




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (10.07 pm): I rise to speak to the appropriation bills which are before the House. I know we all get quite excited when we have an opportunity to stand up and speak in this wonderful House. It is incredible but sometimes we hear ludicrous statements in this House. I have to call the previous speaker out.

In the previous budget there was an increase in the Health budget of seven per cent. There was an increase in the Education budget. Can I say that if it is the case that there is a nurse who is too busy to go to the bathroom then the same situation probably exists there as exists at Kingaroy Hospital where there are eight vacancies because we are unable to fill those positions because it is difficult to encourage people into the regions. Ask the administrators, ask the health board, because I dare say that there is something wrong there. I think that the member should be talking to the health minister about that individual's situation. In relation to class sizes—

Mr Rickuss: She made it up.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: You cannot make this stuff up. There is not one state school in Queensland that has overcrowded classrooms. If there are, bring them on—tell us all about it. You cannot even name those schools. But just like the budget: they can say what they want and do something else. The Treasurer said he was going to pay down debt in this budget; there was no paying down of the debt. He is going to deliver surpluses—again, another fail. He is going to deliver a plan; I am still waiting to hear the plan.

Mr Costigan: Gonna, gonna, gonna.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Gonna, gonna, gonna. This budget is bad for jobs and this budget is bad for growth. It is typical of a Labor government, as we have heard. It is typical of a Labor budget, as we have heard.

For the Treasurer to go to mums and dads in Queensland and say to them, 'This is how I am going to fix it,' just shows his inexperience. Guess what? Grab your Westpac credit card and use it to pay off your NAB credit card, because that is what this Treasurer is doing. Then he is going in to raid our public servants' nest eggs, their superannuation. It is just incredible.

When I was looking through the Budget Strategy and Outlook, Budget Paper No. 2, I read, 'Principle 5—Target full funding of long term liabilities such as superannuation ...'. That is interesting. Then the Treasurer wrote, 'Consistent with the long-standing practice of successive governments ...'. I do not need to read the quotes again—we have heard them several times already today—from all of the other Labor treasurers who have ridiculed this new Treasurer because it is just incredible.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Order! Member for Nanango, take your seat. I know it is late in the night. We will have some order. I call the member for Nanango.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, for your protection. I still recall the day I first walked into the Treasury as the assistant minister to the treasurer in 2012 and on my desk was the incoming government brief. There were folders of them. Treasurer, I am sure you remember your incoming government briefs. The one that we opened on that first day—I can still remember opening it up—said that the state of Queensland’s finances were unsustainable. So that is the legacy that the previous Labor government left us. What was the legacy that the Newman LNP government left this Treasurer? They got an incoming government brief that said that they had a budget and debt position that had broadly stabilised in that short period of time. Now, after this budget, we have no chance of getting our AAA credit rating back—incredible.

But where does agriculture sit with this government? We all know because we have heard—

Miss Barton: They didn’t even mention it.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: The Treasurer does not even mention the word ‘agriculture’. He did not mention ‘fisheries’. Interestingly, he would not mention ‘forestry’ because that is not even in the honourable member for Rockhampton’s title. He is the Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries. He has Sport and Racing as well, but in the portfolio that I am shadowing him he does not have ‘forestry’.

Mr Costigan: They’ve dumbed it down.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: They have dumbed it down. But I know it is still there because the word ‘forestry’ is in the budget papers. Budget Paper No. 2 talks about the economic performance and outlook. I found this really interesting because we all understand that almost 80 per cent of the state is in drought. We understand that. For those people out west in those circumstances it is diabolical. The minister, I am quite sure, is with me on that. The drought funding that is in the budget—which I will get to—relates to that as well. So we know that the state is struggling in some parts.

But it is interesting that this Labor government seems to think that because 80 per cent of the state is in drought that means agriculture is going down the drain, according to the economic performance and outlook. It says that, because we have 80 per cent of the state currently drought declared, the agricultural sector is unlikely to do anything, so let’s pack it up and not count it in. Come on, Treasurer, we should be seriously supporting the agricultural industry and supporting all of those areas in that sector.

Mr Rickuss: What about horticulture?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Yes, horticulture. We have eggs, we have pork—we have all of these other areas of agriculture in Queensland that want to be fought for. They want to be encouraged to have better trade. You do not just count agriculture out because there is a drought in the state. Be proud of it. Be proud of it, please! Do not write it off in the budget just because of the drought situation. There are other areas of agriculture, fisheries and forestry within the economy that we can be so proud of, and we need to support those people out there on the ground.

It is just incredible, and I cannot not touch on the fact of the job cuts within the department. Why would the minister write down his budget and take some 138 staff positions out of the department? I can see the Treasurer over there shaking his head, because he is worried that I have not looked at it properly. Well, I have. Treasurer, I have probably read a few more of these than you. We have the figures. Honestly, the departmental officers, I am quite sure, are all sitting around wondering which 138 positions are going. They will not be in the corporate sector in Ann Street—no, they will not be there. They will be on the front line because they are increasing the corporate sector—maybe that is the media or helping out.

Mr Costigan: Spin doctors.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Spin doctors—that is the word I was looking for. I know I have touched on the drought, but one thing I want to be really serious about is the fact that of those 138 positions we are seeing eight positions go in QRAA. We have seen an increase in drought funding, and I am very encouraged by that. This is carrying on from the hard work of Dr John McVeigh, the then minister, when he secured record drought funding from our government. I know the Leader of the Opposition touched on that, and I commend him for his speech in the House today as well.

It really defies logic—and the member for Keppel will know this because the QRAA applications will be coming from her electorate as well—that we are not only reducing service level expectations, we are not only saying to our staff, ‘Don’t rush. Slow down’, but also taking people out of that vital area. People on the ground do not think necessarily that QRAA is getting it all right at this stage of proceedings, so we need to encourage the minister to have a look at what is going through QRAA. But we certainly do not need eight fewer positions in QRAA.

