




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (5.11 pm): I was going to say what a sham of a budget this is, but what a sham of a contribution that was! That contribution is indicative of a government that does not know how to prepare real budgets for the entire state of Queensland. The budget is a sham. It is a con job. It is a 'jobs bonanza' budget with no jobs—in fact, 80,000 fewer jobs. It is a budget which continues car registration hikes and higher power prices, with fees going up and cost of living going up. It is a budget with cuts to infrastructure and cuts to roads. It is a budget with no vision other than one vision, and that is sandbagging the Deputy Premier against the Green tide in South Brisbane.

I would like to start with some positive news. As announced by the Leader of the Opposition, Tim Nicholls, this morning, an elected LNP government will freeze family car vehicle registration. After two years of being gouged by this Palaszczuk Labor government and with promises of two more 3.5 per cent increases to come, the announcement by the Leader of the Opposition this morning will help ease the cost-of-living pressures on Queensland families. While it is about time that the Premier and Labor adopted our car registration fairness pledge, which we announced in 2015 to cap family car registration increases to the inflation rate, it is quite simply too little, too late. Queensland families have been subjected to an increase of more than \$50 for each family car registered since the Palaszczuk Labor government came to office. It is an outrageous cash grab by an incompetent government.

Labor, now in an election year, want Queensland families to believe them when they say they will cap registration increases to CPI—in two years time, that is. It is like the bank robber telling the bank he will stop stealing from them—just not yet. The Nicholls LNP team has listened to Queenslanders. We have planned and we will act to relieve the cost of living. An LNP government will freeze family car registration for three years. It is a policy that will save a Queensland family with two six-cylinder cars over \$200 across the life of the policy. While Queenslanders will be sceptical about the Palaszczuk government's promises when it comes to registration, they know we can deliver a family car registration freeze because we have done it before.

Turning to Queensland Rail, like the Palaszczuk government's constant registration slugs, South-East Queensland commuters have also had a slap in the face from Labor, with over \$200 million of taxpayers' money going towards extra rail services in this budget which will never come. The reality is that, while Labor wants to pour more money into a broken Queensland Rail, 1,800 services per week have been slashed from the timetable. We also now see the true impact of the rail fail—1.3 million fewer trips have been taken on trains this year than were expected.

The budget has also confirmed that over the last year only 89 per cent of Citytrain services have turned up on time and only 94.9 per cent of services actually ran at all. Five per cent of trains did not even turn up. They were not late; they did not turn up at all—never. What a disgrace. I saw the minister out there trying to spin the cancellation numbers. She was saying, 'There are now fewer services being

cancelled. Things are better.' Of course fewer services are being cancelled because there are fewer services actually being delivered—470 services cut from the timetable each week. When you deliver fewer services, of course you have fewer cancellations.

If this con job of a budget with massive infrastructure cuts was not enough of a stress test for the state's worst transport minister, she was also finally shamed into releasing the Queensland Rail timetable stress test. It is 'take out the trash' week because, under the cover of the stench that is this budget, the Deputy Premier was scrambling to get out their bad news. What the stress test report means for commuters is more cuts on top of the 1,800 we have already been experiencing, more delays and more cancellations. That is all this Palaszczuk Labor government has to offer passengers. With less than a month's notice, we will be seeing three more days of a cut back timetable during the June-July school holidays—25 June, 2 July and 9 July. Yet again the people in my part of the world on the Sunshine Coast will be left with two-hourly services to the Sunshine Coast. It is simply not good enough in this day and age.

The report also admits that the public transport plan for the Commonwealth Games is not yet finished. Correct me if I am wrong, but we are less than 12 months out from the Commonwealth Games and this incompetent government is making it up as it goes along. We have been asking for the Commonwealth Games transport operations plan for over 12 months, and now we find out that it is still being written.

The stress test report also outlines a few contingency actions for when the timetable does become stressed, such as during school holidays and the coming Commonwealth Games. One of the contingency measures for the stress periods is to 'proactively implement short-term timetable changes, ensuring highly patronised services and special events are protected'. To decipher Labor's *Yes Minister* world, this is code for cutting services on other lines to ensure there are enough services to deliver things like sporting events and Commonwealth Games. Tell anyone on one of those lines who has had services cut that that is a good result.

