




Speech By
Michael Crandon

MEMBER FOR COOMERA

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Mr CRANDON** (Coomera—LNP) (3.01 pm): I rise in response to the 2015-16 budget that has been foisted on the state of Queensland and on Queenslanders by this government that simply has no plan. As far as the Coomera electorate is concerned, sadly, there is really not much to say because there is nothing new in the budget for the Coomera electorate; it is just what we already knew. We had already announced many programs and many things. For example, the exit 54 upgrade had been announced before and there has been 12 or so months of preparation. The local Main Roads people had been working on the planning and what have you, and they had been out on the ground for six months leading up to the announcement in January this year. I note that the main roads minister said the other day that the LNP could not deliver it in three years but he delivered it in six weeks. He is a bit of a dreamer if he thinks that is the way things happen.

In the first three years that I was in this place, which was from 2009 to 2012, the two major issues I constantly pushed on—and I got absolutely no support, by the way, in that period from the member for Albert at the time in that last Labor government—were exit 54 and of course the increase in numbers on the rail line to the Gold Coast to get rid of that term the ‘Bombay express’. We got the ‘Bombay express’ fixed during our term of government, our first term. We increased peak-hour services by 34 in 2014, and that was after an additional 10 were delivered in 2013, so 44 new services in that period. That got rid of the ‘Bombay express’, and we found the money for exit 54 from all sorts of places and were able to pull that together as well. This government is taking credit for that—but, anyway, if they want to go out there and spin those sorts of yarns, that is fine.

The budget mentions stage 3 of the Pimpama State Secondary College. Yes, that is in the budget and it was always going to be in the budget because it is stage 3 and that Pimpama area is the fastest growing area in Queensland, with tens of thousands of additional residents moving into the Coomera electorate and the vast majority of them moving into that Pimpama area. There is also some money in the budget for stage 2 of the Pimpama State Primary College. Once again, we knew that was coming. It is just a revamp and a reannouncement of the money that we knew was coming all along. The same thing happened with the Coomera Rivers State School—precisely the same thing. Also, the planning for the duplication of the Helensvale to Coomera rail has been underway for some 12 months. It is a commitment that we made some 18 months ago. It was in previous budget papers, and now it has been claimed by this government as part of their budget for the people of Queensland. It makes sense to continue all of this spending. It makes absolute sense because the Coomera electorate is by far the fastest growing electorate in the state, with just over 39,000 voters on the day of the election in my electorate, which was the highest number of voters anywhere in the state. So I thank the government for staying with the plans that the LNP put in place. Funding for school maintenance is again something that we introduced. Why? Because of the neglect of the previous Labor government. We introduced it, and I thank the Treasurer for continuing to make those funds available to the schools.

May I put a suggestion out there? The government might want to start looking at some of the more disadvantaged schools, and I have a number of them in my electorate that I am constantly working with to try to find them some money. We need to understand that disadvantaged schools are typically in disadvantaged areas and therefore it is very difficult for them to raise funds locally. It is extremely difficult for them to run a profit even in their tuckshops; it is extremely difficult for them to run fundraisers and so on. So perhaps we need to see a bit more consideration given to those disadvantaged schools. I would love to talk to the education minister about providing some assistance for some of those schools in my electorate.

I congratulate the Treasurer for continuing all of those additional sensible funding LNP initiatives. It was sensible for them to reconfirm our LNP commitments, but I do condemn his decision to go back to the past. What do I mean by that? One of the most important things for this Treasurer in the first few months of this new parliament was looking after his union mates. Who are they? His union mates are the Plumbers Union—in fact, I think they are his only mates in the union, or they are certainly the only ones I am told are in his faction. They are his biggest friends, so one of the most important things for him was to make sure—wait for it—that those union mates were the only ones in Australia who could fit water meters. It is all right for the water industry to put the water pipes past houses and what have you, it is okay for the rest of Australia to allow the water industry to fit those water meters to those pipes, but not in Queensland. In fact the union told us in committee that the only people capable of fitting water meters in Queensland are fully trained plumbers. No-one else in Australia feels the same way, but the plumbers of Queensland are the only ones capable of doing it in Queensland. Mind you, the water industry has been fitting water meters for the last 14 years and there have never been any problems or issues. But now, going forward from here, they are the only people who can fit water meters in Queensland. That was a big win for this Treasurer because they were his only mates in the union.

