




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

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

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (11.27 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Appropriation Bill 2016. The 2016-17 state budget is a bad budget. It fails to deliver for Queensland and it sure as hell fails to deliver for the people of Mudgeeraba. It is a budget from an asleep-at-the-wheel Labor government that fails to get the basics right and does not deliver the projects my local area needs. In typical Labor style, electorates like mine have missed out in favour of marginal Labor electorates in a shameless display of political expediency and pork barrelling. This is another example of politics coming before people and campaigns coming before communities as even small ticket items set to make a big difference to my electorate were put on the backburner. The sad truth is that the projects we had secured under the former LNP government which meant so much to my communities have been scrapped, ignored and scuttled away. Of course, this comes as no surprise. This has been the consistent narrative of this government. It has been 18 months and this do-nothing Labor government has not delivered a single thing for my electorate. This holds true for other electorates across the state.

This is a budget of broken promises. This is a budget of more debt and more deficit. This is a budget of infrastructure neglect. On all accounts this is a typical bad Labor budget which boasts more taxes and nothing to show for it. It is arguably the worst budget in over 50 years since superannuation for public servants was fully funded as, in an economically irresponsible attempt to fill his budget black hole, the Treasurer has raided \$4 billion from the superannuation funds of our hardworking public servants. Despite this sneaky \$4 billion shift, we still see debt continuing to increase over the forward years. In fact, no matter how this government tries to spin it, this is a budget that includes an increase to net debt of \$7 billion. Debt is hurtling towards \$80 billion and this government has no plan to stop it. Whilst the Treasurer predicted an operating surplus of \$1.2 billion just last year, he has now predicted a surplus of just \$150 million. We still see infrastructure spending slashed by \$2.3 billion compared to the former LNP government, the lowest infrastructure spend in Queensland's history. Compared to the last budget delivered by the LNP, infrastructure spending is down by almost \$800 million. While last year the Treasurer promised an infrastructure spend of \$10.1 billion, he only spent \$8.1 billion.

As this Labor government heralds its so-called innovation budget, its so-called infrastructure budget, its so-called jobs budget, all we see are reckless raids, dodgy debt and the same old Labor. In contrast with this Labor government's failed budget that fails Queensland, the LNP has put forward our plan to get Queensland working, as outlined by the Leader of the Opposition earlier today in his budget-in-reply speech. Our plan will secure employment for Queenslanders across this state, particularly in electorates such as mine, with targeted support for small businesses and workers that will lead to up to 20,000 more jobs for young Queenslanders. Our plan will reduce the cost of working for young apprentices and incentivise businesses to train and retrain young Queenslanders.

Finding employment can be tough for young Queenslanders and for young people in my electorate. This plan will give them the vital opportunity they need to complete their training and get the experience they need to make a meaningful contribution to the workforce. Importantly, our plan will also include support for up to 20,000 Queensland tradies over four years by contributing \$500 towards new tools for apprentices upon completion of their training. We will provide a \$5,000 boost to businesses that take on new apprentices and help them complete their training. That grant will be available to businesses with a turnover of up to \$2 million and, as the Leader of the Opposition said, will provide 10,000 jobs for young Queenslanders over four years.

Recognising that workers compensation is an added expense for many small Queensland businesses, under our plan, after 12 months of continuous employment of each eligible worker, that worker's wages will be excluded as part of the next year's premium calculation for workers compensation. Any worker injured at work will still be covered.

We understand the costs young tradies in electorates like mine face when they start work and we are committed to easing the burden on our young workers. The LNP has a strong track record of getting young Queenslanders back to work and boosting employment in Queensland. Our positive plan to get Queensland working is in stark contrast to the theories and nonsensical propositions put forward by those opposite, with the Minister for Employment claiming youth employment is not new and there is not much you can change about it. As the Leader of the Opposition outlined in his budget-in-reply speech today, in the first 12 months of this Labor government 2,600 fewer Queenslanders started training and 7,100 fewer Queenslanders completed training.

On this side of the House, we know that something has to be done to get our young people the jobs they need. We know that the empty promises and careless disregard we are seeing under this Labor government are not the way to do it. Whilst this Labor government splashes money around, we are putting forward a real plan that will have a massive impact for young people in electorates such as mine. Our plan is a way for young people to get their foot in the door and to have the tools, training and experience that they need to stay in work and make a meaningful contribution to our state's economy. Under this asleep-at-the-wheel Labor government, we are seeing unemployment go up and young people missing out, and our economy is suffering as a result.

