




Speech By
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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; DUTIES AND
OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (10.06 pm): The socialist lefty loonies are in charge of the budget in Queensland and we have seen how they cannot help but put their sticky fingers into Queenslanders' pockets. It was interesting to listen to some of the newbies in this place patting themselves on the back for what they believe was a wonderful budgetary effort—namely, putting their sticky fingers into the reserves of the Public Service. They call it 'repatriating funds'. This is a very creative way of saying rip-offs, raids and robbery, so instead they say, 'We shall just repatriate your funds'. Believe me, if a burglar broke into one's house and tried to 'repatriate' the funds from one's purse, we would call that robbery. This Labor government is robbing from the future funds of this state and not addressing the overspending and lack of productivity in key areas while this state has a real and genuine need to continue to grow to meet the needs of Queenslanders.

They dare go where no Labor government has gone before. We have seen some doozies from some Labor members who sat in the government of previous Labor administrations. We saw a doozy in the last budget where this Labor government was criticised when it took a five-year holiday from paying into the long service leave of public servants. In that budget they also shuffled the debt from one part of the balance sheet to the government owned corporations and then tried to pretend that somehow they had this miraculous relief of debt from the responsibility of government. That sleight of hand was well and truly seen through by any serious economist or analyst and did nothing to relieve the pressure that the rating agencies saw upon the Queensland budget. That was last year. We thought, 'Well, what will they try this year?' We have seen something that is just stunning in its breathless disregard for basic good economics and common sense. That this Labor government would seek to raid \$4 billion out of the superannuation funds of public servants and try to make that out as a fiscal virtue is just a stunning deceit.

What about the criticism that flowed so quickly when the government revealed it was seriously doing this? They tried to brush it off just as freedom of speech but, when senior members of the business community in this state say that this is not smart or wise, there should be at least some resemblance of conscience from this government in listening to those concerns. Perhaps there was a bit of conscience on the other side as we saw the heads dip, the silence and the stunned disbelief in terms of the public criticism expressed by people who are not part of the political class but who are part of the business machinery of this state and have not necessarily aligned themselves one way or another.

This repatriation of funds is in fact a high-risk robbery of these funds from public superannuation and exposes this state in terms of gambling and rolling the dice; in fact, they are betting the house. This is like watching a slow-moving train crash but, like most disasters of poor Labor administrations such as the Health payroll disaster, they were man-made and foreseeable in their systemic failures. Of course, if someone does not stand up and say, No they will keep going back for more. Last year we saw them dipping into long service leave payments. This year they are dipping into the superannuation

revenue of the public service. What will they try next year—scratchies? They are wishing for an easy option, but like gamblers and addicts who have had a taste of what may be, they roll the dice and go back for more. The government has learnt nothing from the past and has in fact exceeded any of the poor decisions of the past by doing something that no other Labor Treasurer would seriously consider.

This Labor government has no mandate for this madness, but madness it is. They are stunning in their deceit and their temerity to do this. In this budget they even managed to underspend the funds that were there—20 per cent of the capital works budget. This government is good on recurrent expenditure and shovelling it out the door but very poor in terms of getting the boots on the ground, the concrete laid and the roads rolled out in an efficient way. They had a 20 per cent underspend in the budgeted capital program. The LNP, in contrast, had a much higher capital spend in the last year of our budget but we had key projects underway that are critical to ensuring the productivity of Queensland.

The Sunshine Coast had the largest capital works program plan that we took to the last election, building on top of the \$1.8 billion hospital. We brought forward that \$1.8 billion hospital which we were proud to see commence on the Sunshine Coast. Sadly, once again, as I said, the delay in construction under this Labor government has meant that it is late in opening. That has had quite a ripple effect for those businesses relying on that hospital to come online on time. It is behind schedule, and still we have not seen an adequate and honest response from this government as to the reason.

There are some major pieces of infrastructure that are critical for the future of my area of the Sunshine Coast. We went to the state election with a commitment for the Mooloolah River interchange. Contrary to the assertions of the main roads minister, there was a plan. In fact, resumptions had already commenced and I believe were completed or largely completed in that area. The plan that enabled this critical piece of infrastructure to be underway had been put in place and was underway with the acquisition of property to ensure that could take place.

That was absolutely necessary to ensure that the arterial network leading to that hospital was functional. The \$22 million that the minister has announced is a bandaid on a much bigger problem that needs to be addressed which he has not yet acknowledged. He has ignored the work that his own department has commenced and the resumptions which had taken place. We have seen the plans for this road, and it should be getting underway to ensure ambulances are not caught in traffic because, minister, you cannot ride a bicycle from those parts of the Sunshine Coast to our hospital. He might think that will work, but it ain't going to get the ambulances through and it ain't going to get the people through who need to get to that hospital.

On the Sunshine Coast our No. 1 priority is to see the rail line duplicated. That is absolutely critical. It is amazing to think that they built a railway line in the 1880s through the terrain that they did but it has not had a major upgrade to ensure that tilt trains can run at the speeds they are designed to run. On the Sunshine Coast 40 per cent of the rail line services to the north are not train services but are shadowed by rail buses. That is a disgrace. It is a rail line where tilt trains do not run at the speed which they are capable. They can only travel at about 50 kilometres an hour in some sections. It takes hours to get to Brisbane. In this day and age it should be a high-speed rail service. We are very supportive of that being built. Labor ripped up the business case that had been underway as part of the previous work that had been done and put on hold after 2009. We have now gone back to the drawing board with another business case which is delaying that process yet again. This is why we want to keep fighting to ensure that this rail network is brought to the fore and takes place.

