




Speech By  
**Ros Bates**

**MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA**

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### **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL**

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (7.32 pm): I rise to speak on the Appropriation Bill 2015. In the lead-up to the budget I said it would be the first major test of whether the Labor Party would listen to my local residents or choose to simply abandon the Mudgeeraba electorate as Labor governments have in the past. Unfortunately, for residents of my electorate, what we can clearly see is that the Labor Party has failed this test. Fundamentally, this is a budget which is bad for jobs and bad for growth. It is a budget of tricks and raids on public servants' long service leave and superannuation which Labor never foreshadowed before the election. While Labor went to the election and entered government with no plan, we now know Labor has a sneaky plan. These tricky moves represent a complete betrayal of the public's trust reminiscent of their asset sales after the 2009 election. This is a budget which shows debt will continue to rise every year, breaking a key Labor election promise.

Whilst the government talks about a jobs budget, the truth of the matter is that unemployment levels will barely change this term according to budget projections. In typical Labor style, many of the projects funded in the budget were existing ones, simply rehashed, rebadged and reannounced with no money for major job-creating projects. This has become the overarching narrative of this Labor government.

Whilst the former LNP government had committed to and set aside funding for a number of projects in my electorate, all we have seen since January is a fumbling, bumbling Labor government supported by the crossbench and exiled former Labor members with no plan and no clue doing nothing but taking credit for LNP achievements. Despite putting forward no real plan of their own, this Labor government has had the audacity to take credit for countless LNP achievements throughout Queensland and in my electorate of Mudgeeraba in particular. In March, we had the Minister for National Parks, then a member of this House for just over a month, taking credit for the \$1 million John Stacey Suspension Bridge at the base of Purling Brook Falls in Springbrook, which was being built before he was even a member of parliament. As we on this side of the House know, it was the former LNP government and the former minister for national parks, the member for Buderim, who committed to, funded and delivered this suspension bridge for Springbrook only to have it announced by those opposite.

Later that month, we had the Deputy Premier lauding the approval of Pacific View Estate at Worongary as a miraculous ALP achievement. What she neglected to mention was that it was the former LNP government and the former deputy premier, the member for Callide, who called in the development in 2014. Not only that, but her own failed Labor candidate for Mudgeeraba labelled the call-in 'disturbing' during the election campaign and made absurd claims that the LNP would suddenly 'drop' 10,000 people into Pacific View Estate overnight.

Two months later, in May, we then saw the Labor government taking credit for the new \$14.7 million train stabling facilities at Robina train station which were funded and delivered by the LNP as part of our New Generation Rollingstock project to increase the train fleet to cater for demand. Just when we thought this Labor government could not be more dishonest, in June we saw them announce that the LNP's \$5 million Carrara roundabout upgrade at the corner of Gooding Drive, Nerang-Broadbeach Road and Robina Parkway would be completed in time for the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games. Residents were rightfully perplexed by this announcement, remembering that just five months earlier in January I had announced this LNP project with the then LNP minister for transport and main roads as part of a series of road upgrades which would be delivered before the Commonwealth Games. It was yet another case of a project being fought for, funded and delivered by the LNP, only to have this Labor government, with no plan of its own, swoop in and take credit where credit is not due.

What is even more concerning than this government's consistent willingness to take credit for LNP achievements is that, as we have seen in the budget, this is a government with no real plan for economic growth. Queensland is paralysed with a 12-month infrastructure freeze, which remains in place under this budget, and business confidence is down as a result. In contrast, the LNP is a stable and experienced team which has put forward a real plan to grow Queensland's economy and boost jobs. A week before Labor's budget, the LNP announced its Real Economic Plan, which will grow our economy by focusing on major commitments in five key areas of agriculture, tourism, resources, construction and manufacturing, and services and knowledge based industries. We have a common-sense alternative plan which will not only see confidence grow and jobs created throughout Queensland, but will also ensure our local economy in Mudgeeraba is equipped to grow into the future.

