




Speech By
Jarrold Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2016

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

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (3.27 pm): This budget is a bad budget for Queensland. It is a typical Labor budget based on broken promises, more debt and deficit, and no plan for the future. I am particularly pleased to speak on this budget today as the new shadow minister for employment, industrial relations, skills and training and the shadow minister for fair trading, because today we announced a great policy for young Queenslanders and a great policy for small businesses. Our plan will create 20,000 jobs over four years, as opposed to Labor's plan for 8,000 jobs. I will get to that a little later and I will talk about some of the issues impacting the area of Kawana, which I represent, and how bad the budget is for the Sunshine Coast. I have to say that it will come as no surprise to the Sunshine Coast community, as there has been a lack of investment in the area under the Labor government.

I turn to the jobs plan that the Labor Party has been spruiking for the past 12 months. They have talked jobs, training, skills, apprenticeships. They have talked the talk, but they have not delivered. We have high unemployment rates in the state. The member who just spoke talked about lower unemployment, but perhaps he should look at the figures released today. In Queensland, the seasonally adjusted figures for unemployment went up. We are not talking about lower rates of unemployment; we are talking about higher rates of unemployment, according to the figures released today. If we look at the past 12 months of the Labor government, one would think that as they have been spruiking about lower unemployment the figures would back them up, but they do not. The youth unemployment figures do not back them up. However, as I have said many times in this place, what would one expect when the minister, the member for Brisbane Central and a former union official, says that nothing can be done about youth unemployment and that it has always been an issue.

Ms GRACE: I rise to a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Honourable members interjected.

Ms GRACE: I am going to challenge you every time. I find the comments offensive. They are taken out of context. They are misleading the House. I have put the record straight on numerous occasions. I ask that the member withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I ask the member to withdraw.

Mr BLEIJIE: I withdraw.

Mr WATTS: I rise to a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am just wondering if all comments that are taken to be offensive need to be withdrawn or only those that are personally offensive.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think you can leave it up to the chair to make that judgement.

Mr BLEIJIE: I will table very shortly an article that appeared in the press in Queensland in which the minister is directly quoted. The only context around that will be the quote marks at the start and the end of the minister's quote. I will get to that.

Let us look at the Labor Party and jobs in this state. They have the big initiative Jobs Queensland. As I said yesterday, Jobs Queensland was a major government initiative. 'Jobs now, jobs for the future', they said—\$40 million in expenditure over four years. Interestingly, in this budget it says 'implementing Jobs Queensland'. Guess what? The budget they released a year ago said 'implementing Jobs Queensland'. It also had \$10 million allocated to it.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. It takes a while. It takes a long time, but we are dealing with the Labor Party.

If we look at the \$10 million investment in the last 12 months under Jobs Queensland, what jobs have been created because of that organisation? None, because the organisation does not exist yet. There is no documentation. There is no website. There is no ministerial statement or anything anywhere that says that Jobs Queensland exists. The centrepiece of their employment policy was to have \$40 million expended on Jobs Queensland.

We have already had \$10 million expended, but we do not know where the money has gone or what they have done, but it does not exist. We look forward to responses from the Treasurer, the Minister for Training and Skills and the Minister for Employment with respect to where the \$10 million has been spent and when they envisage a board will be established. If they are getting expert advice, which they were meant to be getting under Jobs Queensland, if it has not been established in 12 months who have they been getting advice from?

We know that they have been having lots of meetings with union officials. We know that they are getting advice from them. We know that if someone is a union official in Queensland they roll out the red carpet. We know from the member for Burleigh's questioning this morning in relation to a particular electrical trade business that they could not get a meeting with this government.

Mr Watts interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: And the member for Toowoomba North. We know that a businessperson in this state cannot get a meeting with this government. If a person shows a union ticket or a union card—a CFMEU or ETU one particularly—then they roll out the red carpet. Not only does the door get opened for them but the people at the bottom will have an express elevator to the ministers' offices.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member over there. That is exactly right—ETU, CFMEU; all those other union thugs. Straight up to the top to the ministerial level—

Mr Rickuss interjected.

