




Speech By  
**Tarnya Smith**

**MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY**

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

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (9.09 pm): I received some great news on Tuesday that I want to share with the House. I received an email from a young man—a year 12 student—who emailed my office and said—

Hi there,

I recently contacted you in regards of a meeting with Tarnya Smith. This was in regards to my geography assignment that I have submitted a few weeks ago. I have just received my results for that report today and if it wasn't for Tarnya I would not have achieved such a high grade. I have received an A+ for this report and would like to thank Tarnya so much for her efforts made in the aid of my assignment.

I am happy to share that with members because that is what our next generation of Queenslanders are all about: they are achieving great things. I had to share that good news because clearly the budget brought nothing for Mount Ommaney. The residents of Mount Ommaney got zero, zip, zilch, nil, nada. I will tell members what was sad about the budget handed down on Tuesday by the Treasurer—that is, that the budget will consign Ziad and his friends to a future of debt and deficit and it will be likely that Ziad's children will only know of a Queensland that is cash strapped and struggling, only know of an economic epidemic that will take them until their retirement days at best to recover from. The one thing we can always count on with Labor governments is that they will cost you more and you will get less—every time.

When it comes to the budget outcomes for the seat of Mount Ommaney, guess what? It is no surprise that the electorate has yet again been starved of funds, or, should I say, we have been Sector G-ed—Sector G-ed, *Total Recall*, Mount Ommaney Sector G-ed. That is a reflection on who is actually running this state, because the Premier, as everyone knows, lives in my electorate and she herself sponsored a petition to have Sumners Road upgraded a couple of years back and she could not even muster any influence to get this vital piece of road infrastructure on the agenda.

**An opposition member:** She doesn't run it.

**Mrs SMITH:** This vital piece of infrastructure has been overlooked yet again and I can only come to a couple of conclusions, and my colleague said one of them. The other one would be that even though the Treasurer makes the claim that he likes people I do not think he likes the people of Mount Ommaney. What is important to the state of Queensland is to ensure long-term prosperity and things like spending within our means, for a start; less taxes, not more; building infrastructure; and of course supporting business, be it large, medium or small, and we can do that by creating a conducive environment for businesses because that is where the real jobs are created.

Debt and deficit are not what this great state requires. Debt and deficit are a legacy delivered by the Beattie-Bligh government that has been perpetuated by this abysmal Palaszczuk-Trad government with the handing down of this budget. After a brief reprieve when this side of the House took the

economic reins and steered the state back to a responsibly managed position, the unions again rule the roost and have determined that the puppetmasters are back in control of George Street and that the only way to the top is by driving this state to the bottom of all economic indicators.

'Jobs, jobs, jobs' was the mantra before the 2015 election and where does Queensland sit in terms of unemployment? The latest figures out today show that Queensland's unemployment rate is now 6.4 per cent on both measures. Queensland is the only state in Australia to go backwards in the last month. Since the last budget that was all about jobs, Queensland has fallen behind the other states and the sad, true tragedy for that young man, Ziad, and his friends is that Queensland has the second worst youth unemployment rate in the nation.

The results speak for themselves that Labor is all about talk, but do not just take my word for it. Let us look at what some of the leading economists have had to say about this budget. Let us start with CommSec Chief Executive Craig James. What did he say about the Queensland economy earlier this year? Can members remember? If members cannot remember, let me remind them. He said—

Queensland remains entrenched in the third tier of economies, alongside South Australia and Tasmania.

'Entrenched in the third tier of economies' might have a nice ring to it—well, it might to those opposite—but third tier certainly is not where Queensland deserves to be. The people of this state are over being treated like the lemmings being led to walk off the cliff blindly. Treating us as second or, as reported, third tier, the Treasurer and those across the chamber have blinded the people by smoke and mirrors hoodoo voodoo. All we hear now is 'blah, blah, blah'. This is an absolutely nonsensical, non-caring and irresponsible budget. While people may tout the Treasurer as a nice guy—and I am sure that he is—he is so far out of his depth, as he knows he is, as do the puppetmasters, but he is still choosing to drag the state down by killing off any hope that our youth have somewhat of a bright future. I remind the House of a *Courier-Mail* article not that long ago—on 11 June 2016—where Curtis Pitt said—

But what we have to do and what I have to do as Treasurer is ensure that we manage that fine line between being fiscally responsible ... as well as driving the economy.