Today, the difference for residents of my electorate between our experienced LNP team and this inexperienced, bumbling, fumbling Labor government could not be clearer. Whilst the LNP has put forward a Real Economic Plan to address the needs of our state and my electorate of Mudgeeraba, this is a Labor government which has, in typical Labor fashion, chosen to ignore the needs of my electorate. In my sixth year as Mudgeeraba's representative, I can state with confidence that I have a firm understanding of the projects and funding my electorate needs to enhance our local area. Prior to this budget being handed down, I clearly outlined in this House, in the media and to my local community what were the local area needs and the priorities of local residents. These priorities would see roads improved, school safety enhanced, tourism boosted, law and order secured and the local environment preserved.

Under the former LNP government, in a range of areas, we were working calmly, methodically and competently to address the needs of my constituents and ensure our local area received the funding, infrastructure and services it deserves. In contrast, under this Labor government, we now have a budget which, at its core, ignores the needs of residents in my electorate. In fact, funding previously set aside for local projects by the LNP has been ripped away in this Labor budget.

Under an LNP government, we would have seen \$330,000 allocated to protect the Numinbah Valley community in my electorate from dangerous hooning activity at the corner of Nerang-Murwillumbah Road and Pine Creek Road after this proposal was approved by the Cabinet Budget Review Committee. This location is a known hooning hotspot and the Queensland Police Service considers an upgrade of this intersection to deter hoons an urgent priority. Hoons at this location have escalated their activities to include burning car tyres, posing a significant bushfire risk in a populated and high risk area. This intersection is only five kilometres north of the Numinbah Valley township and only 150 to 200 metres from the Numinbah Valley Environmental Education Centre, which regularly hosts groups of students aged seven to 14 years on overnight education stays.

Our hardworking police officers are frequently put at risk when confronting hoons at this location often being outnumbered by up to 50 hoons in attendance, many of whom patrol the surrounding area to warn other hoons of police en route to the location. A \$330,000 project to stamp out hooning at this intersection through the installation of enhanced lighting and CCTV cameras had been fully funded and announced by the former LNP government. I asked this Labor government to deliver on the LNP's commitment and protect police officers, students and local residents from being terrorised by hoons in Numinbah Valley. Unfortunately in this Labor budget, despite my productive meetings with the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services, we have seen no money allocated to keep Numinbah Valley residents safe.

This Labor government's soft-on-crime approach has not only seen funding ripped from crime-fighting measures in the Numinbah Valley, but also \$24 million ripped from our Safe Night Out Strategy to keep young people safe. In addition, we have seen \$1.8 million over two years and seven staff members taken from the Crime and Corruption Commission, which will now be under-resourced when fighting outlaw motorcycle gangs in my electorate.

Under an LNP government we would have seen \$100,000 spent to revitalise Mudgeeraba Creek, as the funding was already set aside by the Cabinet Budget Review Committee. The poor state of Mudgeeraba Creek has been a huge issue for locals, who can still remember a time when it was home to all kinds of wildlife, including platypus. Unfortunately, it has been stagnant for a long time, often causing flooding due to blockages and omitting foul odours. One hundred thousand dollars in restoration works had been fully committed to by the former LNP government which would have seen local families once again able to visit the creek and enjoy yet another environmental attraction in our local area. In contrast, in this Labor budget we have seen no money allocated to preserving our local environment by cleaning up Mudgeeraba Creek.

In my regular conversations with local Mudgeeraba residents living near the creek, I am frequently reminded of what a wonderful environmental attraction the creek was for local families and what a sad state it is in now. Lucy Moss has told me of how locals would explore near the creek and enjoy all our local environment has to offer, but this has not been possible for a long time. It is disappointing to see, despite all its rhetoric, that when it comes to the Mudgeeraba electorate this Labor government has proven that it has no plan and no interest in preserving our environment, even discontinuing funding for grassroots environmental grants programs.

Under an LNP government, \$80,000 had been fully funded through the Cabinet Budget Review Committee to install flashing school zone signage at Mudgeeraba Special School on School Street, Merrimac State School on Gooding Drive, Mudgeeraba Creek State School on Gold Coast-Springbrook Road and Numinbah Valley State School on Nerang-Murwillumbah Road in my electorate. In the LNP we know safety at our local schools should be a priority. We know that in order to safeguard our children when walking to and from school, we need to ensure that drivers are aware of school zones and are reminded to slow down and take care. The teachers and parents of these four local schools deserve to know their students can get safely to and from school each day and that motorists are being reminded to take adequate care within school zones. Unfortunately, in this budget what we can clearly see is that this Labor government does not take school safety seriously.

