




Speech By

Bruce Saunders

MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; DUTIES AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (10.56 pm): I rise to say how happy I am about the budget. I thank the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Treasurer, the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and the other ministers of the government for how they have delivered for Maryborough. On 16 July last year I said in this House—

I made a commitment to the people of ... Maryborough ... that I would put Maryborough first. I am very proud to be part of a Labor team and the Palaszczuk government that has delivered for Maryborough. We had 18 years in the wilderness—15 years with One Nation and an Independent and three years with the LNP.

I am proud to stand here tonight and say that Maryborough is on the right track. This budget has delivered for Maryborough. I have heard those opposite talking about how they have missed out. Maryborough is on the right track.

Let us talk about the new Howard Police Station and auxiliary fire station. In 1893 Howard got a brand-new police station. It was modern. Now in 2016 the Labor government is putting a brand-new police station at Howard. The great officers at the Howard Police Station—Nev and 'Big Ed'—and the other people who work there are very happy to know that they will have a brand-new police station next year. At the moment, when they go to use the toilet they have to fight brown snakes, lizards or whatever is there. We are delivering.

Howard is the centre of the Burrum district, which is the fastest growing area of my electorate. Howard was a great coalmining area. As I said, the police station was built in 1893 and has not been upgraded since then. We are getting a brand-new police station, a brand-new auxiliary fire station and a brand-new rural fire station. That is what we call the Burrum district in Maryborough. The Burrum district looks after Toogoom, Burrum Heads, Howard, Torbanlea and Aldershot on the Bruce Highway. I thank the Deputy Premier, the Treasurer and the police minister for giving us these facilities that are long overdue in the Maryborough electorate, because we have been forgotten for a long time.

Since the budget has been announced it is wonderful to talk to the people of Howard because this \$10 million is the biggest infrastructure spend that Howard has ever seen and it is a great thing for the communities of Howard, Torbanlea, Toogoom, Burrum Heads, Aldershot as well as the Bruce Highway.

Mr Harper: They've got a great local MP getting on with the job.

Mr SAUNDERS: I take that interjection from the wonderful member who has just got a brand-new stadium for Townsville; thank you very much. I do make great representations, but the difference is that the ministers have listened and they have come and looked and seen. The Palaszczuk government is delivering for rural and regional Queensland. Those on the other side say that it is not, but the Maryborough electorate has been a great electorate since 1865 yet in the three years of the former

government it was like Detroit city, as I said 12 months ago. There has been great expenditure and this budget has been fantastic for the Maryborough electorate. There are road upgrades and school upgrades at Bauple school, Mungar school and also Granville school—schools that have been neglected for many, many years.

The Maryborough Neighbourhood Centre has had no funding and for three years under the Newman government it was cut to the bone. I thank the minister, who is in the House tonight, because that neighbourhood centre will now get funding which means that it will be able to provide services to people. It is a privilege to be the local member and to stand here tonight and say that that neighbourhood centre is equivalent to any centre in Queensland. I thank the minister very much, the member for Brisbane Central, who came up to the area and talked to the people and saw how funding for the last three years had been cut to the bone. She acted and now it will be able to provide services—basic services. I am not talking about flash services or gold-plated services. I am talking about basic services for a community, and the minister listened. The minister talked to the director of the centre and also to people from Maryborough and she has acted, and I am very proud to say that that neighbourhood centre will now be one of the best neighbourhood centres in regional Queensland. That also goes for the TAFE as well.

With regard to the Bruce Highway and the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, a lot of the Bruce Highway runs through my electorate and there is great expenditure for my electorate in that regard. I am very proud to say that, after representations from me and people from the community, the Bruce Highway will be upgraded at the entrance to Torbanlea. With regard to the feeder roads in my electorate, the Burrum Heads to Pialba Road is a main arterial road in the electorate of Maryborough. It has not had a dollar spent on it for years. It will now be upgraded and the Toogoom entrance will be upgraded for road safety. There have been significant changes through a Palaszczuk Labor government.

