



Speech By
Patrick Weir

MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE

Record of Proceedings, 16 July 2015

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (12.50 am): I rise to make a contribution to the Appropriation Bill in reply to the Labor government's budget for 2015, which was delivered to the parliament on Tuesday. Like many people who live in the seat of Condamine, I listened intently to what the residents of my electorate could look forward to from this budget. Unfortunately, we all listened in vain. The seat of Condamine is experiencing great change and growth, particularly in the Wellcamp industrial area, the Charlton development precinct and the proposed expansion of the Oakey abattoir. That rapid growth is putting great pressure on roads, services and infrastructure and some funding to help cater for that expansion would have been warmly welcomed.

When in government, the LNP worked with the federal and local governments to secure funding for projects such as the \$10 million upgrade to O'Mara's Road and the installation of a water and sewerage system into the industrial estate. I was very surprised when I heard the Treasurer claim credit for the \$103 million road works from Charlton to Nugent's Pinch on the Warrego Highway west of Toowoomba to assist in coping with the increased traffic that will result from the considerable development on the western side of Toowoomba. My surprise stems from the fact that on 10 October 2014, while the candidate for Condamine, I attended the sod-turning ceremony on site with federal members the Hon. Warren Truss and the Hon. Ian Macfarlane, the then transport minister Scott Emerson, Trevor Watts and the then agricultural minister John McVeigh. The project was fully funded on an 80/20 funding split between the federal and state governments. Currently it is ahead of schedule and will be completed in September this year.

The other long-awaited announcement that will significantly impact upon the seat of Condamine is the big one: the Toowoomba second range crossing. This is one of the largest infrastructure projects that this country has seen since the Snowy Mountain scheme and the benefits that it will bring to the state's economy will be immense. The cost savings, particularly to the transport industry in fuel and time, will benefit all who rely on the route to transport produce to or from Brisbane. It is a much needed piece of infrastructure, but it is hardly new news. This announcement was made some time ago and the tenderer has been selected and construction is to commence later this year. While it is great to see funding continue for those projects, it was the LNP that secured the partnership with the federal government to make those vital pieces of infrastructure a reality.

As I stated earlier, the seat of Condamine is going through a period of strong growth on the back of the second range crossing and the private airport built at Wellcamp by the Wagner family. That has presented many new opportunities for businesses to take advantage of an international market that is now on their doorstep. One of the main products poised to be a big winner in this new era is beef production. The seat of Condamine is home to more feedlots than any other seat in Australia and we need to upgrade our road system to a road train or B-double standard to better service the industry. It is encouraging to see that the Labor government has allocated funding for the upgrade of the western rail line, as it is also vital to the development plans in this area, particularly for the beef industry.

We have heard much from this government about it being a job-creating government, but apart from growing the public service sector there has been little to encourage the private sector. To date, all we have seen is to the contrary. We have seen a winding back of the industrial relations laws to grant easier access to work sites for union representatives and the same in the area of workplace health and safety. Government members say that they are consulting with business and industry, but the facts say otherwise. Business did not welcome the changes to those laws and sent many submissions to state their concerns and the difficulties that these changes would inflict on their workplaces. However, all those concerns have been ignored. The concerns of business were no match against the demands of the union bosses and the debt owed to them by the members of the Labor Party. The result of the debt owed to the union bosses by the members opposite, along with the Greens, will be increasing debt that all Queenslanders will have to pay, despite the best magic tricks that the Treasurer has. Moving debt sideways, upside down or any other way will not do it. As any of the landholders in Condamine can tell you, if you move your plant and machinery debt over to your farm debt it does not mean it has magically disappeared. You still owe it. The bottom line has not changed. Even raiding the workers' superannuation and travel entitlements will not stop the rising debt.

Addressing the neglect of the ongoing maintenance of our schools was a key priority of the LNP government. I am pleased to see funds allocated in this budget for the Dalby State High School to replace its amenities block. Recently I visited the Brookstead State School, which will celebrate its centenary in August, and was made aware of the very poor state of its amenities block. There is still much to be done to bring our regional schools up to a standard that would be acceptable to their city cousins.

This budget is one that the people will pay a heavy price for in the years to come. The Treasurer can put as much spin, tricks and jiggery pokery on it as he likes, but it does not change the fact that it has let down the people of Condamine and the people of Queensland.