




Speech By
Hon. Bill Byrne

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2016

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

 **Hon. WS BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Services and Minister for Corrective Services) (8.05 pm): I rise to support the Appropriation Bill 2016. I wholeheartedly congratulate the Treasurer on a great piece of work—a great budget indeed. I waited today with some anticipation to hear the Leader of the Opposition's budget reply. After all, he represents the most experienced opposition in Queensland's history. Having been in opposition for 17 of the last 20 years I suppose they would have something to offer. What a dark comedy it turned out to be. That was 50-odd minutes that I will never get back. I will say one thing: at least the opposition is consistent. The Leader of the Opposition used exactly the same language that the Newman government used.

In the equivalent debate in 2012 I made comment that all that was coming from the mouths of Liberal National Party members was neoliberal mantra. A Chicken Little approach to economics, punctuated by sensationalist nonsense, parallels to the Spanish economy, falling into the abyss, darkened canyons and language such as that. Of course, this language was only intended by the Liberal National Party to lay a foundation of fear, meant to scare Queenslanders into accepting asset sales. At the time I accused the Newman government of taking an exaggerated low road, garnished with self-serving statements intended to promote a rabid and absolutist economic rationale.

In 2013 I observed that the Newman government had necklaced growth and doubled the estimated deficit. We did not hear any of that this morning. Deloitte's made it clear that the Liberal National Party's rabid austerity programs had crushed growth. We skip to 2014 and there is consistency again—a considerable deficit blowout and the groundwork for asset sales.

So we fast forward to today—the day when the new Leader of the Opposition had his chance to steal the march and lay out a positive future alternative as a statesman and as a leader and to be honest, if he had been honest, and get the record straight about asset sales. I decided to take some notes. I took notes for 45 minutes. These are the sorts of words that punctuated the Leader of the Opposition's contribution this morning: fear, twice; tax increases; slashed; blown; miserable failure; blame; Bligh even got a mention for goodness sake; conceal; disguise; misguided; dead; discredited; weaker; disillusioned, twice; miscalculated; ballooning debt; blowout; recklessness, twice; burden; raid; risky business; tricks; inconsistent; backward thinking; economically irrational—

Government members interjected.

Mr BYRNE: I have to get this on the record. This is a positive Leader of the Opposition. I continue: bribery; foolish; jealousy; bad; conscripted; errors; ripped out; declined; short changed; cannot manage; bad investments; hopes; chasm; flawed; desperate; shabby; and twisted. That was what I jotted down while the Leader of the Opposition was raving on about something or other. It had nothing to do with the budget, but it was a very interesting melange, I suppose, of what it was about.

Mr Boothman interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Elmes): Order! Member for Albert, if you want to interject please go back to your seat.

Mr BYRNE: In the middle of all that we had the interlude into Rome. Apparently the barbarians were at the gate. That is a reflection of what was said a couple of years ago in the debate on the budget. I said then that the barbarians were the Liberal National Party and that they were not at the gates. They were inside the walls for three years and the people of Queensland made their judgement about that pretty quickly. I want to talk about Roman history and add a bit of Shakespeare. It is unfortunate that the member for Southern Downs is not here, because the quote 'Et tu Brute' might be more appropriate for a budget debate. 'Et tu Brute' returns. Here we are!

When the Leader of the Opposition reflected on his vast history in opposition and what occurred at the time, there was no recognition in that debate, none whatsoever, of the global financial crisis. There was no mention of any economic fundamentals that need to be addressed either in this state or in Commonwealth relationships. There was nothing about vertical fiscal imbalances, something which people who understand what is going on in the country know needs to be addressed by members in this House. In all of that, there was nothing positive whatsoever in the Leader of the Opposition's commentary. I sat there thinking, 'This is the new Leader of the Opposition, here is his opportunity, what is on the table?' There was not much that people in Queensland could take from that. All the people who contacted me after watching the speech were astounded at the way in which it was delivered.

