




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.46 pm): The Palaszczuk government's Queensland budget for 2015-16 has at its core a fundamentally flawed debt action plan. As such, there will be more heartache for Queenslanders. This state budget is a feather castle built on liquid sand. It will float away and disintegrate rapidly. Shifting or transferring general government debt to our government owned corporations, including our electricity companies, is simply a smoke-and-mirrors exercise. But Queenslanders will not be fooled.

Accessing the long service leave fund of public servants is a cheap trick that risks our currently fully funded Public Service entitlements. This plan, which includes ripping out \$3.4 billion from the funding pool set aside for public servants' long service leave and not contributing towards the defined benefit scheme for five years, is highly questionable and is really a form of Russian roulette. This is being done by an inexperienced Labor government with no credible or sustainable plan for our economic future.

What we have heard from Labor in their state budget is rhetoric and hollow announcements which cannot be matched by practical, long-term, sustainable action. This budget is bad for jobs and bad for growth. Grassroots environmental programs have been slashed. The infrastructure freeze is more like a blizzard. The successful Safe Night Out Strategy has also been inappropriately targeted. What we also know is that Labor are soft on crime. They have cut funding for the Crime and Corruption Commission and they are empowering criminal gangs.

This budget does nothing to provide real cost-of-living-pressure relief for my residents in the electorate of Moggill. The cost of car registration has increased by 3.5 per cent from 1 July after a three-year freeze under the former LNP government. In my electorate of Moggill this means that the cost of putting a four-cylinder car on the road has risen by \$12, with the costs for a six-cylinder car rising by \$17.

In contrast, the Liberal National Party has a vibrant and robust economic plan which will deliver real jobs and ensure sustainable, long-term economic growth in Queensland. The LNP has real economic plans which will deliver jobs and achieve economic diversity and growth in Queensland. Diversifying via a balanced investment in a range of industries, sectors and emerging technologies and markets, as committed to by the Liberal National Party, is a prudent and wise course of action.

The public at large understand that economic security is a fundamental right of all Queenslanders. Achieving resilience within our economy requires a focused and determined commitment by experienced economic managers such as those within the LNP. Without a realistic and truthful approach to our government's finances, Labor will not be able to truly invest in our schools and hospitals of tomorrow as well as much needed state infrastructure.

The Liberal National Party understands that the agricultural sector is a vital component of economic activity for our state, ensuring that food and primary source materials are available for secondary industries such as manufacturing. In Queensland over the last three years the value of our total manufacturing sector has remained relatively stable at around \$18 billion despite some unfavourable conditions including rapid technological change, a higher Australian dollar and variable market conditions and consumer expectations. The Liberal National Party will ensure that workers in manufacturing occupations have access to further research and development strategies, including design occupations which can be exported to international markets.

Tourism at present represents 70 per cent of Queensland's service industry—a \$23 billion industry. Many visitors from around the world contribute to our local economy by enjoying the beauty of our Great Barrier Reef, visiting our national parks, interacting with our unique flora and fauna as well as visiting our beaches and tasting our terrific culinary delights. The LNP understands the importance of tourism and has a track record of strong support for this sector whilst in government, and I acknowledge the former minister and member for Currumbin for her great work during the term of the Newman LNP government.

Our resources sector with a specific focus on coal, oil and gas must continue to be supported with specific strategies to drive investor confidence and expedite approval processes whilst also ensuring that the highest standards of environmental protection are adhered to as part of an ethically sound governance framework. The LNP will deliver such a balance in relation to mining and the resources sector in Queensland.

Those in construction also need less bureaucratic red tape, lower taxes and planning law reform in order to progress residential developments in the south-east as well as regional Queensland so as to sustain projected population growth. Queensland has a unique opportunity to further progress biomedical research and be a recipient of its economic benefits. This was recently discussed at the Asia Pacific Cities Summit held in Brisbane, and I must offer my congratulations to Lord Mayor Graham Quirk on hosting such a successful event. In order to invest in biomedical and health research, a government must be able to discharge its due diligence and oversight proper governance processes. What we know in health is that when last in government the Labor Party had the trifecta of governance failures with the payroll fiasco, the Patel saga and the fake Tahitian prince episode. The LNP has strategies to further expand the education and training sector, particularly in relation to exported services of this sector into the Asia-Pacific region.

On 31 January 2015 a state election was held and a decision made by the people of Queensland. Since then, the LNP has systematically set about the task of rebuilding and developing innovative public policy whilst also announcing a number of associated commitments. The LNP is committed to reducing debt, delivering sound economic management when in government, enhancing the successful Royalties for the Regions program, reducing the tax burden on small business, further expanding front-line services and ensuring value for money for taxpayers in the provision of public services. The LNP will always be committed to lower taxes, smaller government and the principles of fairness, accountability, transparency, productivity and efficiency for the people of Queensland.

The Liberal National Party has also always had a strong commitment to supporting those with disadvantage in our community by creating and providing opportunity through real and practical education strategies and employment opportunities, and I give the practical example of the School of Hard Knocks in Queensland. The original Choir of Hard Knocks, now known as the Choir of Hope and Inspiration, first began rehearsing in September 2006 under the leadership of the great Australian choral conductor and opera singer Dr Jonathon Welch AM. The choir was created for people experiencing homelessness or disadvantage, with many members having a range of unique personal, physical, health and/or emotional needs.

Many honourable members may remember that the original Choir of Hard Knocks captured the hearts and minds of Australians in the award-winning ABC TV series of the same name in 2006. Since 2006, more than 300 street choirs have formed around the world. From the experiences of the original choir, Jonathon Welch has established the School of Hard Knocks, which provides a range of arts and wellbeing programs to those suffering with disadvantage. The School of Hard Knocks trains volunteers and professional teachers in its methods and provides a pathway forward for those suffering homelessness, poor mental health or other forms of disadvantage towards obtaining formal educational qualifications, employment and a brighter future.