I turn to the Bruce Highway. I know that there has been some movement in respect of this project in recent years. I want to acknowledge our federal colleagues for their funding commitment to this road. It is 80 per cent funded by the federal government and 20 per cent by the state, and yet the state delivers the construction design of these road networks. I will table in a moment the QTRIP for 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17. The six-laning proposition and the bundling together of the section of the Bruce Highway between Caloundra Road and the Sunshine Motorway was not something that happened this year in regard to planning. That had been underway with the department over the last couple of years and it had appeared in the previous QTRIP. One of the reasons I did not criticise the readjustment of QTRIP last year was that I was aware there had been a rebundling and change in the way that that project was going to be delivered. It was last year that the QTRIP reflected the work that had been underway to bring forward the six laning and stages of that upgrade of the Bruce Highway that had been budgeted for and provided for by our federal colleagues, with a state contribution as well.

As these figures will show, the contribution to get that project underway was a lesser amount in the budget for the year that has just been in recognition of the change in the way that that was to be delivered because there would be more spent the next year. In the 2015-16 QTRIP it said that by the end of 2015-16 there would be \$6.5 million spent and in the financial year 2016-17 there would be \$182 million. That was including the widening to six lanes that had been referenced previously as 'stage works to widen'. That was last year's QTRIP.

When the latest QTRIP came out and showed that those moneys were not being spent in that order, even though the adjustment to that had been part of last year's QTRIP, and there was about \$135 million less being spent this year, you can understand our concern and why we do not want to see this project slip. I acknowledge the \$900,000-plus that our federal colleagues have committed to this and the hard work of the department in trying to bring the design forward. We will keep fighting to ensure the rest of the Bruce Highway north of Caboolture is upgraded, because it is such a critical piece of infrastructure. I table that QTRIP.

Tabled paper: Extract from Department of Transport and Main Roads: Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program 2015-16 to 2018-19, pp. 41, 43 and 53 [\[973\]](#).

On the Sunshine Coast it is probably not well understood that we have one of the highest small business ownerships as a proportion of our community in Australia. It is higher as a proportion of our population than the Gold Coast and Brisbane, with about 22 per cent of the population involved in their own small business. They are people who are employing themselves and employing other people. That is very much part of the aspiration, the belief and the culture of our beautiful area where people want to live, work and raise their families and to protect the lifestyle that they so passionately adore in regard to our wonderful environment.

They have the jobs not only of today but also the future. We are very strongly a small business community and one that is passionate about ensuring that, as we invest in the future of our youth, they are able to have jobs in our area. That is why I was so delighted to see the announcement and to participate with my colleagues on the LNP's plan to get Queensland working again. The apprenticeship boost is particularly for young apprentices but it will provide up to 10,000 new apprentices over four years, with \$5,000 incentives for Queensland businesses which take on a new apprentice. That is something to be applauded. We know from talking to local businesses how much that is going to be valued.

Tools for tradies is not only for the carpenters and the chippies who are involved in the construction industry but also for the hairdresser who has equipment needs or a range of other trades that require that little bit of a boost. There is a \$500 voucher for tradies who complete their apprenticeship to get the tools they need to get working. We will provide tools to 20,000 tradies over four years. We have a job-start incentive of \$4,000 grants over 12 months to assist small businesses with recruitment and start-up costs for eligible young Queenslanders. This is something that is needed in our area. These are the things that have been raised with us that would be a practical help. We also have the employment bonus, which is thanks to the good stewardship of the LNP and the work that was done in our time in government to put us in a strong financial position again to encourage further businesses to train and retain young Queenslanders.

The Sunshine Coast aspirationally is a great place to live and work, but we want to see a brighter future for young Queenslanders and for Queenslanders of all ages. It has not been easy for a number of years because of the pressures the government has been putting on business. We have been critical of this Labor government. They are very good at spending other people's money and not respecting that each dollar comes with a cost. The government's role is to be a servant of the people, not to put the people into their servitude in order to pay off the debts that they have racked up through their poor fiscal management.

I want to address an area in regard to my shadow portfolio and particularly with respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships. I was privileged recently to attend the Indigenous Leaders Forum in Cairns. A number of resolutions were passed at that forum. I want to pay tribute to the leadership in the Indigenous communities of Queensland. They are spread throughout this great state and some are in very remote areas. Many of us have a background in rural and regional Queensland and we know that there are special challenges that come with living away from the major urban areas. For some of our fellow citizens in the Indigenous community, those gaps in access to service and the issues of disadvantage can be magnified so much more. It encourages you to see the strength of some of the leadership that is in those communities and the difference they are making. Some communities are really kicking goals and others are out there fighting so hard in respect to the gap in outcomes and the inputs into the community.

This needs to translate into meaningful ways where people are safe in their communities and young children have access to good educational opportunities and pathways to the jobs of the future. I would like to table some of the resolutions of the Indigenous Leaders Forum that cover a number of portfolio areas.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Indigenous Leaders Forum—Cairns—June 8 & 9 2016: Motions' [\[974\]](#).

They are not only state issues; they also cover federal issues. I table those resolutions so that members of the House can have an opportunity to review them. It is through genuine partnerships between us and all Queenslanders who have needs that we are able to provide that better future.

We cannot do that by paternalism. We have to respect and empower people to unlock their potential wherever they live. We have to ensure that we do not take away the choices of future generations through poor decisions that are made today. We need to unlock the potential of the future generations by having some respect for the fact that the decisions we make today are the ones that are laying down the opportunities for them in the future.

That is why we speak strongly for small business, for the empowerment of opportunity through those who are able to employ other people, particularly in local communities and not just in major corporations far away from the homes where people love to live. We need to ensure there is access to local education. We need to ensure that governments respect and support the vulnerable, the elderly, the disabled and all levels of our community. We also need to understand that it should not be about putting them into the servitude of a government that has no respect for the fact that ultimately taxpayers' dollars are their dollars and they need to be spent wisely.