What were the positives? There was a mention of productivity. I thought, 'Here we go, we will hear something sensible about productivity.' There was no substance whatsoever. There was a statement of the bleeding obvious about what is essential in productivity.

My final note about this speech this morning concerns froth and bubble conservative nonsense because, frankly, that was the Leader of the Opposition's contribution. It has been simply incredible to watch the opposition when I recall just what an economic vacuum the LNP has been in and remains in to this day. There are so many examples where the Liberal National Party demonstrates its capacity to economically prostitute itself. A simple example was Tuesday's question time in this House. The definition of 'foreign' became a Liberal National Party critical area of dispute with Labor's economic initiatives. We are in budget week and their definition of 'foreign' becomes a critical point! That was followed by questions about attracting business to Queensland, and the nature of the question implied protectionism. It was a protectionist approach. There was this mismatch in terms of what they were concerned about in the budget. We repeatedly see this fundamental conflict in their economic philosophy and party construct.

The Liberal National Party is apparently in favour of a closed-shop approach, an anticompetitive policy, but also wants to champion foreign investors' rights of privilege over those of Queenslanders and Australians. Actually, they are reinforcing their lack of credibility. It is absolutely evident that they are protectionist and anticompetitive Luddites. There is a very recent poignant example of my assertions. Look back to the sugar bill that passed with the support of the opportunist opposition across the table who, by their actions, demonstrated precisely how malleable they are in terms of economic philosophy. The economic rationalists versus the agrarian socialists, the protectionists, the re-regulators versus the pro-investors, and the rationalists in terms of economics—that is what they across the chamber represent. It is a schizoid marriage of convenience called the Liberal National Party, a party created only because of optional preferential voting that has never been able to present a coherent, optimistic, economic narrative because of the party's foundation divisions.

Let us not forget the recent change of leader of the opposition. We see a party which is deeply divided and which is held together by self-interest and the ambition of individuals who cannot even maintain a constant view about asset sales. In the last 12 months we heard, 'No, yes, no, maybe, we will see in the future,' and what did we hear today? 'No comment.' I am not sure exactly where the Liberal National Party stands on much—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! The House will come to order.

Mr BYRNE: I am sure they do not know themselves; no idea at all. The truth is that the LNP have only ever had one shot in their locker, that is, asset sales. That is the one elephant in the room that nobody across the table in this debate spoke about or is prepared to speak about, because it is the only thing they have to talk about. That is the deal with the Leader of the Opposition. It has always been that.

The Treasurer's 2016 budget represents a significant investment in the safety of all Queenslanders. It is a budget that gives me great pride as a responsible line minister. It is a budget that delivers. I seek leave for the remainder of my speech to be incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Queensland Police Service

Mr Speaker, this Budget represents a significant investment in the safety of all Queenslanders. It is a Budget that gives me great pride as responsible Minister. It is a Budget that delivers.

Police, Fire and Emergency, and Corrective Services are critical to the safety and good order of our communities. The men and women involved, paid and volunteer, take on an additional burden to many of us in the course of their duty.

This Budget delivers for them.

Mr Speaker, the Budget provides real support for our police, with a real focus on operational equipment, building capability, and targeted investments in the future needs of the Queensland Police Service.

In 2016-17 the Government will provide increased funding of \$39.1 million over four years to Target Serious and Organised Crime and implement the Government's response to the Queensland Organised Crime Commission of Inquiry report.

The Queensland Police Service will undertake operational and intelligence-driven activities, legislative reform and education and training.

More than \$16 million will be provided to Improve Counter-Terrorism Capability and Capacity in response to the sustained national threat level.

This funding will enhance the ability to profile and assess persons of interest, source valuable intelligence and counter violent extremism. This funding also includes \$788,000 in 2016-17 to provide operational equipment and vehicles.

The Government has budgeted \$3.2 million over 2 years to Tackle Child Exploitation and implement the interim response to the Queensland Organised Crime Commission of Inquiry report.