In 2014 Jonathon Welch established the Absolutely Everybody Choir in Queensland, with a formal launch occurring on World Mental Health Day. This would not have been possible without the support primarily of the then LNP government but also the Department of Health and the Queensland Mental Health Commission. As an honorary patron of the School of Hard Knocks in Queensland, I want

to acknowledge the achievements of Jonathon and his team including David Jones, Susan Gilmartin and Melissa Gill as well as various partnering agencies including Common Ground, Open Minds, Richmond Fellowship, Footprints, Lives Lived Well, Stepping Stone, the Salvation Army, Transitional Housing, and most recently, the Brisbane City Council for the collaborative work they are all undertaking for the benefit of many in our community.

This year the School of Hard Knocks intends to hold the Absolutely Everybody Loves Broadway concert at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre on the evening of Friday, 9 October, during Mental Health Week. I would encourage all honourable members and the people of Brisbane and Queensland to consider supporting this event given the transformational change such events and programs are making to the lives of those Queenslanders suffering with social, economic, health and educational disadvantage. This highly innovative and successful collaboration is an example of the LNP augmenting and enabling the delivery of socially and economically sound programs as part of public-private partnerships in our community.

I now wish to return to budget matters and, having previously addressed elements of the state budget, I now make some comments in relation to the federal budget delivered a few short weeks ago. I do this given the importance of cooperative relationships needed between state and federal government budgetary arrangements—that is, working together. This year's visionary federal budget and associated initiatives and incentives are great for residents not only in my electorate of Moggill but also right across Queensland. The Commonwealth announcements for small business including tax cuts will boost economic activity and create jobs. Allowing small businesses to immediately write-off any asset they buy up to \$20,000 with no limits on how many assets they write-down or how often they do it until June 2017 is to be commended. Providing small businesses earning under \$2 million a year a 1.5 per cent tax cut to 28½ per cent from 1 July has also been very much welcomed in my electorate by small businesses. From the Commonwealth government, Queensland hospitals will receive an extra \$819 million from 2014-15 to 2018-19 and Queensland's schools will receive an \$876 million increase from 2014-15 to 2018-19 and Queensland will receive an extra \$5.6 billion in GST revenue.

The Commonwealth's \$5 billion funding package for Northern Australia will also have very significant infrastructure and economic benefits for Queensland. Major highway projects to benefit from federal funding will also boost job creation in Queensland. In health additional Commonwealth funding for new medicines on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, vaccines and eHealth is also welcome. What this all highlights is that the Liberal National Party knows how to manage the finances and support economic growth in Queensland as well as across the nation.

In Queensland this side of the House has a plan for the future. Those members opposite have no credible plan. There is no vision; there are no credible plans. Queensland requires a credible vision and commitment to address our roads, rail and other vital public transport infrastructure. All this government has been focused on is outrageous directives to encourage union membership and return workplace relations to a situation of antagonism, with the resultant effect of Public Service inefficiency, poor productivity and wastage. The taxpayers of Queensland, including my constituents in Moggill, deserve better.

As a member of the LNP parliamentary team, I will continue to hold the Palaszczuk government to account as the residents of Moggill will not be hoodwinked by a lack of investment in vitally needed local infrastructure as well as the game of smoke and mirrors being led by the Treasurer and member for Mulgrave, Curtis Pitt. Debt is debt is debt. It does not matter where you hide it. It is still debt, Premier.

Finally, the health minister, Cameron Dick, asked a few short weeks ago: what do I have against the doctors of Queensland? That is a cheap shot at best. I am pleased to inform the minister: nothing at all. That is why the doctors of Queensland elected me to be president of both the Australian Medical Association of Queensland as well as the Rural Doctors Association of Queensland on two separate occasions as well as serving in various capacities of both organisations for over a decade. I am one of only two doctors in the history of Queensland to have been afforded this honour. But the real question is: what does the health minister, the member for Woodridge, have against the people of Queensland, as it is the health minister who opposes surgical waitlist integrity and it is the health minister who opposes Queenslanders getting their required care within clinically recommended time frames? It is also the health minister who locks out members of his own department from providing advice. The minister himself locks them out.

Can I also suggest to the health minister that he take a train trip. Maybe he and the Minister for State Development and Minister for Natural Resources and Mines, the member for Stafford, Dr Lynham, should board the *Spirit of the Outback* train. They can travel up the coast and have a look at some terrific communities and then head on inland and see some great parts there. They could personally

support some of those drought affected communities by making that trip and perhaps on the way they could enjoy a glass of champagne from the estate or vineyard known as champagne socialism. That is right: they are champagne socialists on the other side of the House.

Eventually, they would come to Barcaldine. I would recommend that they disembark and spend some time in Barcaldine and support the local economy in the town. Perhaps they could have a meal at the Union Hotel. I know that the member for Whitsunday and the member for Gregory have certainly enjoyed time there. But after the health minister and the member for Stafford have contributed to the local economy and enjoyed their meal at the Union Hotel, they really need to visit the Tree of Knowledge. At the Tree of Knowledge they will find that it is dead—and not because it has been poisoned in the middle of the night by some scoundrel but because the Labor Party is rotten to the core because of union corruption, cronyism and failed public administration by Labor over many years not only in Queensland but right across Australia.

This year's state budget is flawed, just like the Labor Party. Queenslanders deserve truth in government, honesty and a credible economic plan. Labor is all about spending more but getting less. Certainly, there is a lack of transparent outcomes metrics in relation to health and education. My constituents in Moggill and the people of Queensland deserve better.