Don't worry about jobs, don't worry about growth, but do worry about your union mates. Don't worry about the future for Queenslanders, raid their superannuation, raid their long service leave entitlements; but make sure you look after your union mates and make sure that they can fit those water meters because they are the only ones capable of doing it. Give yourself a funding holiday on that long service leave, give yourself a funding holiday on that superannuation fund, but make sure you look after your union mates.

On the subject of the raid on superannuation and long service leave and the suggestion that the Queensland Investment Corporation would be looking to invest in infrastructure and the like in Queensland, I have to explain something to the Treasurer. The QIC is a fund manager—it is a responsible fund manager—and it will not invest in his harebrained ideas. The other day an article in the *Australian Financial Review* stated—

... at the end of the day, any asset we invest in on behalf of a client—be it a government client or a non-government client—needs to make sense from an economic point of view.

I hope the Treasurer is reading this material. It goes on—

Clients aren't going to want us buying assets that don't make any sense.”

Remember that that money that QIC is looking after belongs to clients. It is not their money; it is not the state government's money; they hold it on behalf of their clients and they will not invest those dollars in things that simply do not make sense.

I have promised my colleagues that I will try to keep things short in this particular delivery. If honourable members opposite would like to urge me to go on, I am happy to do so.

Government members interjected.

Mr CRANDON: Okay, I will go on then.

Government members interjected.

Mr CRANDON: All right, you have got me. I will go on.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Grace): Order! Please, members, would you stop interjecting! The member for Coomera has the call.

Mr CRANDON: I do have a meeting to go to, so in conclusion—

Government members interjected.

Mr CRANDON: It is a very important meeting and then I have a meeting with the chair and other members of my committee. It is really important that I be at that meeting before I go to the meeting with members of my committee—Di Farmer and others. We cannot be late for the first meeting because we have to be at the second meeting, which is really important, too.

Just to wrap up, this government has no plan. It has a tricky budget that shows that it cannot be trusted as it is borrowing from the future instead of investing in it. It is as simple as that. The government is sending forward the responsibility for funding the entitlements of superannuants to the people of Queensland in the future. I suggest that, by the time the last man standing wants to get his money out of that super fund, the Treasurer would be retired. We would probably all be retired by then. It does not matter; we will just send that debt forward.

Raiding public servants' long service leave and superannuation is not a plan. It is an accounting trick that burdens future generations of Queensland. The budget does nothing to address unemployment or boost business confidence. On the subject of business confidence, we have a situation on the Gold Coast, something that I have spoken about in this place before, and that is this: in the 2009 to 2012 period we had something in the order of 350 applications for development. Over the 2012 to 2014 period—not quite three years because the statistics I have from the council go to 24 November—that number was more than double. That comes back to business confidence. It comes back to developers being confident in the government's plans. I hope that we are able to maintain the momentum, particularly for the Coomera electorate, and business confidence so that they will keep going forward, particularly given that we managed to get exit 54 up. That means a billion dollar investment in and around that area over the next few years. I am sure this government will take the credit for that even though we put all of the mechanics for that in place.

In contrast, the LNP has a real economic plan. I would urge everyone opposite to go and have a read of it—and it is available online. We have a real economic plan to kickstart the economy, pay down debt and deliver job-creating infrastructure. If we are fortunate enough to be voted back into government at the next election we will lift Labor's infrastructure freeze and reduce payroll tax, increasing the threshold by \$100,000 each year. We will reintroduce the surgery wait-time guarantee, tie family car registration costs to inflation, stop Labor's soft-on-crime approach and reinstall the Royalties for the Regions.

Going back to that soft-on-crime approach, we are not talking about those poor beggars who find themselves in difficulties as a result of their drug addictions and so on. I am not talking about people who are gathered up by the crime gangs of which we had so many down on the Gold Coast. I am not talking about those people. I am not talking about the people who are, if you like, victims themselves of these crime gangs. I am talking about being soft on the crime gangs, soft on the business end of crime. We will stop that soft-on-crime approach. We will reinstall the Royalties for the Regions program that has been ripped out by this government and establish a Queensland regional finance and insurance corporation.

In conclusion, I urge the Treasurer to please go back to the drawing board. It is not too late. This is his first budget. He has only been doing it for five minutes. He led the people of Queensland astray when he said he was not going to touch superannuation. A couple of years ago he said no, he would not touch any of that 'superannuation stuff'. He led us astray in that regard, but it is not too late. He can undo what he has put in place. Just do it quietly. He does everything else quietly. He does it underhandedly. You can do this underhandedly as well. Just do not tell them. Just unwind it all. Do not make the mistakes. It is not too late. It is his first budget. It is a failed budget, but he can reconsider things and I urge the Treasurer to do so.