




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (8.43 pm): I rise to speak this evening on the Appropriation Bill 2015 before the House. I must say at the outset that I am just so disappointed with this budget. I think that is the best word I can find to describe the budget that has been presented here this week. I am disappointed because it is a return to the past. It is back to future. We are going to dust off the Labor credit card from the previous Labor government's term. We are going to rack up the expenses. We are going to exploit our kids' future and leave nothing left in the bickie tin. We are going to lead Queensland down the same path that we saw under the previous 10 years of Labor mismanagement here in Queensland.

This morning we heard Cameron Dick, the Minister for Health and the member for Woodridge, describe the previous LNP government's wait-time guarantee as a gimmick. Yet in his own budget paper on page 119 we read that for the previous year in categories 1, 2 and 3 we achieved 99 per cent of all elective surgery time frames—99 per cent. Let's see how that is looking after another year of classic Labor mismanagement of the health system.

I note that the Premier, as one of her first tasks, emailed every public servant across Queensland to reassure them that their jobs were safe. Well they were always safe, but what was the effect of this email? It sent the wrong message to everyone. It basically said, 'Happy days. Labor is back. Kick up your heels. Don't worry about accountability. Don't worry about meeting reasonable or statutory time frames. Just do as you please. The old gang is back. Dust off your dancing shoes and let the good times roll.'

Mr Power interjected.

Mr MOLHOEK: I am not taking that interjection. In my first year as the member for Southport, an elderly lady and her husband from Keebra Park came to see me. She had had a stroke. She was the principal carer for her frail husband. She was struggling to cope while waiting for a simple cataract procedure because her cataracts had left her almost blind. For three years she had been trying to get those cataracts dealt with. She had a pile of paperwork about an inch thick—letters from the hospital advising her where she stood on the waiting list; another letter from the audit department at the hospital wanting to check that she knew that she was on the waiting list; another letter from the hospital saying, 'You will get your appointment on such-and-such a date'; then another letter saying, 'Unfortunately, we are going to have push that date'; but then another follow-up letter from the audit department again to make sure that she knew that she was still on the waiting list for a \$500 procedure. She sat there almost in tears at my Saturday morning listening post because she had been struggling with the effects of a stroke, looking after her frail husband and being barely able to find her way around the house because she is just about blind from these cataracts that had been left for so long. One phone call is all it took and she received the procedure within the month.

I am worried—and so should the people of Southport, the Gold Coast and Queensland be—about Labor's approach to health services. How dare the minister this morning suggest that our government's genuine desire to help people receive urgent and non-urgent surgery on time is nothing more than a gimmick. How dare he be so flippant about our track record on health. Five hundred and forty extra staff—that is, nurses, medical officers, support staff—were employed in the Gold Coast health region under our term of government in the previous three years. What do we see in the budget presented in this House this week for Health? An extra \$119 million. Do you know how much the previous government allocated to extra health services on the Gold Coast? An extra \$400 million a year—a serious attempt, a serious commitment, to improving health services on the Gold Coast.

What did we see when we came into government three years ago in terms of the dental waiting lists on the Gold Coast? There were 4,416 people on the waiting list. What is that figure today? Zero, absolutely zero! That is the standard that we have set. I am concerned that the government on the other side of the House, through its commitment to this very disappointing budget, is not going to maintain the standards and the benchmarks that we have set over the past three years.

I want to take a minute though to draw to the attention of the House this wonderful brochure that was presented by the Treasurer, which allegedly provides some highlights of the budget and what it is going to deliver for the Gold Coast. I take you to the front page where it talks about \$1.19 billion for infrastructure. I am not sure what those commitments are because I have not been able to work it out from this fairly complex grid.

Mr Boothman: You need to get some crayons.

Mr MOLHOEK: I take that interjection from the minister for Albert.

Mr Boothman: Minister? Thank you.