Yes, Treasurer, that is what you have to do, but you have failed the people of Queensland badly. I draw the House's attention to a number of comments in the media after the announcement, and in reality that is all the budget was—an announcement of intent to suffocate and bleed the lifeblood out of this state. Judith Sloan reported—

When it comes to analysing a state budget, there are two key variables to look for. What's happening to employee expenses and what's happening to government debt.

On both scores, the Queensland government's mark is a fail.

Ms Sloan went on to say—

When it comes to government debt, Curtis Pitt performs a sleight of hand by raiding the ... public sector workers and directing some of the monies to paying down gross debt, by close to \$2 billion. But here's the thing: it will do nothing to alter the net debt position of the state ...

I table that document.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Australian*, dated 15 June 2016, titled 'Pitt's day of reckoning will come, and it's not far off' [970].

The Treasurer and the Labor government just do not get it. They have absolutely no idea on how to do business—none whatsoever. Let me delve more into the commentary for those who are in the know. The Heart of the Nation column in the *Australian* stated—

After being hit hard by the resources slump, Queensland needs private sector investment. There was little in the budget, however, such as overall payroll tax relief, to encourage it. Instead, Annastacia Palaszczuk and Mr Pitt have set out to buy jobs, allowing public sector staff costs—mainly in health and education—to balloon by 7.3 per cent (more than five times inflation) this year, with a further 4.9 per cent increase forecast for next year.

I table that document.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Australian*, dated 15 June 2016, titled 'Spending from a bottomless Pitt' [971].

The headline by Michael McKenna screams, 'Billions raided but still no better off', and I table that document.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Australian*, dated 15 June 2016, titled 'Billions raided but still no better off' [972].

Does this not ring alarm bells? Did not the Premier and Treasurer promise at the last budget to manage the debt? Yes, they did, but this was either an untruth or, more accurately, a complete lack of understanding of what they are doing. They just do not understand—that has become clear—and I would suggest to Labor ministers and the Labor government to stop being caught up in your own self-importance and stop worrying about yourselves.

The Chamber of Commerce & Industry Queensland made the following comment—

The context to today's State Budget is an economy doing it tough at present with Queensland's domestic economy in difficulty, contracting over the past two years and the unemployment rate on the rise ... Queensland needed a Budget that doubled down on efforts to help the Sunshine State transition from the resources boom to a more diversified economy.

Amy Remeikis reported in the *Brisbane Times* the response from the property industry and that revealed more broken promises. The chief executive of the Real Estate Institute of Queensland said—

The Queensland Government is treating the property sector like an ATM once again.

The chief executive of the Real Estate Institute of Queensland stated further—

Curtis Pitt made a firm commitment to Queenslanders and the property industry in 2015 that he would not raise stamp duty or increase costs or fees for foreign buyers ... He said, 'Queensland is open for business'—but today he's slammed the door shut.

The state government has failed to consult with industry groups on this matter and if they had, we would have told them how fragile the market is at the moment.

This could not come at a worse time—regional Queensland is struggling and we have rising vacancy rates along with falling job rates.

That is not a ringing endorsement for the Treasurer of this state. I feel that a pattern is being established and it certainly is not pretty.

I turn now to the portfolio of Science, Innovation and the Digital Economy. Last Friday I had the joy of attending the St Lucia campus of the University of Queensland where I looked at a number of very exciting, cutting-edge research projects that are currently being undertaken. For example, some great work is being done on plant based painkillers. The Australian Institute for Bioengineering and Nanotechnology is focusing on improving health outcomes for ageing Australians, for example, in working out how we can prevent people from getting arthritis, which hinders people from living a healthy lifestyle as they age. That research is being funded by the Australian government. It is truly fascinating stuff. It is these areas in which we need to ensure that we have a strong Queensland economy so that we can assist in supporting these home-grown programs.