Another action is 'implementing efficiency improvements'. Labor's previous patch-up job solution for the timetable that did not work was to run more express services, which means skipping stations and leaving commuters stranded on the platform. The Premier now needs to rule out creating express services, leaving commuters on platforms, as a so-called 'efficiency improvement'.

The stress test report also identifies the rollout of the new generation rolling stock as a stress on the timetable. What that means is that, after stuffing around with the carriages at the union's behest, the member for South Brisbane still does not have enough drivers for the new trains. Queenslanders know that it is the LNP that can get Queensland Rail back on track, get the trains running on time and services restored. Why? It is because that is exactly what we did during our term of government. For commuters, Labor's budget means cuts, cancellations and delays.

I move to Cross River Rail. This Labor government only does things by half measures. Despite the Deputy Premier's trumpeting, this budget delivers only half of the capital costs of the Cross River Rail project, and that is before all of the extra costs are factored in. All in all, Labor's secret business case says that the project is a \$14½ billion project. If this government is so convinced this project stacks up, then the Deputy Premier should today table the full business case so Queenslanders can judge for themselves—not a sanitised public business case version which she has ordered from Building Queensland but the whole business case. One thing is for certain: this is not a shovel-ready project like Annastacia Palaszczuk declared in 2013.

I turn to road funding. This year's road budget reads like a list of LNP achievements. There is the \$1.6 billion Toowoomba Second Range Crossing—tick; that was the LNP. Thank you, member for Toowoomba North and member for Toowoomba South. There was the \$1.1 billion Gateway Upgrade north. That is another tick for the LNP. There are projects up and down the Bruce Highway which were part of our \$8½ billion Bruce Highway Action Plan—tick, tick, tick—including the Sunshine Coast Motorway to Caloundra Road upgrade. The Warrego Highway upgrades were part of our \$600 million 'Warrego is Go' plan—again, tick. Well done to the member for Condamine and the member for Warrego.

Overall in this budget we have seen a cut in the roads budget and a cut in all but two of the Transport and Main Roads districts. We have heard a bit of conjecture from the Premier and the member for Yeerongpilly denying that they have been slashing roads and transport infrastructure, so let me step it out for them. In the north coast district, from the Sunshine Coast to Moreton Bay—my patch—in last year's budget, in the Capital Statement, Budget Paper No. 3, starting at page 119, the government spend on the north coast region was \$299 million. In this budget, in the Capital Statement, Budget Paper No. 3, starting at page 123, they are spending \$236 million. My 10-year-old son would be able to tell the Premier and the minister—

Mr Minnikin: What the rate of GST is.

Mr POWELL: I take that interjection from the member for Chatsworth. Yes, he could tell the Premier what the rate of GST is. He could also tell you that that is a difference of \$63 million. That is \$63 million less being spent on the north coast. That is a \$63 million cut, and these cuts have been replicated around the state. As I said this morning, \$134 million has been cut from Toowoomba and the Darling Downs; \$34 million has been ripped from Far North Queensland and \$17 million from Northern Queensland; \$26 million slashed from the Fitzroy region; \$16 million in Mackay-Whitsunday; \$16 million in the north-west and \$7 million in the south-west; and Labor has gutted the Wide Bay-Burnett region by nearly \$85 million.

While the Metro region lost \$33 million in funding, regional Queensland has been hit the hardest. Across the state a total of \$400 million has been slashed and burnt from the roads and transport infrastructure budget for 2017-18. This includes the modest budget increase of \$645,000 in central west—the member for Gregory must be doing something right out there—and \$30 million extra for the south coast, but that is largely attributable to the Commonwealth Games roadworks.

In a media release earlier today the minister claims that we should be looking across the four-year program of works, not just 2017-18. I did that. I got the Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program. Even a cursory glance at this document shows that across the four years when it relates to the state network or the local network there is a complete paucity of project funding across those networks from 2019-20 onwards. In other words, there is next to nothing in the pipeline when it comes to road funding and construction. I suggest that the minister might be better off looking at his QTRIP rather than banging out media releases that again mislead and try to con the people of Queensland.