Nowhere is the economic incompetence contained in this Labor budget more damaging than in the Mudgeeraba electorate. For 18 months we have felt the impact of this Labor government's careless disregard, as residents are spending less and less time with their families, out and about in our local area or contributing to our economy and more time stuck in traffic. Every single day, those residents of the southern Gold Coast who live south of Mudgeeraba, particularly in areas such as Robina and Reedy Creek, are stuck in traffic on their daily commute, as this government continues to hold up the upgrades of the M1 from exits 82 to 85. As members will recall, after Labor's first disastrous attempt at a budget last year I spoke about the failure of the Minister for Main Roads to ask for funding in the 2015-16 federal budget. Despite that embarrassing blunder, it did not stop the minister from issuing a media release following the federal budget in which he claimed to have asked for \$350 million to upgrade the M1 but had received nothing. Of course, what the minister was referring to was not a submission made by the Labor government as he would have us believe, but rather a submission made three years earlier by the former LNP government to the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd federal government, which was promptly ignored.

Four months later we saw this government contradicting themselves as the Deputy Premier came into the House and delivered a statement in which she lauded the fact that this government had finally mentioned an upgrade of the M1 on the Gold Coast to the federal government in their submission to Infrastructure Australia. No doubt Queenslanders and residents of my electorate were understandably baffled, as the Deputy Premier stood in this place and directly contradicted claims made four months earlier by her Labor colleague, the Minister for Main Roads. Not only had Labor taken seven months to prepare their submission; it became clear that they had simply rehashed initiatives from the former LNP government, including an M1 upgrade from Robina to Reedy Creek, with at least one other project being decades old.

Just as we thought that this Labor government could not possibly bumble and fumble any further, earlier this year the Minister for Main Roads outdid himself by forgetting to include the M1 in Labor's so-called State Infrastructure Plan. In April, I asked the minister about that blatant omission in a question on notice. After taking a month to think about it, the minister responded—

The M1 Pacific Motorway upgrade—Mudgeeraba to Varsity Lakes upgrade is listed on page 10 of the *State Infrastructure Plan, Part B: Program*, under the heading "Infrastructure Priority List—Queensland Projects

What the minister forgot to mention was that that page was not in fact listed in projects put forward by the Labor government, but rather was reiterating priority projects put forward by the federal coalition government in the Australian Infrastructure Plan. After my federal colleagues and I called the minister out on that latest instance of forgetfulness, we saw him publicly declare that he had submitted a final business case for the M1 upgrade six weeks prior. Unfortunately for the minister, that turned out to be another case of telling porkie pies as the federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport confirmed a final business case had been submitted only three weeks prior.

As a result of these continued delays and Labor holdups, we have now seen reports that commuters on the southern Gold Coast are spending the equivalent of four days a year in traffic and that commuters are now spending two more hours a week in traffic than they were a year ago. With our constituents sick of these delays, last week I joined the member for Burleigh to call on the Labor government to finally fund the next upgrade of the M1 in this week's state budget. We said it was about time this Labor government put their money where their mouth is and delivered the \$110 million we need to upgrade the M1. Our calls came amidst renewed public pressure for the Labor government to agree to a fifty-fifty funding split. Unfortunately, once again, the southern Gold Coast has been ignored.

This bad Labor budget is yet another nail in the coffin when it comes to seeing the M1 upgraded before the Commonwealth Games. After a year and a half in power, Labor has once again refused to commit any funding to upgrading the M1 between Robina and Reedy Creek. For 18 months, we have seen bumbles and fumbles, porky pies and bewildering forgetfulness, but now we can see clearly set in stone that this government is not serious about alleviating traffic congestion. This government has well and truly abandoned the southern Gold Coast.

In fact, in the Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program, or QTRIP, for 2016-17 to 2019-20, for my electorate all we see is rehashed funding for projects I have already announced. On the Gold Coast-Springbrook Road, we see funding listed for a feasibility study for a future upgrade of the Austinville causeway. I announced that study in September of last year and it has already been completed. On Beechmont Road, we see funding listed for the installation of guardrails and a stopping bay, which is a project I announced in April after the Labor government finally caved in to months of political pressure and announced a quick-fix solution following a string of fatal and near-fatal accidents on that hazardous hinterland road. We see funding listed for the signalisation of the intersections of Gooding Drive, Palm Meadows Drive and Lakelands Drive, which is a project that I have been telling local residents about for the better part of a year.

For residents of my electorate, no new announcements for our roads is not the only disappointment that has come from this bad budget. Once again, we see no funding allocated to important local projects that would have been fully funded under an LNP government. The \$330,000 for CCTV cameras and lighting at the corner of Nerang-Murwillumbah Road and Pine Creek Road in the Numinbah Valley, which was a fully costed election commitment of the LNP, under Labor has slipped under the radar and remains unfunded in this year's bad Labor budget. For residents of Springbrook and the Numinbah Valley, that means that one of their biggest concerns will remain unaddressed. As members are aware after my speeches in this place, that location is a known hooning hotspot and is an ongoing concern for the Queensland Police Service, particularly our local officers at Nerang Police Station. The intersection is only five kilometres north of the Numinbah Valley township and only 150 to 200 metres from the Numinbah Valley Environmental Education Centre.

