




Speech By
Craig Crawford

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

Record of Proceedings, 16 July 2015

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Mr CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (12.29 pm): As the first government member on my feet after the opposition leader, I acknowledge his speech and thank him for his very comprehensive speech and also for his recognition of the areas of the budget that he does have some agreement with. I rise to support the budget and also to congratulate the Treasurer on delivering this 2015-16 budget in a professional, measured and responsible fashion. I was a public servant and I did have a beef with the LNP. This budget delivers on all of the election commitments made in my electorate during the 2015 campaign as well as delivering for Far North Queensland and the regions around my electorate. In particular, it delivers on one of the most frequently canvassed items in the 2015 election campaign—that is, the progression of the Bill Fulton Bridge at Redlynch. This bridge is currently a two-lane highway on the Western Arterial Road and has been outgrown by a fast developing housing and community network on the Northern Beaches. It requires duplicating of a bridge and approximately half a kilometre of highway connecting Redlynch to the city of Cairns. I thank the Minister for Main Roads for his time in visiting the site recently with me and discussing this important missing link in our road network. This budget gives a kickstart to the much awaited work to develop the plan, the costings and the design for the upgrade that our region requires and it will be warmly welcomed by the Barron River electorate as well as the surrounding electorates as a clear sign of intent by this government to action this bridge.

This budget delivers for Cairns and the Far North region the core services that are needed to exist in the Far North, with continued investment in our schools, our hospitals and our emergency services. In the campaign the No. 1 issue identified by Barron River voters was access to public health care and the ongoing future of services available at the Cairns and Hinterland Hospital and Health Service. I am delighted to see a six per cent increase in the Health budget for health services in Far North Queensland. I am delighted to see the funds in the budget for the commencement of the Cairns Special School and, along with my parliamentary colleagues the member for Cairns and the member for Mulgrave, the Treasurer, I warmly welcome this important asset to our region. A special school has been something on the agenda for a number of elections now in the Cairns region and it is a true Labor government that will deliver this in the Far North.

I have spoken many times in this House about tourism in Cairns and the importance of the Great Barrier Reef. In the 2015 election we promised \$100 million towards water quality on the Great Barrier Reef and I welcome the commencement of that funding injection into this budget. The reef is key to Cairns and the Barron River economy. Those on our side of the House get it. Those on the other side seem to lack that vision. Importantly, this budget addresses the constant rhetoric from those opposite that a Labor government cannot manage debt by forecasting a surplus in our 2015-16 year. I congratulate the Treasurer on his debt management strategy. He has my full support in its delivery. This government can deliver a debt management strategy without sacking thousands of workers and without flogging off the state's assets to bolster the books like those opposite. Those opposite have asked for a plan. Well, now they have it and I refer to my copy—everyone has it in their budget pack—

of *Jobs now, jobs for the future* for Far North Queensland. I want to highlight a couple of sections, the first one being \$892 million for our Health budget. As I said before, that is a six per cent increase. There is also \$61 million for maintenance of our Far North Queensland schools.

Ms Jones: Hear, hear!

Mr CRAWFORD: I thank the education minister for her interjection. There is \$81 million for disaster relief. Those who live in the north know that we are ground zero for disasters in Queensland. Almost every year without fail we will see anywhere up to six large cyclones circling off our shores, sometimes crossing the coast. We are used to it. We deal with it all of the time and this disaster relief funding in partnership with the Australian government is a welcome sign.

There are a few small things kicking around in the Far North but nonetheless important to the voters. There is money towards tourism and events; money towards aviation investment to bring planes into Cairns, particularly from Asia; and money into stolen wages. The electorate of Barron River includes Kuranda, and a number of Indigenous Australians there will qualify for stolen wages. There is also money towards saving the reef, as I mentioned before; money towards social housing, particularly for the Kuranda area of Barron River; and money towards homeless people. There is also money towards disaster recovery, Indigenous arts, Indigenous rangers and Panama disease. Earlier it was said that there has been no statement about agriculture by this government, but the money for Panama disease is an incredibly important announcement for members such as the members for Cook, Dalrymple and Mulgrave who have a number of banana plantations in their electorates. There is money for school capital works, money for Indigenous land rangers and money for Indigenous sea rangers.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr CRAWFORD: I was quiet when they were talking. Unfortunately they cannot do the same in return. There is also money towards the Cairns Convention Centre refurbishment and mountain bike tracks in the Smithfield area. I could go on and on and on. This is a successful budget. I could not help but notice when reading the *Courier-Mail* this morning that it made reference to the fact that this is a vanilla budget and that Labor MPs have found it to be a vanilla budget. Not this one. I do not agree that it is vanilla. I find this budget to be a statement of what this Labor government is about and what the people of Queensland have asked for and can now look forward to without fear of reprisal and without fear of the fancy websites, slogans and jingles we saw from Campbell Newman. We promised jobs for the electorates and it is jobs they will get with a range of initiatives and advancements being rolled out, and it is these jobs that we need to address the high unemployment rates in the Cairns area. We promised jobs, and jobs we will deliver. I commend the Treasurer, the Premier, the Deputy Premier and all cabinet members on a well structured and well balanced good Labor budget. I look forward to the next 12 months along with all Queenslanders as we manage this state in a responsible manner. I support the bills.