Mr SAUNDERS: I rise to a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. He just called me a paedophile. I take offence at that.

Mr Rickuss: I didn't call you a paedophile.

Mr SAUNDERS: You called me a paedophile. I take offence. I want an apology.

Mr BLEIJIE: I did not say anything.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Resume your seats.

Mr RICKUSS: I ask him to withdraw that accusation because it is false.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I did not hear—

Mr Saunders: He is now accusing me of being a liar.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members should wait until they are called by the chair. I did not hear that interaction. I am going to seek the advice of the Clerk and then I will address the issue. I ask members to hold for a moment, please. Neither the Clerk nor I heard the interaction. We will look at the transcript and then follow it up with both members.

Mr BLEIJIE: As I was saying, if a person is a union official in this state—

Mr RICKUSS: I rise to a point of order, Madam Speaker. He accused me of something that I did not do. I ask him to withdraw

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Lockyer, you are not on your feet at the moment as the member addressing the chamber. You are not addressing the chamber at the moment. It is the member for Kawana who has the call. You are referring to interactions between two people who are interjecting. What I have actually advised the chamber is that we will listen to the audio and clarify

exactly what has happened then we will get back to both members. We will address those issues. Neither the Clerk nor I heard what was going on there. It is the member for Kawana who actually has the call at the moment. That is the member I am asking to rise to their feet.

Mr BLEIJIE: As I was saying, if someone is a businessperson in this state they cannot get access to ministers or the Premier, but if they are a union official they can get direct access. If one has a look at the diary entries of the ministers, particularly the member for—

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the member for Brisbane Central. She is interjecting a lot. I have read the diary of the Minister for Employment. I have read about the unions. I have seen the unions that she has met with. I have seen that she has met with Michael Ravbar and CFMEU officials. I saw in the diary after they met with Michael Ravbar that it is then just an official of the CFMEU. Through the diary I know who the employment minister meets. I can clearly see that.

If a person is a union official in this state and they have a direct interest or conflict then there are no worries they get to meet with Labor ministers and the Premier. This is despite the Premier saying many months ago that her government was going to have an open door policy and access for businesses and any Queenslanders. As we heard this morning from the questioning of the member for Toowoomba North and the member for Burleigh, that is not the case. Unless a person has a union ticket or a membership card they are not allowed to see the ministers. That is the reality.

We have heard the Minister for Employment, the member for Brisbane Central, talk a lot about jobs and training. The reality is that there is high unemployment and high youth unemployment under her reign. She has no plans. She has not explained to Queenslanders how she is going to rein in youth unemployment. She has no policies in place to rein in youth unemployment.

We had a big debate about this in the parliament yesterday. All those on that side of the House voted to support higher unemployment rates in this state by virtue of the fact that they voted against a motion of fact—that is, that apprenticeships have declined. I talked about apprenticeships declining. There are 5,500 fewer apprentices in the Labor Party's first term in government as opposed to in ours. I take members to a document which I referred to yesterday but is updated as of today. This is fresh off the press—'Apprentices and trainees 2015, December quarter'. I said they had 5,000 fewer apprentices under their regime in the first year of government. It gets worse. It is actually 7,000 now. Overnight the figures have gone from 5,000 to 7,000 fewer apprentices. Apprenticeship numbers are getting worse in this state.

The Premier and the Minister for Training and Skills have got to stop blaming everybody else. They have to acknowledge the fact that they have been the government for over 12 months and it is their responsibility. No-one else is to blame, but those members themselves.

I refer to a comment I made before about the employment minister. The employment minister rose to object and say that she took personal offence to a statement I made and said that I took her comments out of context. I draw the attention of honourable members to an article—thank you, member for Burleigh, for getting this document for me—with the headline 'Employment minister says youth unemployment "not new" and "not much you can change"'. That article is dated 15 January 2016 at 2.41 pm and written by John McCarthy, Tom Snowdon and Trent Akers of the *Courier-Mail*.

