




Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (11.21 am): I rise today to respond to the government's budget for 2016-17. I have to say at the start that this budget has been incredibly disappointing. This budget does not live up to any of its promises. All it does is deliver more debt, more deficit and more decline in infrastructure.

Despite the Treasurer's \$4 billion raid on superannuation, debt continues to increase over the forward years. Despite the Treasurer's raid on superannuation, infrastructure spending has been slashed by \$2.3 million when compared to the LNP. The Treasurer's so-called infrastructure budget will deliver the lowest infrastructure spend in Queensland's history. Despite the election commitment to pay down debt, debt continues to increase over the forward years. Debt is still increasing up towards \$80 billion, and it is clear that the government has no plan and absolutely no intention to fix it.

The bad news continues in the portfolios of Corrective Services and Police, Fire and Emergency Services. I direct the attention of the House to Corrective Services. As I mentioned in my contribution on Thursday morning, the current minister has failed to deal with the blow-out in the prison population. In fact, he is all talk and no action on this particular issue. He spoke very vigorously when in opposition, but he has not backed up that talk with action in trying to address this issue. In the last 12 months, which has been entirely under Labor's watch, the utilisation rates in our prisons have increased by almost eight per cent, to 111 per cent. In our high-security prisons, which house our most hardened criminals, the utilisation rate has increased by nine per cent, to 115 per cent. This is incredibly disconcerting. Unlike the LNP, who had a plan to deal with this issue, it seems that Labor's only plan was revealed on the front page of the *Sunday Mail* of 29 May. It states—

QCS is prioritising resources for diversion, community supervision and re-entry services as part of a demand management strategy for women.

We know what these words mean. These words are code, basically, for letting people out early and not sending crims to jail in the first place when they deserve to be incarcerated. Labor is soft on crime. We know that, the criminals know that and Queenslanders know that. That is why this government cannot be trusted to manage our prison system.

We have hardworking prison officers striking right across the state because they are concerned about their safety. This is a serious issue. Unlike the minister, who huffed and puffed when he was in opposition, we actually took this issue very seriously. Our hardworking corrective services staff have a difficult enough job as it is without having to put up with record levels of overcrowding of hardened criminals in our jails.

Nine out of our 11 prisons are over capacity. As at 1 January this year, after almost a year of Labor reign in this state, the utilisation rates are: Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre, 113.9 per cent; Brisbane Correctional Centre, 116 per cent; Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre, 137.4 per cent;

Capricornia Correctional Centre, 118.6 per cent; Maryborough Correctional Centre, 113.4 per cent; Southern Queensland Correctional Centre, 119.2 per cent; Townsville Correctional Centre, 107.8 per cent; Wolston Correctional Centre, 116.4 per cent; and Woodford Correctional Centre, 110.1 per cent.

As I mentioned earlier, the LNP had a plan to deal with this issue. We make no apologies for making our communities safer. We had a plan to deal with increasing prisoner numbers.

Mr Russo: Well, share it.

Mr MANDER: I will do that. In the 2014-15 state budget we had a \$61 million plan to provide an additional 650 beds across prisons in Queensland, including 492 at a recommissioned Borallon Correctional Centre, which should have been fully operational 12 months ago. All this minister had to do was hand in the homework of the LNP. All of the work was done, the money was allocated and much of the capital program had been completed. As we have seen from Labor time and time again, they are good at talking about problems and issues and ordering reviews but terrible when it comes to delivering outcomes and getting on with the job of managing our prisons and protecting our hardworking corrective services staff.

By his own standard, the current minister has failed the test as corrective services minister. In 2012, when he was in opposition, he said that 'the Corrective Services minister needs to be held personally responsible' for any incidents as a result of prison overcrowding. That quote will haunt the current minister for all of his time in parliament, until he addresses this issue head-on. Our prison population is up and the unions have been striking. The minister needs to get on with the job he is paid to do.

I turn to policing. This year's Police budget hands in the homework when it comes to our four-year commitment of 1,100 additional police officers but fails to deal with the shortage of police cars that has been so eloquently put in the past week or so by the Queensland police union—the only union, it seems, that the Labor Party does not listen to. They estimate that there is a shortfall of some 200 police vehicles and that in some locations officers are having to catch public transport—the train, the bus—or even ride their bicycle to the job they are paid to do. In the last two Labor budgets only 25 additional police vehicles have been provided, compared with an additional 46 new vehicles in the LNP government's last budget.

We will match our record on police resource investment with that of Labor any day. When we came to government in 2012 we had to make up for years of neglect from Labor with additional police numbers and resources, and we did. In typical Labor form, they have again dropped the ball. From those people who gave us trains without seats, dams without pipes, a fake Tahitian prince and a massive bungled Health payroll system, the administration of services is again faltering as this government and this minister remain asleep at the wheel. It is Queenslanders who are paying the price.

