998 million. So we have the Service Delivery Statements saying \$988 million; we have the Sunshine Coast glossy brochure saying \$998 million. I guess it is only \$10 million that the government is out in their figures, but I wonder how many other figures are wrong.

The Treasurer should tell the people across Redcliffe, Murrumba and Kallangur where cuts have been made or what cuts are planned for this project, considering they have just added a new road which should add extra cost to this project for access to the Rothwell station. The government should also provide the actual figures for the state government's financial contribution to this project for 2014-15.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this budget abandons Queensland and short-changes the people of Redcliffe. It is a budget that does nothing for education; it merely rebadges the strong work done by previous Labor governments that did have a strong commitment to education and squanders the opportunities that were placed before them with the Gonski funding model. It is a budget that liquidated the training sector in this state, turning TAFEs into wastelands with fewer courses costing students more. It is a budget that retreats from funding for science and innovation. Its only plan is to ignore the wishes of Queenslanders and sell assets, which will mean fewer jobs and worse services.

This is not a budget for battlers; it is a budget for bankers, because they are the only ones that will benefit from Campbell Newman's assets sales. The next election will give voters a clear choice: the LNP will sell state assets; Labor will not. This is Campbell Newman's third budget of arrogance and broken promises that will do nothing to create jobs and lower the cost of living. It is a budget that shows the LNP has never had a plan for managing our state economy. This is a budget that hurts, not helps, Queenslanders.