My local schools have been shocked to learn that the flashing school zone signage they were due to receive under a re-elected LNP government has been taken away from them by the new Labor government. During my discussions with the P&C president of Mudgeeraba Special School recently, I was again told how urgently flashing school zone lights were needed to ensure secure student safety. Having visited the school on many occasions, I know firsthand how cars drive through School Street at high speeds, even though it is marked as a 40-kilometre-an-hour zone, with the school being located at the bottom of a steep hill and being prone to alarming road safety issues as a result. As the P&C president has said to me, this is an issue which needs to be addressed as soon as possible rather than funding being taken away and ministers engaging in unproductive buck-passing.

When it comes to schools in the Mudgeeraba electorate, this Labor government does not have a plan and does not have any concern for the safety of our local students, nor does it have any plan to give my local schools the funding they deserve. Under this Labor budget, local schools in my electorate will miss out on funding through the LNP's Great Teachers = Great Results program, as well as missing out on a share of \$299 million in funding through the Great Results Guarantee in 2016.

Similarly, whilst tourism in the hinterland areas of my electorate would have been a priority for an LNP government, there is no funding in this Labor budget for improved tourism signage in my hinterland communities. Under the LNP, \$155,000 had been set aside through the Cabinet Budget Review Committee for improved tourism signage at Springbrook on approach to Wunburra Lookout. This signage would have provided a one-stop shop for visitors and locals alike to have a guide to all tourism attractions in Springbrook, as it is not uncommon for visitors to stop by one attraction and miss other fantastic tourism drawcards. This was a sensible step championed by the local community and myself which would have further revitalised this mountain community. Unfortunately, whilst this project was fully funded by the LNP, there is no funding in this Labor budget for tourism signage in Springbrook. Despite all of its vague commitments to boosting hinterland tourism, this Labor government has unsurprisingly cast aside the tourism potential of Springbrook.

Whilst much has been said since the election about the LNP's Strong Choices proposals, our proposals allowed for \$1.5 billion to be spent on much needed infrastructure on the Gold Coast, much of which would benefit the residents of my electorate. It is now the responsibility of the Labor government to explain exactly when and how it will ensure our \$1.5 billion in planned road and rail infrastructure upgrades for the Gold Coast will be funded under this government. Under our proposals, projects like the widening of the M1 from exit 82 at Robina to exit 85 at Reedy Creek and the widening of exit 82 to exit 79 northbound at Mudgeeraba would have been fully funded, relieving the traffic pressures faced by my constituents on a daily basis. In contrast, under this Labor government we have

a Minister for Main Roads who has admitted that he did not even bother to ask for federal funding for the M1 before this year's federal budget. This is despite the minister having attempted to shift political responsibility for the M1 to the federal government, claiming to have 'asked for \$350 million' in a media release issued a day after the federal government's budget was handed down. Unfortunately for the minister, he was caught out telling porky pies when it was revealed that the only submission made for federal funding for the M1 between Robina and Reedy Creek was made in 2012 under the LNP state government to the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd Labor federal government, who did not cough up one cent of federal funding. Whilst the minister chooses to spend his time playing politics and attempting to rewrite history, the residents of my electorate deserve better. They deserve a plan for their roads to be fixed, and they deserve it now.

Similarly, under Strong Choices \$22 million would have been allocated to upgrade Franklin Drive in Mudgeeraba from Old Coach Road to Somerset Drive, meaning residents of Bonogin, Austinville, Springbrook, Mudgeeraba and Tallai would have had a safer section of road to drive on every day, with improved visibility at this road's tricky intersections. Only last Monday night on my way back from playing tennis there was a severe accident between a motorcyclist and a car at this very intersection. My understanding is that the motorcyclist will probably lose his leg.

Whilst the Strong Choices proposals were defeated at the state election earlier this year, it is incumbent upon this government to ensure they outline an alternative plan to fund these important projects. Residents of my electorate supported our proposals which would have allowed their road issues to be fixed, including at major congestion hotspots in my electorate. Unfortunately, they have yet to see an alternative plan for improved road infrastructure from this Labor government.