This funding will enable a state-wide blitz on child exploitation material by building the capability of specialist police officers, providing additional civilian staff, and regional travel and training costs.

Mr Speaker, in addition, \$1.3 million over two years has also been reprioritised by the Queensland Police Service to implement the interim response to the Queensland Organised Crime Commission of Inquiry report. This funding will provide specialist ICT and investigative equipment to enable detection of online child exploitation activity.

Mr Speaker, this Budget recognises the contemporary environment for police and the need for specialised infrastructure. The 2016-17 Budget has allocated \$5 million to develop a business case for a contemporary Counter-Terrorism and Community Safety Centre at the Westgate Police Academy.

The Budget also includes new funding of \$12.6 million in 2016-17 from the Camera Detected Offence Program for road safety, trauma recovery, rehabilitation services and the administration costs associated with infringements, and 12 additional staff within the Road Safety Camera Office. This includes capital funding for installation of additional fixed and mobile digital cameras, and Point to Point Cameras.

Mr Speaker, police are often the first responders to domestic violence. Our Government recognises the toll that domestic violence takes on victims and the Queensland community.

The Palaszczuk Government is providing the Queensland Police Service with \$17.5 million funding over five years for a number of domestic and family violence response activities.

This funding is part of an overall package of \$196.1 million to respond to the Not Now, Not Ever report including:

- \$8.7 million over three years from 2017-18 to enable the Queensland Police Service to continue to provide prosecutorial support for the expansion of the Specialist Domestic and Family Violence Courts. (Funding to be held in contingency).
- \$5.1 million over four years to enable the Queensland Police Service to undertake coordinated activities to support the High Risk Teams delivering an integrated response to domestic and family violence.
- \$2.2 million over four years to support the Queensland Police Service in pursuing cultural change.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services

To support Queensland Fire and Emergency services personnel, this Budget brings new and upgraded fire and emergency service facilities, more fire appliances and communications equipment to service Queensland communities.

The Budget recognises the role of the community in preventing fire, mitigating risk and changing culture. Funding will be provided to support important community education programs. These include:

- \$3 million for a ten year, comprehensive consumer protection campaign for smoke alarms in domestic dwellings;
- \$400,000 for the Get out. Fire about. Winter fire safety campaign to educate Queenslanders about the importance of home fire escape plans;
- \$280,000 to deliver the Fight Fire Fascination program which supports parents to educate their children about the dangers of playing with fire; and
- \$250,000 to deliver a practical lifesaving road safety awareness program to young drivers facilitated by operational firefighters.

The 2016-17 Budget has also allocated \$1.5 million over two years to establish a Reserve Roster for firefighters. This roster will employ additional firefighters as an alternative solution to backfilling positions through overtime and the use of temporary firefighters.

The Government will deliver \$74 million for fire and emergency services facilities, urban and rural fire appliances and communications equipment. This includes:

- \$9.8 million to complete the replacement permanent fire and rescue station, Rural Fire Service Queensland and State Emergency Service (SES) facilities at Bundaberg and Petrie and the auxiliary fire and rescue station at Cunnamulla;
- \$8 million to complete the upgrade of the permanent fire and rescue station at Bundamba, the replacement auxiliary fire and rescue station, Rural Fire Service Queensland and SES facility at Roma, and upgrade the south western region headquarters at Charlton;
- \$5.6 million to commence replacement auxiliary fire and rescue stations at Childers, Gordonvale, Oakey, Rainbow Beach and Tara, and extend the auxiliary fire and rescue station at Thursday Island;
- \$2.9 million to upgrade the Horn Island collocated Rural Fire Service Queensland and SES facility, the permanent fire and rescue and auxiliary fire and rescue station at Mount Isa and the Richmond auxiliary fire and rescue station; and
- \$2.3 million to continue the replacement of the auxiliary fire and rescue station at Charleville and commence work at North Rockhampton.

In total, \$34.5 million will be spent in 2016-17 on replacement and new urban and rural fire appliances across Queensland.