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection. She said at the press conference that she was taken out of context. Let us see what the direct quote was. The direct quote from the employment minister was—

"Youth unemployment is always difficult to address. I don't know that there's much you can change structurally," she said. "There's always an issue with youth unemployment. It's not new, it's been around a long time."

If the Minister for Health wants to defend the employment minister about what she said, well, that is what she said. The Minister for Health is blaming the media. 'It is the feds' fault. It is the LNP's fault.' Now it is 'the media's fault'. Not 30 seconds ago the health minister said to me, 'Look at what she said at the press conference.' The minister may not know that I have the story printed from the press conference. The health minister should note, in italics, a direct quote—

Youth unemployment is always difficult to address. I don't know there is much you can change structurally. There is always an issue with youth unemployment. It's not new, it's been around for a long time.

I table a copy of that for the employment minister, and perhaps the attendants could take a copy to the health minister so he can see what his colleagues said in January about youth unemployment, because she said exactly what I quoted from the press conference.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail* online, dated 15 January 2016, titled 'Employment Minister says youth unemployment "not new" and "not much you can change" [\[964\]](#).

In terms of jobs around the state, it is clear that the Labor Party has no clue. We need a change of policy and a change of direction. On that note, we need a policy to get Queensland working and moving. That is what the LNP leader announced today—a real plan to get Queenslanders into jobs, to address unemployment rates, to ensure that, no matter where in the state one resides, if one is unemployed there will be an opportunity. Our plan to get Queensland working will attract 20,000 new jobs over four years. A Queensland apprenticeship boost will provide a \$5,000 incentive for Queensland businesses that take on a new apprentice from beginning to end. This boost will provide up to 10,000 new apprentices over four years. Then there is the tool for tradies—\$500 vouchers for tradies who complete their apprenticeship to get the tools they need to get working. Over four years this will provide tools for 20,000 tradies to get ahead in their job.

I thank Andy and Cat who joined the Leader of the Opposition at a press conference today. Cat is from Tradex, and her boss, Helen, was there. There was Chris from Tradesmen on Time and his apprentice, Andy. In front of the cameras Andy and Cat said what a great opportunity the \$500 voucher will provide at the end of their apprenticeship. We heard Chris and Helen from Tradex say that that the \$5,000 boost will incentivise them to take on another apprentice. Helen said that, with the cost and difficulties of putting on another apprentice, the \$5,000 means she can hire a new female plumbing apprentice in their business, and that is good news for Queenslanders.

There is also the Job Start incentive—\$4,000 grants over 12 months to assist small businesses with recruitment and start-up costs for eligible businesses. This concerns 15- to 24-year-olds who are unemployed and not enrolled in full-time education and training, because we know that a lot of people just want a job. They do not want to go to training or to university or to finish high school: they just want a job. This will incentivise small business to take on those people. If mum-and-dad businesses take on the apprenticeship boost and the Job Start incentive, they also will be applicable for our WorkCover Queensland rebate and employment boost. For each 12 months of continuous employment of each eligible participant, employers will have that worker's wages excluded as part of the next premium calculation.

When this morning the Leader of the Opposition announced this policy of tools for tradies, I saw the look on the faces of the Minister for Employment and the Minister for Skills and Training. They were thinking, 'If only we had of thought of that.' The government's \$100 million plan creates only 8,000 jobs. Our just over \$100 million plan creates 20,000 jobs, deals with apprentices and deals with small mum-and-dad business operators; real jobs that this economy needs.

I refer to issues in my electorate. As I said at the outset, and as is always the case, the Sunshine Coast has been absolutely neglected by the Labor government. When in government, we brought forward by six months construction of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. We signed the contract, got the deal done, got the hospital built. Of course we see the Labor Party delay it again until April next year. We see roads cut from projects that were already planned. We saw the plans years ago, but now they are back in the planning stages under the new Minister for Main Roads.