Figures in this year's budget reveal that reported crime is up across the state, undoing much of the good work and the results achieved under the LNP. In the last year assaults are up by 9.8 per cent. In the last year robbery is up by 7.7 per cent. In the last 12 months unlawful entry is up by 2.8 per cent. In the last 12 months motor vehicle theft is up by 5.8 per cent, and the families and the businesses of Queensland are suffering from Labor dropping the ball. While we welcome money spent to address the resources needed to fight organised crime, we know that Labor is soft on crime. The criminal gangs know that. The lawyers know that. Our law enforcement agencies know that and Queenslanders know that. These additional resources do not make up for Labor's scrapping of the VLAD laws, watering down of penalties and winding back resources for important specialist policing squads like Task Force Maxima—a group of men and women who need to be congratulated for the work that they have been doing in taking drugs, illegal weapons and other contraband off our streets and making our communities safer. In fact, over the last 12 months or so, Task Force Maxima has taken over \$38 million worth of drugs off our streets. These are the drugs that are manufactured and distributed through bkie clubhouses, which Labor cannot guarantee will remain closed under its weakened response to organised crime. Right at this moment criminal motorcycle gangs—patched members—are campaigning on the north side of Brisbane against the LNP because they do not want these laws retained because they want to come back in force to this state.

Mr Minnikin: They can sniff an opportunity.

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection from the member for Chatsworth; they can sniff an opportunity and they cannot wait for the Labor government to weaken these laws.

Turning to fire and emergency services, I do not want to touch on legislation that is before the House at the moment but we do welcome the funding in the Fire and Emergency Services budget for \$3 million over 10 years for consumer awareness campaigns for changes in smoke alarm requirements.

These are very important changes and it is important that the education of the public takes place. However, they are as a result of our strong action in this area and forcing the government to act on something that it had no intention of doing.

I turn now briefly to my electorate of Everton—an electorate that I am incredibly proud to represent and an area that I have lived in all my life in the north-west suburbs of Brisbane. Again this budget delivers nothing or very little for the electorate of Everton. For some time we have been campaigning about the intersection of South Pine Road and Stafford Road. This is an intersection that causes a major bottleneck every morning and afternoon. Now that the suburbs of Cashmere, Warner and further out have been developed, the intersection of Old Northern Road and South Pine Road is part of a major arterial and, with the completion of the Woolworths development at Everton Park, this intersection has become a nightmare. Unfortunately in this budget there is no funding allocated whatsoever to improve and make the upgrades that are necessary. When we were in government there was a concept plan finalised, so the plans are there all ready to roll but all we need is funding. A couple of weeks ago when we had that very bad weather it was quite disturbing that there were three accidents at that intersection within a period of hours. This intersection is not only inconvenient; it is also dangerous. We need to ensure that we upgrade this intersection as quickly as possible.

There was some mixed news with regard to traffic lights that we lobbied for on the corner of Explorer Drive and Old Northern Road. I want to thank the residents who came to me about this issue, particularly the residents of Aveo retirement village at Albany Creek—elderly people who were concerned about coming out on to the main road of Old Northern Road. The transport department recognised that, yes, this did warrant traffic lights and there is an allocation in QTRIP, but unfortunately that is not for the coming financial year but the financial year after that. I am concerned about that. I am grateful for the funding, but we will be asking for that to be brought forward because this is potentially a very dangerous intersection and it is important that there are lights there to make it as safe as possible. There has also been an allocation for the North West Transport Corridor planning study. We have been planning this north-west corridor for a long time. I am not too sure what this \$600,000 is going to be spent on, but it would be good to see less reviews and a bit more action. We have to do something on the north side of Brisbane. The congestion is increasing on a daily basis. We need a long-term solution and it seems like it does centre around that North West Transport Corridor.

Mr Hinchliffe interjected.

Mr MANDER: I think it may go through your electorate, Minister, does it?

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I ask the member and the minister to direct all your conversations through the chair. Thank you.

Mr MANDER: Let us hope that something comes out of that and we get a long-term solution. I also express my disappointment with regard to the funding for schools in my electorate. The answer to that is very easy and you can actually answer that basically in one word—zero, zip, nothing. This has happened for the second year in a row, so that is very disappointing for the 16 schools in my electorate, including eight state schools. They are all great schools.

An opposition member: Nothing?

Mr MANDER: Nothing for capital upgrades at all. They are great schools. We are all very proud of the schools in our electorates and I thank the teachers and the staff for the incredibly hard work that they do on a daily basis. In summary, this is a disappointing budget. This is a budget that has not served the needs of the state, not served the needs of the police and fire and emergency services nor the correctional services areas and it most definitely has not served the needs of the electorate of Everton.