Public Safety Business Agency

The independent review of the Public Safety Business Agency made recommendations to change the operating model and organisational structure of the PSBA and refocus it as a corporate services support agency.

These recommendations have been accepted by government and through the implementation of the report's recommendations, an improved support service will be provided to the public safety agencies, which in turn, will enable them to deliver a better service to the community.

In 2016-17 the Public Safety Business Agency will deliver efficient and effective public safety outcomes for its partner agencies, the Queensland Police Service, Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and the Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management.

This includes delivering most of the new and ongoing capital initiatives funded in the 2016-17 State Budget for partner agencies.

The 2016-17 Budget has allocated \$6.1 million over four years for a new Queensland Government Air rotary wing facility at Cairns. This facility will ensure the continued operation of rotary wing services to deliver lifesaving, community safety services in Far North Queensland.

The Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management

The 2016-17 operating budget of \$4.653 million for the Office of the Inspector-General Emergency Management (IGEM) will ensure it continues to review and assess the effectiveness of disaster management arrangements for opportunities to improve community outcomes. This includes undertaking reviews that may arise from future disaster events.

In 2016-17, the Office of the IGEM will review and assess the effectiveness of disaster management plans at local and district levels.

It will also enable stakeholders to conduct a health check of their disaster management capability against the Standard for Disaster Management through systems and processes that are easy to use, accessible and that provide clear, useful and timely information; and facilitate continuous improvement, consultation and collaboration across the sector through the state-wide network of disaster management officers and local disaster coordinators.

Corrections

Mr Speaker, the Palaszczuk Government recognises that the justice system needs to function as a coherent whole, in order to deliver a safer community.

This Government is committed to ensuring Queensland's criminal justice system operates effectively and efficiently.

This includes addressing the increasing demands placed on all aspects of the criminal justice system, and in particular the impact on prison infrastructure.

To this end, \$835 million has been allocated to Queensland Corrective Services to enable the agency to continue to manage prisoners in custody and offenders in the community, and contribute to a safer Queensland.

A priority for this Government is addressing the overcrowding and capacity issues faced within our correctional system. Since January 2012, the number of prisoners in Queensland has grown by over 38 percent.

It is no secret that this growth was tied to the former Government which made no effort to address this issue. Instead, they chose to plan for failure. They have left this Government an extraordinarily expensive mess to fix.

Queensland Corrective Services has a current built cell capacity of 6,076 in secure correctional centres. As at 6 June 2016, approximately 116 percent of this built capacity was occupied.

A number of key initiatives have been funded in the 2016-17 Budget to help QCS manage this increasing demand.

This includes \$1 million for the development of a business case for the expansion of the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre. QCS will also review existing business cases for the expansion of facilities at the Southern Queensland Correctional precinct by 1004 beds, and a further 244 beds for Capricornia Correctional Centre.

\$40.9 million of a \$126.9 million budget has also been allocated to complete the recommissioning of Borallon Training and Correctional Centre, incorporating the remediation of hanging points from all secure cells without air-conditioning. This will allow the remaining 244 cells to be re-commissioned, creating additional capacity at the centre.

As well as infrastructure initiatives to ease demand management, a number of non-custodial infrastructure initiatives have also received funding. This includes \$14.977 million over four years, to expand support services in correctional centres, including health, offender intervention and sentencing management strategies.

The Probation and Parole Service and the Queensland Parole Boards will also receive an additional \$20.5 million over two years to improve supervision of offenders on community based orders and the timeliness of decisions on the cancellation and suspension of parole.

Further, the Government recognises the need to address the causes of crime and reduce the likelihood of reoffending. To this end, \$4.5 million over five years (this includes \$0.5M in 2015-16) has been allocated for a specialised women's re-integration support service. This service assists with providing specific programs tailored to the individual and collective needs of women to enable a successful transition into the community.

Sexual Offender programs have also received a boost of \$10.3 million over four years to continue the delivery of evidence-based sexual offending programs aimed at reducing the future risk to the community.