Hooning activity is putting the community and visiting students in danger, as fires started by the burning of tyres pose a serious bushfire risk and hooning activity causes those staying at the Environmental Education Centre great distress. That is why during the 2015 state election campaign, alongside the then minister for police, fire and emergency services, I announced that \$330,000 would be spent to address hooning at that location under a re-elected LNP government, which was part of our fully costed and audited election commitments. Since then, I have asked for assistance from the Labor government to address hooning at the location. I have asked that they deliver on the former LNP government's funding commitment.

To date and again in this bad Labor budget the community's concerns have fallen on deaf ears. Similarly, projects such as \$100,000 to clean up the Mudgeeraba Creek from the M1 to Swanton Drive in Mudgeeraba; \$80,000 for flashing school zone lights at Mudgeeraba Special School, Merrimac State School, Mudgeeraba Creek State School and Numinbah Valley State School; and \$155,000 for tourism signage in Springbrook at Wunburra Lookout have been ignored in this bad budget. These are projects that were fully funded and fully costed under the LNP but ripped away from the community under Labor. Whilst these projects would have enhanced our local environment, kept our schoolkids safe and boosted local tourism for the struggling Springbrook economy, this Labor government has continued to ignore our community.

Disappointingly, victims of domestic violence on the southern Gold Coast have also missed out in this bad Labor budget, with no funding allocated for the Robina Community Legal Centre. Half of the Robina Community Legal Centre's case load is made up of domestic violence victims with nowhere else to turn, who seek free legal advice from the volunteer lawyers at the centre. This Labor government has ignored the community's pleas for months, instead choosing to play politics and blame the federal government for all their woes, and their response to this budget is more of the same.

Whilst this budget is bad news for my electorate of Mudgeeraba, as the shadow minister for communities, women and youth, child safety and the prevention of domestic and family violence and shadow minister for disability services and seniors, I am pleased to see the good work started by the former LNP government being continued. As members are aware, the former LNP government began the tremendous task of reforming our state's child safety system, of stamping out domestic violence in our communities and of getting Queensland ready for the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The LNP instigated the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry, chaired by the Hon. Tim Carmody QC, and committed over \$400 million to implement the report's key recommendations. The commission was directed to deliver recommendations on reforms to ensure that Queensland's child protection system achieves the best possible outcomes to protect children and support families. The LNP accepted all 121 of the commission's recommendations and passed the Public Guardian Act 2014, the Family and Child Commission Act 2014 and the Child Protection Reform Amendment Act 2014. This budget contains funding to continue the implementation of these reforms.

When it comes to the prevention of domestic and family violence, the LNP commissioned the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence in Queensland, chaired by Dame Quentin Bryce, which produced the *Not now, not ever: putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland* final report. The report identified a framework for change and improved responses to domestic and family violence. The LNP opposition has offered bipartisan support for all 140 recommendations of the report, aiming to eliminate the scourge of domestic and family violence from our community. I am pleased to see the Labor government allocate funding to continue to implement these recommendations.

In the critical area of disability services, the LNP wholeheartedly supported the National Disability Insurance Scheme, giving Queenslanders with a disability greater control and choice over their care. The LNP signed up for the National Disability Insurance Scheme in 2013. The LNP had inherited from Labor the lowest per capita disability spend of any state in Australia.

The Queensland and Australian governments signed a bilateral agreement announced in March 2016 for the rollout of the NDIS across Queensland. Whilst the LNP welcomed the signing of this bilateral agreement, it was disappointing to see the Palaszczuk Labor government playing politics with the federal government and delaying signing the agreement for almost 12 months. Credit must be paid to the member for Aspley for her outstanding tenure as the minister in the former LNP government, for without her bold approach to tackling child safety and domestic and family violence we would not see these issues being addressed.

I am pleased to see that almost \$200 million over five years has been allocated to address domestic and family violence in Queensland, in line with the recommendations of the *Not now, not ever* report. I commend the minister for her commitment to continuing the good work of the former LNP government and ensuring that we continue to curb the scourge of domestic violence in this state. This includes through the development of new and enhanced specialist and generalist domestic and family violence services that will be directed towards closing current service gaps. In total, this funding commitment is worth \$43.1 million over four years. I am pleased to see a continuation of the important reforms begun under the former LNP government by the member for Aspley. I also welcome the allocation of funding to the rollout of the NDIS which begins next month, continuing the LNP's commitment to the most significant disability services reform of our generation.

Overall, however, this is a budget that does not deliver for Queensland. It is a budget that does not deliver for my electorate of Mudgeeraba. It is a budget of more debt and deficit, raids of public servants' superannuation, broken promises and record low spending on infrastructure. As a result, my constituents will continue to miss out under an asleep-at-the-wheel Labor government with no plan for our area and no plan for the southern Gold Coast.