



Speech By
Bruce Saunders

MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH

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

 **Mr SAUNDERS** (Maryborough—ALP) (11.25 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill. I wish to talk about small business. I think I am an expert on small business as I have been in small business all my life and have had a lot of small businesses. The only time I have ever lost money in small business is when the mob on the other side was in government. If we talk about small business when John Howard came into power, it was probably the worst time I ever had in small business. If we talk about the LNP governments of Rob Borbidge and Joan Sheldon, in that period I had an overdraft that a kangaroo could not jump over. Let us wind forward to the Newman era. We heard the member for Indooroopilly talk about small business when he was in a PR firm. He was not at the coalface talking about small business. I have had a lot of staff and a lot of small businesses in my days and every time an LNP government came into power I would shudder, because it was an attack on workers and small business. They talk the talk but they do not walk the walk.

A government member interjected.

Mr SAUNDERS: Absolutely. I see the member for Everton and his mouth dropping open as it did when he was a referee. The member was one of the worst referees in Australia. Has he ever been in small business? When he was a referee, he cost me a lot of money because he was a terrible referee. Any time those opposite talk about looking after small business, I absolutely go into the foetal position because I worry about their getting hold again of the treasury benches.

This budget is a great Labor traditional budget. When members opposite were in power they talked about the four pillars but they absolutely cut down the four pillars. They talked about the Roman Empire but demolished the four pillars. When in government we talk about the four pillars: housing, education, jobs and health care. They are the four pillars of a traditional Labor government and this is what the Pitt budget delivers for this state in 2017.

I wish to talk about my electorate. I see the member for Woodridge, the health minister, in the House tonight. I congratulate him on behalf of my electorate, because there is a \$57.4 million increase for the Wide Bay Health District. I thank the minister, because the federal government has cut \$53 million a year over the next 10 years from our budget, but a Labor government has provided a 10 per cent increase. I thank the minister, because this is a traditional Labor government. We are looking after the people.

In 2015 when I came to office in Maryborough, at my local hospital we had no pathology, one could not get a band-aid and it had been run down in the three years of a Newman government. Staff morale was at the lowest levels one had ever seen. Since we have been in government, the number of front-line troops has increased and pathology has been restored. Not only that, but the hospital is back and building. There was a \$10 million investment in the accident and emergency, something which we looked forward to and which the minister delivered. The minister has visited the hospital three times and talked to the staff. I have had great conversations with the minister. That is what a Labor

government does. Ministers come and talk to constituents and members and they deliver. All the other mob did was cut, cut, cut. 'Jack the Slasher': that is what they were. They cut services and they cut staff. Not once in the three years of the Newman government did a minister visit Maryborough city and talk about something they were doing: All they talked about was cut, cut, cut—

Mr Mander: I came up there.

Mr SAUNDERS: Of course you did, and every time you came up you cut staff. This is a great budget. One of the things that I am excited about is education funding. The education minister has been absolutely fantastic. The only way to lift areas is by investing in education. That is something that this traditional Labor government does.

I will go through what is in the budget for the great seat of Maryborough. It is one of the oldest seats in the state. Maryborough has been a state seat since 1865. It is a fantastic seat. When a Labor government has been in power that is when we have seen Maryborough go ahead. 2017 is a great year for the electorate of Maryborough.

Through school infrastructure funding there is \$250,000 for an upgrade of the modular outdoor learning area at the Tinana State School. This is on top of \$1 million for a music hall that was promised by those opposite and never delivered. There is \$250,000 for Parke State School. Parke State School is one of the oldest schools in my electorate. It has been there for a long time. That \$250,000 is going to go a long way.

There is \$200,000 to refurbish blocks C and D at Central State School. Central State School is a great school in my electorate. It used to be called Newtown State School but is now called Central State School. It is absolutely fantastic to get that money from the education minister. There is \$120,000 to upgrade the sports complex at Maryborough West State School.

These schools had no money during the three years of the Newman experiment. They had nothing. They were cut, cut, cut. There is \$120,000 to refurbish the multipurpose courts at Torbanlea State School. Torbanlea is a great part of my electorate. It is an old coalmining area. It is a fantastic area. It is known as the Burrum district. To get \$120,000 for that school is absolutely fantastic.

There is \$80,000 for Maryborough State High School to do a block up for hairdressing studies and a few other things that the principal of that school uses it for. We have fought hard for that funding and got it. There is also \$4.5 million for a performing arts hall. Maryborough State High School has not had a brand new building since 1955. We are delivering \$4.5 million for that hall. The high school has partnered with USC to do creative arts at the school. This has lifted the Maryborough community. We are seeing this because this is a traditional Labor government. There is another \$60,000 for Maryborough West State School. These are just some of the things that are happening in my electorate.

Under the three years of the previous government all we were told in Maryborough was cut, cut, cut—we cannot afford it. We have paid down debt. General government debt is \$14 billion lower than under those opposite. We have increased our education budget. We have increased the number of teachers. We have increased front-line services at our hospitals. We have a pathology service and a new accident and emergency department coming. The hospital is a very good hospital thanks to the Labor government. This Labor government is restoring services.

Let us talk about roadworks. We have heard those opposite bleat about roadworks. Members know when a government is doing well when constituents come in and tell them, 'You are doing too many roadworks. Cut it out. You are doing too much, brother.' Those opposite never had that problem.

This budget is really putting Maryborough back on the map. Maryborough is a proud city. It was brought to its knees by those opposite. With a traditional Labor government a working class area like Maryborough has come back. We have seen funding for health care, education and roadworks and are seeing jobs created. We have seen the Palaszczuk Labor government invest in jobs with Downer EDI, MSF and Heinz. We have seen this government reinvest in regional Queensland.

I would like to ask those opposite how much money they reinvested into areas like Maryborough. All they did was chop, chop, chop. We have heard the ads for a well-known supermarket which says the prices are down, down, down. That is what was happening to my community under the LNP—it was going down, down, down.

Those opposite say in this House that the community wants the LNP back. I can tell them that Maryborough does not want the LNP back. They will never forgive the LNP for what they have done to our great community. It will never happen. I invite members opposite instead of having their champagne lunches and lattes to get out and talk to the real people on the streets. They will tell them that they do not want anything to do with the LNP. They know that every time the LNP come into power it means that their mates suck on the taxpayers' teat. That is what happens. Public money goes into private pockets all the time. It never goes back to where it should.

This is the third budget of the Palaszczuk Labor government. When I look around my city and my electorate at the roadworks, the hospitals, the schools and the things that have been done I am very proud to say that this is a great Labor government. It is a fantastic Labor government.

Mr Pegg: And you are delivering.

Mr SAUNDERS: I will take that interjection from the member for Stretton. We are delivering for Queenslanders. In 2½ years we have delivered more in Queensland than they did. All they did was cut, cut, cut. Some 2½ years ago everyone in Maryborough used to walk around looking down at the footpath because of the actions of the LNP. Now they are looking forward and have their heads held high. They know that they can go to their local hospital and get services. They know that their children are going to be educated. They know there is the prospect of jobs on the horizon.

They also know with the great housing policy that we have announced that there is going to be social housing for people in my electorate who cannot afford it. That is the difference that they see with this government. All those opposite did was turn people away. They would say to people who needed social housing, 'Sorry, unfortunately, we cannot help you.' It was absolutely shameful.

What drove me to get back into politics was the way the opposition treated people in Queensland. I grew up in the west and we had a saying that some in the LNP used to treat their cattle better than they treated people. That happened in Maryborough. This budget is fantastic for Maryborough. 2017 is a great year for the electorate of Maryborough. I thank the Palaszczuk Labor government for that.