



Speech By  
**Tim Nicholls**


**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 September 2015

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

**Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee, Report**

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (4.18 pm): I just want to make a few comments on the estimates committee report. This budget in general continues to perpetrate the fraud that this accidental government is paying down debt, controlling expenses and has a plan for growth in Queensland. Nothing could be further from the truth. We know that under this government debt continues to rise. We know that shuffling the debt around, like moving the deckchairs on the *Titanic*, is not going to solve the problem. We know that in typical Labor fashion the budget does not set a high standard for a fiscal surplus but simply lowers the standard for a surplus to an operating surplus—something that the LNP government achieved in each of its last two years in office.

There is nothing new in this budget. It is a failure; it would be marked as a failure. It delivers nothing new, it pays nothing off, it increases debt and it does nothing to reduce taxes. Not only is there no plan to pay down gross debt to restore the state's financial position, to get back the AAA credit rating that Labor lost or to strengthen the economy; it also has no plan to build new infrastructure. Queensland is in the middle of an infrastructure freeze under this government. It does not matter where one travels, be it from Currumbin to Cooktown: this state is languishing under Labor as there is no plan for infrastructure. The Deputy Premier was unable to identify one new infrastructure project she wants to build, except for a football stadium in Townsville for which she will not release the cost-benefit analysis. The Deputy Premier will not release the cost-benefit analysis or the business case in relation to the Townsville football stadium.

While the minister criticises the previous government, she should remember that all of the major infrastructure projects identified in the budget papers were LNP projects. Let us look at the projects here reported—\$8½ billion, Australian and Queensland government funded, 2013-14. That was when the LNP was in power and there was a coalition in Canberra. There was a \$635 million Australian and Queensland government funded Warrego Highway upgrade, 2014-15 to 2018-19. There was an LNP government in Queensland and a coalition government in Canberra. Look at the projects put forward that were funded by the LNP in Queensland and by the coalition in Canberra. The only project to which Minister Lynham and others referred this morning was the Queen's Wharf development. As I said on radio—I did predict the future and it was one of the few occasions when I got it right—there would be a conga line—

**An honourable member** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** No, we have the new member for Woodridge who cannot remember what he said. After the election loss in 2012 he said—

Ultimately I think we got it wrong with the people of Queensland on debt and deficit.

They were his words. Where has the member gone now? The member for Woodridge said on ABC News 24 that 'ultimately we got the message wrong on debt and deficit'. The member muscled his way in at Woodridge. Do members know why he wants better public transport? It is because he still has to get public transport from Holland Park to the electorate of Woodridge. The member still wants to get the train or the bus from home at Holland Park back out to his electorate of Woodridge.

Members opposite talk about the \$10 billion government spend. It is just the normal spend of government on infrastructure. There is not one new infrastructure boost project. There is not one new project coming on line to deal with the tapering off of investment in the resource sector. There is not one single new initiative of this Labor government coming through to pick up those jobs, and after seven months we are still waiting.

Even if members opposite had a plan, they would not have the funds to pay for it. They cannot figure out how they are going to pay for it. Debt continues to inch up towards \$80 billion over the forward estimates despite the hit-and-run raid on super and long service leave and despite the debt shift. This pea-and-thimble trick is not fooling anyone. Days after the election the Deputy Premier said that she needed to borrow money; in estimates she said that she did not want to. The minister refused to recommit to her previous position. This budget is a farce—a fraud on the people of Queensland—and infrastructure is no different. I want to thank the member for Mirani, Jim Pearce, for conducting a reasonable estimates process and I am glad—

*(Time expired)*