Mr MOLHOEK: Sorry, I am a little confused. I find it amazing that the brochure also claims there is \$514 million for transport yet not one cent for the expansion of light rail. There is not one new initiative. All they have done in here is reannounce a whole lot of initiatives that were already underway under our government. They have reannounced every one of our commitments to games venues and the village. They have even tried to claim credit for the aquatic centre by saying they are going to build an aquatic centre. Well, the aquatic centre was finished about 18 months ago and the Pan Pacs have already been held there. It is open. It is just across the road from where I live and the lights are on every night. I am really not sure that it is appropriate to be reannouncing the \$48 million commitment for a new aquatic centre that we delivered, along with the Gold Coast City Council.

I am so excited about the roads program presented in this brochure—it is basically the \$100 million of mandatory road upgrades that are required to meet the games bid. That is it. There is no money for improvements to Edmund Rice Drive and no further money for improvements to build on the \$110 million that we committed to getting Olsen Avenue and Smith Street upgraded. There is no money for the realignment of Nerang Street from Kumbari Avenue to Queen Street and no commitment to the realignment of Ferry Road or Smith Street into Bundall Road. So I have to say that I am a little bit disappointed by the smoke and mirrors of this wonderful brochure.

The brochure has lies, lies and damn statistics, but one could be excused for thinking there was some really good information on the back of the brochure with more announcements from the government. Well, these are the announcements: the total population was 878,000; agricultural production was \$193 million, although I am not too sure there is a lot of agricultural production on the Gold Coast; and a number of residential buildings were approved. The government is trying to take the credit for those approvals, but I note that all of those approvals were for the year ended 31 March so I think nine months of the credit goes to us for that achievement. Then there is the wonderful statistic that says there are 80,000 businesses on the Gold Coast. I thought we were the party that was all about supporting business. If Gold Coast businesses understood what the other side of the House were proposing in terms of winding back WorkCover and relaxing the criminal bikie gang laws, then the government would not be bragging about business statistics in this brochure.

There is no mention in this brochure about the new half billion dollar private hospital at Parklands, but I note that on the back of the brochure the government are taking credit for a private commercial development down at Broadbeach, they are taking credit for the redevelopment of Pacific Fair, which has been underway for about 12 or 18 months now, and they are also trying to take credit for the expansion of Jupiters Hotel and Casino at Broadbeach, which has been on the drawing board for about five or six years. There is no mention of the great improvements to Southport TAFE and the fact that it has gone from 5,000 to nearly 10,000 student enrolments this year. There is no mention of the 38,000 jobs in my electorate. There is no mention of the prolific growth of Griffith University and the almost

\$300 million of new projects that are underway there. There is no mention of the work of the RDA and the epic growth in international students on the Gold Coast, which is forecast to grow from some 8,000 to 30,000 over the next three to five years. And, strangely, there is no mention about the extra medical staff and nurses who were actually employed in the Gold Coast health region during our time.

I have to say I am a little disappointed with this brochure. We committed to and delivered the first stage of the Gold Coast Light Rail. In spite of the current government proclaiming that it is all about jobs, I notice there is still no announcement about extra funding for the light rail. In fact, on Tuesday the Treasurer announced his bold plan for the next stage of the Gold Coast Light Rail extension, and it was the 'go for it plan'—no financial commitment, no budget, no idea, just that the current operators, GoldLinQ, can go for it. I would like to see what is in the budget for availability payments. I would like to see what capital commitments have been made in the budget in future years, because at this stage I do not think there are any. I would really like to know how the Treasurer plans to assess an application or expression of interest from GoldLinQ while meeting the state's stringent probity and competitive tender requirements. There is a lot of work to be done on this.