The other day I was flicking through the government's Advance Queensland initiative election commitments and a couple of items stood out that I thought were worthy of mention. During the election campaign, Labor said that it would establish a high-level Advance Queensland expert panel led by the Deputy Premier. I went to the website to inform myself of the activities of this expert panel, and something stood out to me. The website states, 'The Chair of the expert panel will be the Minister for Innovation, Science & the Digital Economy.' Not only is the Deputy Premier not chairing the expert panel but also she is not even on it. Maybe she is too busy to be part of one of the government's so-called priority areas. Or maybe she was overawed by the level of expertise of the members on the panel—from the business, academia, research and education sectors—because she has never had a real job other than being a political hack. Or maybe she was just confused.

The second part of Labor's election commitment that stood out to me was the following promise—

Labor will provide a three-year payroll tax holiday to any new companies established in Queensland as a result of Advance Queensland research programs.

There is barely any reference to this initiative on the government's web page. I would appreciate an update from the minister during her contribution on how many businesses this program supports and how much money has been allocated and will be spent on this initiative. I will probably have a lot more to say about that during the estimates hearings as well.

One of the things that seems to be lacking as part of the government's Advance Queensland agenda is the lack of any targets and specific outcomes that would measure the success of an individual program, an initiative, or an entire program. We know that Labor members like to talk, talk, talk, but when it comes to delivering real outcomes, I would be right to have significant concerns.

On a further note, by providing a number of funds and grants, this government is trying to pick winners. The government's job is not to pick winners. I would like to place on the record that this is very much a slippery slope for the government to be going down. Of course, earlier this week, this minister was exposed for failing to update her ICT strategy. Her credibility in delivering the basics is already shaky at best. That document and others on that site, which I had not got to, that related to the digital economy strategy magically disappeared overnight.

It already appears that the government has taken its eyes off delivering better front-line services for Queenslanders. The percentage of clients satisfied with the services provided by Smart Service Queensland is at only 67 per cent—well short of the target of 80 per cent. Labor is renowned for being good at spin, hot air and terrible at delivery. Who could forget the biggest public maladministration in the history of the nation—

**Mr Minnikin:** Payroll.

**Mrs SMITH:** Bingo!—the completely bungled implementation of the Queensland Health payroll system, a small IT changeover that ended up costing taxpayers over \$1 billion and saw hardworking nurses, doctors and allied health professionals underpaid, overpaid, or not paid at all. How much did that cost? It cost \$1.253 billion.

When it comes to delivery, that is Labor's legacy. We will be scrutinising heavily the rollout and management of this portfolio, which has a history of mismanagement under Labor. The budget shows a couple of reductions in staff at the State Library of Queensland. We have seen three go. At Queensland Shared Services, there is 22. That is worth mentioning. We will see how these services are affected, if they are affected at all.

I have a confession to make: I am a fan of reality TV. Over the years there have been many programs. We have had *Masterchef*, *Big Brother*, *Survivor*, *The Voice*, *Dancing with the Stars*, *Hell's Kitchen* and *The Bachelor*, just to name a few. When the Treasurer was handing down the budget on Tuesday, I keenly observed his colleagues who were surrounding him. I can tell members what their body language was saying. The Deputy Premier was saying, 'You are the weakest link, Treasurer. Goodbye.' The member for Woodridge was saying, 'Your torch has been extinguished. The tribe has spoken. Treasurer, it's time for you to leave the island.' The member for Yeerongpilly was saying, 'Sorry, Treasurer, you did not get a rose tonight. Please leave the mansion.' What was the member for Brisbane Central thinking about? I think she was thinking about what was on the lunch menu that day. We had the member for Springwood saying, 'Your work of art doesn't work for us.' I think members get my drift, but I can continue. Other colleagues were saying, 'Please pack up your knives.' 'You no longer are in the running for Australia's top model.' 'Your journey has ended here.' 'Please leave the chateau.'

I say to the Treasurer that he had all the elements to create a budget that could have set a positive direction for Queensland. Instead, he has chosen short cuts and lazy methods. At no stage has the Treasurer grasped an understanding of the right ingredients that are required to provide financial leadership in this state. On that basis, on the overall score for the Treasurer's efforts on this budget, I give him a one out of 10.