What Labor does not understand is how far this roads funding goes in regional Queensland. In the regions, infrastructure means roads and infrastructure means jobs. The sum of \$400 million could drastically improve safety on some of the longest, loneliest stretches of roads. It could fund the upgrades which would open up more business opportunities and increase productivity for our agriculture and resources sectors. It could improve and strengthen so many old and neglected bridges around the state.

Road congestion is worsening, with the government missing the mark for the expected percentage of the road network having reliable travel times. Only 72 per cent of the 33,000 kilometres of state roads met this threshold. We have a plan and we have a track record to deliver the roads, bridges and infrastructure Queenslanders need.

I turn to local government. This budget has also been a kick in the guts for local councils across the state. Local councils have seen their grants funding slashed since the last budget. With this Premier, it is give with one hand and take with the other. While she talks up the works program that she has provided to local councils, Indigenous councils will be hit hard with \$2.1 million ripped out of the Indigenous state infrastructure program. I do not think Labor understands just how important that funding is for those Indigenous communities.

From 2016-17 to 2017-18 the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program has been slashed by over \$17 million. Just months after an Auditor-General report was released raising serious concerns about the financial sustainability of councils, this government wants to make things harder for them and their ratepayers. What Anastacia Palaszczuk and Labor do not understand is that in small regional and rural communities council funding means jobs.

Labor have also quietly axed the Building our Regions fund in this budget. It was a program that failed to deliver 99 per cent of the regional infrastructure it promised in 2015-16. What an embarrassing backdown! While the implementation of the program was flawed, the intent was similar to the LNP's Royalties for the Regions, a program to partner with local government to deliver vital infrastructure. That is why we will restore a dedicated \$500 million Royalties for the Regions program to invest in infrastructure in regional Queensland. Our upgraded \$500 million Royalties for the Regions fund will partner with local government to focus on projects that foster job creation in rural and regional Queensland, lead to more investment in the regions, and help rural and regional communities become economically sustainable. We have also made a regional road guarantee to councils. There will be no changes to the TIDS funding under the LNP. We will deliver to local councils in this state.

I would now like to turn to how this budget affects my constituents and my local communities in the electorate of Glass House. That can be summed up in four words: zip, zero, nothing, nada. Those of us in the Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay hinterland have long felt neglected by state Labor governments. It is one of the reasons I decided to seek election in the first place, but not ever in any of the previous five Labor budgets has the neglect been so complete. There is no north coast rail. There is no Mooloolah River interchange to free up access to our new Sunshine Coast hospital. There is no funding for the Maleny Kenilworth Road. There is nothing for the intersection of Kilcoy Beerwah Road

and Old Gympie Road at Beerwah. There is no money to replace the bridge at King John Creek on Beerburum Road. There is no capital funding for any Glass House schools. There are no flashing school zone lights at Peachester or Glass House Mountains State School.

If further proof is needed, let us look at the regional action plan for the Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay region. Let us look at the map with coloured numbers all over it. The Glass House is here. There is nothing but grey. The people of Glass House have quickly established that it is only LNP governments that deliver locally. LNP governments deliver overtaking lanes on the D'Aguilar Highway, lights at Reed Street and Bowen Road intersections on Steve Irwin Way at Glass House Mountains. The LNP addressed the maintenance backlog at our local schools. The LNP delivered Great Results Guarantee funding directly to our schools so that principals, in partnership with their teachers and local communities, can decide how best to use it to educate our kids. The LNP delivered flashing school lights at nearly all of the schools in the electorate of Glass House. The LNP delivered funding to our priceless and amazing community and sporting groups. The people of Glass House will not be conned by this budget. They see right through it. They know Labor will not deliver for them.

I will finish like I started in my budget reply. This is a con job budget. It is a budget that is bad for jobs, a budget that is bad for roads and infrastructure, a budget that is bad for Queensland commuters and a budget that is bad for Queenslanders. The Leader of the Opposition outlined our real plan to build a better Queensland. That is the plan Queenslanders know will create jobs, provide safe and livable communities, build the roads, bridges and dams we need, support strong families and deliver better government.