




Speech By  
**Verity Barton**

**MEMBER FOR BROADWATER**

---

Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2016

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

 **Miss BARTON** (Broadwater—LNP) (10.36 pm): I rise this evening to contribute to the debate on this year's budget. At the outset I acknowledge the Leader of the Opposition for his reply today to this government's budget. What we have seen today from the Leader of the Opposition is not only a very clinical response and assessment of this government's budget, but he also took the opportunity to tell the people of Queensland what it is that we would do to make sure that we delivered jobs not only for the regions but for all of Queensland. What we have seen with the budget that was tabled and delivered on Tuesday is a government that is incredibly disappointing. We saw a budget that did not live up to the expectations. We saw a budget that is reliant on the hopes, wishes and aspirations of a number of fairies. Instead of a Treasurer who is trying to pull gold coins out from behind his ears, what we see this year is him trying to keep as many fingers and toes crossed that everything comes together just as he said that it would.

The Leader of the Opposition today said that this was a budget of raids, rip-offs and writedowns. This is a sentiment that has been echoed not only by many of my colleagues on this side of the chamber but also by people in the business community and, more broadly, people across Queensland. What we have seen are public servants who are having their superannuation ripped out from underneath them, as the government steals the superannuation of hardworking public servants in an attempt to pay down debt. What we see is that under this asleep-at-the-wheel Labor government, debt continues to rise. What we see under this asleep-at-the-wheel Labor government is that unemployment will continue to rise. What we see is that the only thing that will drop are the approval ratings of the Premier and this government.

We have seen this budget fail the Gold Coast. We have seen this budget fail my electorate of Broadwater, and I will touch on that later in my contribution. This government talks about infrastructure and how it wants to build infrastructure in Queensland. What they have done is fail to spend money that they said they were going to spend. Last year they failed to spend about 20 per cent of their infrastructure fund. What we have seen is this government cut infrastructure spending in Cairns, Townsville, on the Darling Downs, in Rockhampton, Mackay—right across Queensland we have seen this government continue to cut funding for infrastructure.

What we have seen is a government stand up in this House and claim that they are capable of fiscal management, of reducing debt. However, what they have done is mislead the people of Queensland because, as we know, the Labor Party are incapable of delivering a good budget not only in Queensland but across the country.

We have seen the Labor Party prove that they are incapable of managing debt appropriately. I believe that we should have lower taxes, I believe that we should have less government and I believe that we should create an environment where business is able to create employment and grow jobs.

**Mr HARPER:** I rise to a point of order. The member for Broadwater misled the House when she said that the Townsville infrastructure spend is less. It is actually \$44 million more than it was last year.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Crawford):** Order! There is no point of order.

**Miss BARTON:** As I was saying, I believe that we should create an environment within which business, and particularly small business, is able to do what it does best, which is create wealth and grow jobs. We have seen this government fail to do that, and their actions in this House last night with the merger of Ergon and Energex show the contempt that the Labor Party has for small business in this state. As we on this side of the House know, small business is the economic powerhouse of Queensland. It is the backbone of Queensland.

One of the things that I said was that I believe in lower taxes, and that is why I was proud to be able to support my colleagues on Wednesday evening in the disallowance motion, because this government has increased car registration by double the rate of inflation. That has significant impacts not only for people in my electorate of Broadwater and across the wider Gold Coast but also for my colleagues in rural and regional Queensland who do not have an opportunity to use public transport, which was an alternative suggestion. I note that the member for Warrego contributed to the debate last night and she was very vocal about that.

When we are talking about increases in taxes, we have seen this government place a tax on noncitizens buying homes in Queensland. Instead of saying to noncitizens who want to buy a home in Queensland or who want to invest in property in Queensland, 'We welcome the investment in our state. We welcome you bringing your culture to our state, and we welcome you bringing all your other gifts to our state,' we say, 'We are going to impose another tax on you.' When the Treasurer announced it last week, I was contacted by a resident of my electorate. Lynne, who lives in Coombabah, has been living in Australia for 10 years. She is on a retirement visa 410. The only conditions on that visa are that she has to maintain a specific level of private health insurance. What she has said to me is that she is incredibly disappointed that, as someone who contributes to this country by paying taxes where appropriate, by contributing to society more broadly, but who does not have an opportunity to take advantage of some of the other benefits that Australians do like Medicare, Centrelink and the like, she is disappointed that the government in this state would seek to punish her further when she chooses to move house. I table the email that I received from Lynne.