I would also like to see how the Treasurer plans to fund the existing \$300 million shortfall in revenues as a result of the gap between Labor's forecast patronage of 40,000 back in 2008 and today's reality of 20,000 passengers. It is a hollow promise and the Treasurer knows it and the Deputy Premier knows it. I am disappointed that there has not been a serious commitment to what will be one of the most important pieces of social infrastructure in South-East Queensland. In fact the recent report released by Infrastructure Australia highlighted it as one of the top 10 most important public transport projects in our nation. It has been said a number of times that there has been no commitment from the federal government, but, surprise, surprise, last year I actually did write to Warren Truss, the Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Development, and I got back from him a very clear commitment that the federal government was happy to work with us if we were prepared to get on with some asset recycling. I want to turn for a moment to the Housing budget.

Government members interjected.

Mr MOLHOEK: I am not taking those interjections. I want to highlight the outstanding achievements and the benefits in the budget in respect of housing. What we have in this budget from Minister Enoch is her first achievement, and it is probably a great achievement because I think it is the only department budget I have seen from the government that actually shows a reduction. We are going to reduce capital grants to community housing providers across the state by \$33 million. Last year under an LNP government we supported community housing providers across the state to the tune of about \$120 million. What do we see in the budget? A reduction of \$33 million for community housing projects across the state. If members of the House cared to look, they would see it all there in black and white. It is quite easy to find. Simply turn to page 72 and look at the numbers there—\$33.3 million less than the commitment of the LNP last year. We were committed to regional Queensland. We were passionate about improving housing across the state.

I want to take a moment to talk about some of the highlights of the previous minister, the present shadow minister for education, Mr Mander, who is sitting here in front of me this evening. Over the last few years, the waiting list for long-term social housing was reduced from 30,723 to 17,985. Our government was previously committed to delivering better housing outcomes. We released the Housing 2020 plan—a real plan to address some of the housing shortfalls across the state. The goals were as follows—to build 12,000 additional social and affordable housing dwellings across the state; to provide assistance to some 250,000 low-income households which would enable them to enter the private rental market instead of social housing; and to facilitate five major urban renewal projects, including revitalising areas which have a high concentration of social housing. It is disappointing to note that the government has delivered absolutely nothing in terms of the renewal programs that were proposed by our government. They have killed off all the other proposed programs. They have killed off the proposed stock transfer program. They have siphoned off the ability of enthusiastic volunteer community housing organisations across the state. They have robbed them of the capacity in the balance sheet and the opportunity to get out there and deliver real housing solutions for Queenslanders. I have to say it is nothing short of disappointing.

Here are some of the other goals that we have spelt out in our Housing 2020 plan, and I am really looking forward to seeing the plan from the government. The plan we had, which we are still committed to, contained 500 additional social and affordable dwellings in Logan, an extra 500 for the Gold Coast, 750 on the Sunshine Coast, 50 in Redcliffe, 500 additional social and affordable housing dwellings in Townsville, 400 in Gladstone, implementation of the first stage over a three-year time frame of the Mount Isa Regional Housing Plan—and so it goes on and on.

The achievements of our government are on the record. Queenslanders have seen those achievements. What are we doing about homelessness? The previous minister under the LNP government announced the Homelessness-to-Housing Strategy 2020. Just last week I participated in a community sleep-out with St Vincent de Paul on the Gold Coast with about 140 other business and community leaders. What an eye-opener that was to see, to understand and to be able to empathise. Two or three homeless people came and shared their stories with us. I am so grateful for the work that that organisation does. I am really looking forward to seeing what the government's plan is to address this issue, because all we have heard so far is a lot of talk and a lot of rhetoric.

I will not be supporting this bill before the House. I have made my feelings quite clearly known. It is disappointing. I am concerned about the future in terms of the funding proposals. If the government were a commercial business, it would not be allowed to bypass its superannuation or long service obligations. It seems that in the world of 'Labornomics' there are two sets of rules: there is one set for them and the unions and another set where they can just flaunt what is conventional wisdom. Quite frankly, I feel very sad and concerned for the future of not just Queensland but also my kids and future generations to come.