Thankfully, some measures that I have been fighting for on behalf of my local residents have been secured by the LNP. Pressure from the opposition has seen this government recommit to the LNP's hugely popular Get in the Game program. The former LNP government had committed \$68 million for the grassroots sports funding program up until now, and I am absolutely delighted that our program will be continued for the benefit of local sporting clubs. It is, however, disappointing that it has taken this long for Labor to commit to the LNP's Get in the Game plan. I do take this opportunity to thank the minister for sport, who was one of the few members on the other side of the chamber who actually listened.

As the patron of 15 local sporting clubs in my electorate, I have spoken personally with a number of my clubs and I can say they are absolutely thrilled that this much needed LNP funding program will continue. During a recent visit to the Mudgeeraba Tennis Club, local coach Andrew Dornsteiff said the Get in the Game program had been a huge success in the local community. He told me that thanks to the Get in the Game program, over 150 community members have enjoyed tennis lessons on Sunday mornings at the club so far. He said it really has been wonderful to see so many people learning new skills and making new friends from the Get in the Game program. This story is common throughout all of my local sporting and recreation clubs, as I have been proud to deliver more than \$560,000 in funding to local clubs since I was elected.

I am also pleased to see that \$6.5 million has been allocated for clinical decision units at the emergency departments of the Gold Coast University Hospital and Robina Hospital which provide health care to the residents of my electorate. As a registered nurse for over 34 years and having again visited Robina Hospital recently, I know this was an issue of concern for staff. I am sure these clinical decision units will make a difference to our hospital and health services.

Whilst the residents of my electorate will no doubt be unsurprised by Labor's abandonment of the Mudgeeraba electorate in this budget, they can rest assured that I will continue to fight for them in this place and ensure our concerns are addressed. In particular, I will continue to fight for a concept design and upgrade of Beechmont Road in Lower Beechmont between Elimbah Court and Jardine Road, which is something I have been fighting hard for alongside the member for Beaudesert. As the Minister for Main Roads would have seen recently on Nine Gold Coast News, this section of road is the final section residents want upgraded following extensive community consultation.

During community consultation, the residents identified this as the most hazardous section of road which has yet to be upgraded after I had secured \$11.4 million to upgrade Beechmont Road since my election in 2009. This is an incredibly narrow section of road on which cars, as well as school and tour buses, often come dangerously close to colliding with each other. Having driven on this road countless times, I stand shoulder to shoulder with the community and the Better Roads for Beechmont Committee as we take the fight to the minister and ensure this Labor government cannot continue to ignore our road safety concerns.

Whilst the minister may have already dismissed the Lower Beechmont and Beechmont communities as 'not a priority' for the Labor government, I am sure former Labor ministers for main roads will knowingly confirm that I will keep fighting for this road upgrade for as long as I am seated in this House. Only two weeks ago there were two fatalities on Beechmont Road—one at each end—involving motorcyclists. It is a very bad area for high-speed motorcyclists. Unfortunately, as we all know, even if we do fix up the road we cannot stop stupidity.

In addition, I will continue to fight for \$1.6 million which had been allocated to the upgrade of Worongary Road at the Worongary Creek causeway but which remains unspent, to be reallocated to fixing the rest of Worongary Road. As the Minister for Main Roads should be aware, the 2014-15 Capital Statement lists an upgrade of the Worongary Creek floodway as having a budgeted cost of \$3.981 million including \$750,000 to 30 June 2014 and \$3.231 million for 2014-15. Despite almost \$4 million having been budgeted, the final design and construction contract for this significant project was in the order of \$2.36 million. By my reckoning, this means that about \$1.6 million is left over from the LNP's upgrade of the Worongary Creek floodway, and I want the minister to ensure this money is put directly back into Worongary Road for the benefit of local residents.

Whilst this budget will no doubt come as a bitter disappointment for local residents of my electorate who had voted for better roads for a growing population, for the education our kids deserve and to make Mudgeeraba the safest place to raise a family. Whether in government or in opposition, I will keep fighting to ensure we receive the funding we deserve. It is no secret that this Labor government came to office with no plan and very few election commitments, but residents of my electorate can be assured that, as their local member, I will keep fighting for the things that matter to them.