*Tabled paper:* Email, dated 10 June 2016, from a constituent to the member for Broadwater, Miss Verity Barton MP, regarding the proposed foreign investor tax [975].

Not only did she send me that email last Thursday; she also took the opportunity to see me at my mobile office on Saturday outside the Runaway Bay library to deeply express her concerns to me about what the actions of this government mean.

In this budget we see the government claim they are focused on jobs, and they talk about a jobs package that they say is going to revitalise everything, but of course that is not going to do anything to get young people into employment on the Gold Coast or even more broadly in South-East Queensland. What we have done, and what we have seen today, is the Leader of the Opposition announce the LNP's plan to get Queensland working. It is only the LNP that has a plan to get Queenslanders and Gold Coasters working. What we are going to do is support not only those who want to undertake apprenticeships and who want to be able to seek further education but also those young Queenslanders who want a job. We want to be able to support those businesses who have the opportunity to be able to offer them gainful employment. That is what it is about: it is about getting young Queenslanders back into work. It is only the LNP that has a plan to do that. It is only the LNP which has a strategy to deal with youth unemployment because, unlike the government, we do not think that it is just something that happens, you cannot deal with it and it has been around forever.

As I said, we are going to focus on apprentices so we have the Queensland Apprenticeship Boost, which will be a \$5,000 incentive for Queensland businesses which take on an apprentice and complete that apprenticeship. We are going to support tradies. We are going to provide tools for tradies because we understand that when someone has gone through their trade qualifications and they are entering the workforce, sometimes they need a bit of support at first. The other thing that we are going to do is the Job Start Incentive, which is about encouraging small businesses across Queensland to employ a young person who wants to work. That is what it is all about: making sure that young people who want to work have an opportunity to work.

In the contribution by the Leader of the Opposition this morning, we also heard him raise some very important issues for the Gold Coast community. One of the things that he raised was the fact that this government plans to roll out the red carpet to criminal motorcycle gangs in Queensland. The other thing that he spoke about in his budget reply speech was the fact that this government is yet to sign another contract with respect to the V8 Supercars. As I am sure all members from the Gold Coast appreciate, and indeed the members who represent the Ipswich and Townsville regions, significant and

major events such as the V8s and other major events across Queensland not only bring a significant amount of money to the local community by way of creating jobs as well as tourism spent, but they are also an opportunity for us to showcase our regions right across not only Queensland but also Australia.

The other thing I wanted to touch on was the fact that this government has ignored my electorate of Broadwater. Perhaps the Labor government is punishing the Gold Coast for returning LNP members—I am not sure—but when you have a look at the budget spend on the Gold Coast the only things you see that this government is spending money on are Commonwealth Games projects that were locked in by the former deputy premier and the member for Callide and the former minister for the Commonwealth games. This government has ignored an opportunity to increase security at Biggera Waters State School. This government has ignored an opportunity to increase safety at the crossing out the front of Coombabah State School. This was an issue that I raised in this House last year, because just before the budget last year there were children hit by a car while crossing the road at the designated crossing outside Coombabah State School. I took the opportunity at the time in the lead-up to the budget to write to the Treasurer. I took the opportunity in the lead-up to the budget to write to the Minister for Main Roads. It is disappointing that we have not seen this government come to the table when it comes to the safety of schoolchildren in my electorate.

Last year, in addition to ignoring those things, they also ignored a fully funded, fully costed plan to install flashing school zone lights outside Labrador State School. I am pleased to say that with a significant amount of lobbying from not only me but also the Labrador community, we eventually forced the government into a backdown. I am hoping that over the coming months, however long it is until either the member for Woodridge decides to use his numbers to roll the Treasurer in caucus and become the Treasurer, or until the Deputy Premier herself uses her numbers to roll the Premier and take over government, in the intervening period between now and then, or even an election, this government will take the opportunity to consider the safety of the students at Coombabah State School. We had a plan that was fully costed and fully funded which was going to ensure that that intersection was safely upgraded for the benefit of those students in my electorate. As I say, it is disappointing that we see a government that is more concerned with playing politics than potentially saving the lives of children.