I refer to the \$440 million plan to build the Mooloolah River interchange. Under Labor, it will never happen. Not one dollar was put aside for the Mooloolah River interchange. The minister must know that, when the Sunshine Coast University Hospital opens next year, there will be major traffic congestion and gridlock which will put ambulances at risk—

Mr Dick interjected.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take the interjection from the minister. There is no use in a hospital if the ambulance cannot get to it. There is no use being a patient in the back of an ambulance if one cannot get to a hospital. Does the minister think a monorail traverses the roads and gridlock to drop people at the hospital? There is no monorail. We need cars to get to the hospital. Unless we build the roads and infrastructure for the buses, ambulances and vehicles to get there, there is no point in having a hospital. As occurred when the water tanks exploded on Kawana Way, people will be cut off from that hospital, and that is what I am trying to avoid. That is why the Labor Party should have invested in the Mooloolah River interchange, but it has not. The Minister for Health will be held responsible next year when the hospital eventually opens and when ambulances cannot get to it, because this minister and this Labor government delayed its opening by five months.

As the health minister seems to have a lot to say today, I table for his benefit about 800 nonconforming petitions with respect to 'Road Delay—No Way.' The minister says this is not an issue on the Sunshine Coast, but this morning the Clerk tabled thousands of petitions from Sunshine Coast residents. I now table about 800 nonconforming petitions with respect to 'Road Delay—No Way' and in respect of the Sunshine Coast University Hospital.

Tabled paper: Nonconforming petition regarding road delays [\[965\]](#).

When the health minister squeaks, squawks and interjects as though nothing is an issue, he should listen to the thousands of Sunshine Coast residents who say that this is an issue. This will be an issue.

As a minister in the Bligh government, the minister put on a blindfold saying, 'Nothing to see here; it is never my fault.' 'Not my fault,' he said when SPER debt skyrocketed. 'Someone else's,' he said. And then we know that he tried to fiddle with the figures. If we refer to the Ethics Committee investigations, let us consider the one carried out on the former attorney-general, who is now the health minister, with respect to the fudging of the numbers and the SPER debt. We know what the minister did, we know what happened when that SPER debt was there—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! We all appreciate some spirited debate, member for Kawana and Minister for Health, but can we return to the budget?

Mr BLEIJIE: As I was saying, the Mooloolah River interchange is vitally important for the Sunshine Coast community. It will be no good opening a hospital next year if people cannot get to it because the roads are insufficient. The Minister for Main Roads has already acknowledged the gridlock at the moment on those roads. The minister thinks a bandaid solution of \$22 million to upgrade a few roundabouts will solve all the issues. The LNP investment of \$440 million has been put on the backburner by the Labor government in terms of its \$22 million investment. I suspect and suggest that a \$440 million road around the hospital would ease congestion more than \$22 million being spent to duplicate a couple of roundabouts. Residents of the Sunshine Coast community, particularly in my electorate, have spoken with their signatures and with those petitions tabled today. Thousands of people have signed those petitions in this respect.

I dare the health minister to hold a public forum when the hospital opens to explain to the Sunshine Coast community around Kawana that the roads will be fine, that the roads will be okay, and there will be no gridlock. I dare him to come to a public meeting and to say to my constituents that it is alright, that everything is under control and that the roads will be okay to get to the hospital. I dare the health minister to do that, but he will not. He will not because it will be 'the board's fault'; it will be someone else's fault. It will be the fault of someone in Tuvalu—where the minister used to serve as attorney-general—that the roads have not been built on the Sunshine Coast. That is what will happen.

This minister should be ashamed, because the last time the Labor Party was in power the Sunshine Coast University Hospital was delayed. Of course, the first thing the new Labor health minister did was delay the Sunshine Coast University Hospital. Then in parliament the minister refuses in answers to questions on notice to explain why the government has delayed its opening. The minister refuses to produce the independent report about the delay and says, 'No, that is confidential; but put in an RTI application if the Sunshine Coast community wants to know why it is delayed.'

Only the LNP has the confidence, the expertise and the experience to get Queensland moving. As part of our plan to get Queensland working, 20,000 jobs will be created. That is good for Queensland and good for young people. Unfortunately, they are not going to see it under the Labor Party.

(Time expired)