Tonight I have sat here and listened to members of the opposition and I want to tell them that this is a regional Queensland budget. With regard to unemployment in regional Queensland, the federal LNP member for Wide Bay for 26 years has been the Deputy Prime Minister and every year the local youth unemployment rate has gone up. That is the only thing I can say about the Hon. Warren Truss—that is, that every year the unemployment rate has gone up. This Palaszczuk Labor government is doing things that the federal government has not done. The Deputy Prime Minister has represented this electorate and yet youth unemployment is 26 per cent. Those opposite have said that Labor increased youth unemployment, but let me tell them: it has gone up one per cent every year for 26 years since the Deputy Prime Minister has represented the seat. I am not the only one—there are quite a lot of us—who is glad that he is retiring, because we may get some representation in the Wide Bay electorate.

The Palaszczuk government—and I thank the minister for this—is providing \$10,000 for employing people who have been unemployed for 12 months and \$15,000 for employing those who have been unemployed for longer. That will be a significant issue for my electorate because that will give long-term unemployed people a chance to get something done. That is what a Labor government does: we care about people. We look after people.

The health minister has increased the Health budget for the Wide Bay health district by about eight per cent on last year's budget, which is pretty good and equates to about \$10 million. My biggest concern is this, and I say this to members opposite: my health district is going to lose \$53 million a year for the next 10 years—\$530 million will be cut back—if the Turnbull government is re-elected. That will mean cutbacks. That will mean that we will lose services that the people in my electorate desperately need—\$530 million.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr SAUNDERS: I take that interjection. That means that people who cannot afford it will have to front up with \$495 to get an MRI. It is disgraceful because we will lose \$53 million in funding. In terms of state funding, we have increased state funding to the Wide Bay health district because we have a government that cares and we have ministers who come to the electorate and talk to the people.

An opposition member: What's your waiting list?

Mr SAUNDERS: I will take the interjection. Our waiting list is one of the lowest in Queensland.

Mr Cripps: Well done, Laurie!

Mr SAUNDERS: Thank you very much for that because you have given me a chance to promote how great my health district is with Adrian Pennington as the manager, because the funding from the health minister in Queensland has made sure—

Mr Cripps: Lawrence Springborg.

Mr SAUNDERS: The member for Southern Downs cut pathology whereas under the Labor government we got pathology services returned. We have reopened pathology services—a great Labor initiative. We were the only hospital on the east coast of Australia without a pathology unit. Guess what? We have one now. It used to take anywhere between two to six hours to get a result back. The other day we got one back in 6½ minutes. As the local member I am so proud to say that a Palaszczuk government is delivering for my electorate.

An opposition member: This is just pork-barrelling.

Mr SAUNDERS: It is not pork-barrelling. Fancy the pot calling the kettle black. Fancy that! Those opposite pork-barrelled right around Queensland except in the Maryborough electorate and they stripped the services out. The Palaszczuk government is delivering services back into the Maryborough electorate. They talk about—

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr Cripps: What a load of nonsense!

Mr SAUNDERS: I will take that interjection from the member for Hinchinbrook, and I will tell you why: he was part of that government that he is proud of. He is an embarrassment.

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr SAUNDERS: He stands there and tells people in this House how good his government was. I will tell you what: I had people sleeping in cars because of you! You are a disgrace! You are a disgrace to humanity!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford): Member for Maryborough—

Mr SAUNDERS: We had people sleeping in cars!

Mr Cripps interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SAUNDERS: We had people sleeping in cars!

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Maryborough, will you please—

Mr SAUNDERS: I get a bit passionate about the people from Maryborough.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Maryborough, I find the language that you used unparliamentary. I ask you to withdraw and I ask you to direct your comments through the chair.

Mr SAUNDERS: Sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker. I withdraw. I do get a bit passionate about my electorate, as everyone here knows, and I always put Maryborough first. I love the people that I represent and I do not like what happened to them during the three years of the previous government.

This budget has delivered for my electorate and I am so proud to be part of a Labor government that is delivering for regional Queensland and that finally people in my electorate are treated the same as anywhere else in Queensland because we have a government that cares. We have ministers who are actually delivering for the electorate. I do not make any apologies for my advocacy of my electorate, because for years we have been forgotten. We have been the poor cousins of Queensland and this government led by the Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Treasurer and the ministers have actually put Maryborough back on the map. I thank them very much from the bottom of my heart, as do the people of Maryborough.