The other thing that I am disappointed to see—I am sure that my colleague the member for Coomera would join me in being very concerned about this—is a complete lack of work by this government to even consider an upgrade of the Jabiru Island bridge, which connects Paradise Point in my electorate and Hope Island in the electorate of Coomera. It is an incredibly busy thoroughfare. It is a state controlled road. Two lanes become one over the bridge and immediately become two lanes again. It is disappointing that this government has again ignored the wants and the needs of the Gold Coast community.

I have been contacted not only by people raising concerns about this government's determination to force noncitizens to pay more when they buy property in this state but also by people who are very concerned that their children will not be able to get jobs. They do not have trust and faith in this government's ability to get the economy right, to get the basics right—to set in train an economy within which business can do what it does best.

As we and the people of Queensland know, it is not the government that creates jobs. It is the role of the government to create an environment within which business is able to create jobs and grow wealth. The only jobs this government seems to be able to grow are those in the public sector. We have seen staffing levels in the public sector increase at twice the rate of population growth. We should be focused on making sure Queenslanders—young Queenslanders in particular—have an opportunity to get back to work and are able to do so within the private sector. I commend the member for Kawana for the work he has done in putting together a fantastic plan to get Queensland working.

A number of things about this budget concern not only me but also a number of my colleagues. Particularly at a time when we really need to make sure we are focused on paying down debt and reducing our deficits, I am concerned that we have a government that is delivering fiscal deficits totalling \$7.3 billion over the next four years. The LNP when in government was focused on getting the budget back on track, on making sure that we could forecast and deliver operating surpluses. What we have seen is this government focused only on pork-barrelling in its own electorates as it ignores electorates represented by LNP members across this state. We have also seen it focus only on paying back its union mates and increasing debt.

**A government member** interjected.

**Miss BARTON:** I take the interjection from the member for Thuringowa about the stadium. I put on the record my acknowledgement of Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull—I also recognise the former member for Thuringowa, Sam Cox—for the work he has done for the people of Townsville. The Prime

Minister is contributing more to the people of Townsville than this government. The Prime Minister has put more money on the table than has the federal Leader of the Opposition. The Prime Minister is absolutely delivering for the people of Townsville. I am sure that the member for Thuringowa joins me in acknowledging the great contribution of the coalition government to the people of Townsville and the electorate of Herbert.

One of the things we hear the government talking about is their focus on jobs, jobs, jobs. If they are so focused on jobs, at a time when they are growing the public sector at twice the rate the population is growing, I still do not quite understand why unemployment is going up. Maybe the employment minister does not quite understand her role, but unemployment, if you are creating jobs, is supposed to go down. What we have seen, and what we will see, is unemployment continuing to rise under this Labor government. This government does not understand what we need to do not only to get young Queenslanders back into work but also to get Queenslanders working again.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Crawford): Member for Kawana, member for Hinchinbrook and Attorney-General: if you want to have a discussion can you take it outside the chamber. I could barely hear a word that was being said.

**Miss BARTON:** If it would benefit the House, I am happy to start again. What we have seen is this government focused only on jobs in the public sector and only on jobs for their union mates. The jobs policy that has been announced by this government has no impact on South-East Queensland, so it is not going to deliver jobs in my electorate of Broadwater and across the Gold Coast, in Brisbane, in Logan, in the Ipswich region, in the Redlands region, on the Sunshine Coast or in the Caboolture region.

If members listened to the Leader of the Opposition and his reply today they would know that this LNP team has a plan to get Queenslanders working again. That just shows the contrast. On the one hand we have an asleep-at-the-wheel Labor government that does not have a plan to get Queenslanders working again; on the other hand we have the LNP's real economic plan for economic growth. We on this side of the House understand what we need to do to get the economy going again, to appropriately manage debt and to ensure young people have an opportunity to get an apprenticeship and a job.

This government's budget has been full of disappointments, not only for my electorate of Broadwater, where nothing has been delivered, but also for the people of Queensland more broadly. We have a budget that increases debt and unemployment. The only thing that I say will decrease under this budget are the approval ratings of the Premier and this government, who are asleep at the wheel and are not delivering for Queensland but are betraying the trust and faith that they claim has been put in them by the people of Queensland as they destroy the opportunities young Queenslanders will have in this state. As I say, the contrast is stark: on the one hand an asleep-at-the-wheel Labor government with no plan and on the other hand an LNP team with a real plan to get Queensland moving and to get Queenslanders back into jobs.