People out there in the regions wanted to see some encouragement for research and development in this budget. That is the way of the future. We have had some successful trials, but unfortunately it does not seem to be a priority. What I did see throughout the budget papers is Labor's commitment to Greens preferences. I know that Andrew Cripps spoke about this. It should not come as any surprise that they stated in the budget papers that they intend to reinstate the vegetation laws to 'implement changes to the vegetation management framework to appropriately manage and minimise the clearing of vegetation'. Are you kidding me? The people on the ground who know how to manage their land are having their rights stripped away from them by the relevant ministers who are acting under pressure from their green colleagues within the cabinet. I find this incredible—absolutely incredible.

I am encouraged by and welcome the money that will be contributed to the Panama disease tropical race 4 program, which is providing surveillance to delimit the disease and tracking to determine the extent of the spread of the disease. I acknowledge that this is much needed and I am very much looking forward to the eradication of this disease. We need to be careful that all of our eggs are not put in one basket because there are always so many biosecurity issues that are happening—hence, again why I am so surprised that those FTEs have been ripped out of that department.

I mentioned the forestry industry. I note that it has been forgotten in the minister's title and it has been forgotten in the budget—or at best it has been quite neglected. When we were in government, we allocated some \$1.4 million towards a new forest and timber research and development program to drive innovation in the industry. The former LNP government was committed to ensuring that the future of the agricultural sector was strong. We revitalised the Emerald and Longreach agricultural colleges, and I probably have missed something there while I am talking about revitalising things. It was the LNP government that had to put the whole department of agriculture back together, because it was dismantled under the previous Labor government. It was thrown halfway out to DERM and halfway out to one of those other big megaportfolios and there was no department of agriculture at all. It is no wonder the previous Labor government got rid of the Dalby agricultural college, the Burdekin agricultural college and all of those good people with all of that wonderful knowledge.

There are other areas that I want to touch on in the short time I have left. I am really pleased with the work that the LNP government did in relation to the child protection sector. It astounds me that we have to sit here on this side and hear that apparently we do not care about children in protection. I find it completely abhorrent that that has been said over and over again. The LNP government put some \$406 million into child protection—

A government member interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It is interesting to hear those opposite laughing because they probably have never looked at budget papers before. If they go back and pick up the budget papers from the previous government, they will see it because it is really obvious. The papers are numbered on the front so it is quite easy to find. You just need to have a look. It is exactly the same in that it was the LNP which found the money to deliver an extra \$868 million to the NDIS. Our plan delivered one of the biggest single increases in disability funding in the whole country, and that certainly warrants me saying that here in the House today.

I will turn now to my electorate. I have left it to last because, unfortunately, we are back to having a typical Labor government. My electorate had a crossbench member for 12 years, so that was a dreadful time and we only got thrown a scrap here or there. It was not until I was able to stand up in the House, like the member for Townsville, and then I could list all of the amazing things we were so lucky to introduce under the LNP government.

The first thing I do with the budget is I grab my fluoro and I go into the capital budget paper and I look particularly at education and at the schools, because I have 36 schools in my electorate. Not one school within my electorate got one cent—that is right, not one cent. Not one school in the South Burnett, the Somerset or the entire Nanango electorate got one cent. One thing I will mention is over the border in the electorate of the member for Callide, Jeff Seeney, and he has spoken about this a lot. The Wondai State School library burnt down and thankfully we have the money in here for the Wondai library. It is not in my electorate but I am sure Mr Seeney will not mind if I talk about it because I have no schools in the Nanango electorate with anything in the capital statement.

I am very pleased that Sean Choat, the former member for Ipswich West, and I spent the last couple of years working so hard towards an upgrade for a small section of the Brisbane Valley Highway. Unfortunately, it is only \$1.1 million and it is only a small section but we will continue to lobby extremely hard to get the money for the Brisbane Valley Highway. Whilst I was in government and sitting on that side, we were able to deliver overtaking lanes. I was very pleased because I was only there for two years and 10 months but I was able to deliver four overtaking lanes for my electorate. Whilst this is a little scrap and it is in the Ipswich West electorate—so it is over the border again—I am still proud

because I fought very hard for it and my people drive on it all the time so I am happy with that. I will mention one more thing just over the border in the electorate of Glass House. My great friend and colleague Andrew Powell, who is sitting over there, has fought very hard for upgrades to the D'Aguilar Highway. I am extremely pleased about his hard work.

Incredibly, in the jobs plan, the only plan for Wide Bay in the capital budget paper is the overhauls for the Tarong and Meandu mines, but they have to happen anyway. They have been announced; they have to happen. Interestingly, the document says that those overhauls are going to create 1,500 jobs. Guess what? If we are lucky, those overhauls will bring in an extra couple of hundred jobs. I do not know where they get 1,500 from. That is just incredible to me. Obviously my electorate got no jobs either.

I am very pleased that the police minister was able to say, 'We're not going to stop building the Kingaroy Police Station. It's half built. We're not going to stop, everyone. We're going to continue to build it so I can reannounce it because that will be the only announcement for the Nanango electorate—even though the member for Nanango announced it last year, but don't worry about that. We're not going to stop the building. It's going to keep going, so that's great.' It is already half built and I am looking forward to getting all of our great local coppers into that much needed building.

I am extremely disappointed that this government has decided not to support the South Burnett clubhouse. I have talked about that in this House on many, many occasions. I will be talking to the health minister because I do need to talk to him because the Kingaroy regional hospital was not even mentioned in this budget at all, even though it is a priority for regional hospitals and the health minister knows it is because it was the No. 1—

(Time expired)