




Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2017

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

 **Mr WHITING** (Murrumba—ALP) (9.49 pm): I rise in support of this budget, the third Labor budget in a row that delivers a surplus, the third Labor budget in a row that delivers jobs and services to Queenslanders and the third Palaszczuk government budget that embodies strong Labor values. This budget meets all of those values shared by so many Queenslanders. For example, Labor has always wanted to make sure that working Queenslanders have a roof over their head. This budget delivers that. I am talking about the \$1.8 billion investment in the Queensland Housing Strategy which will deliver 5,000 new homes over 10 years. We will build 10 times the number of houses that the LNP did in their term of government. In Moreton Bay, \$97 million will be invested in 330 new homes and in the revitalisation of existing housing stock. That means hundreds of local families will get the security of a home of their own. That is what they can look forward to.

We also believe that working class kids deserve a great education. That is why I welcome the decision that we are planning for an extra high school in the Murrumba electorate. North Lakes State College will be the third largest school in Queensland. It has got there after only about 10 years or so! The P-6 schools that we have—Mango Hill and Bounty Boulevard—will be the biggest and second biggest primary schools in the state. These are all just five minutes from each other. We are very glad to deliver the planning for that new high school. Not only that, we are delivering \$250,000 each to Moreton Downs State School, Hercules Road State School and Deception Bay North State School. That is on top of the \$15 million multistorey block we are delivering for North Lakes State College, a new school hall at Bounty Boulevard State School and the completion of two new blocks at Mango Hill State School. That is only part of what we have achieved in delivering a great education for our young people.

Since we were elected in March 2015 there have been an extra 3,500 new teachers and teacher aides teaching our kids, and we have committed to employ 875 extra teachers above growth for Queensland children as well. Not only that; we have had the very welcome announcement today that there will be more teacher aide hours for prep classes throughout Queensland. Each prep class gets 25 hours a week of teacher aide assistance. I have a daughter, Rebecca. She will be starting prep next year. I look forward to going home and telling my wife that our daughter will be the beneficiary once again of the Labor government's policies and initiatives on education.

One of the things we believe in—and we have heard it many times tonight—is that everyone deserves the dignity of having the security of a job. That has been the primary focus of the budget. I thank the Treasurer, the Premier and the ministers for the \$27.5 million extension of the Back to Work program to the outer urban areas of Brisbane. That means that when a young person in Deception Bay gets a job \$20,000 goes to their employer and when a long-term unemployed person gets a job \$15,000 goes to their employer. That is on top of the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. I thank the Minister for Training and Skills for all the great work she has done in that area. This has delivered jobs

and training to 354 young people in the Deception Bay area. That is 354 people whose lives have been changed by this program. That is 354 people who would have been abandoned under the LNP because they cancelled this very program in 2015.

We do have a job creation record that the LNP can never match. Let me state it again: 59,200 Queenslanders have found jobs since we were elected. That, as we have heard from the Minister for Health, is over double the number of jobs created under the term of the previous LNP government. I saw a tweet from the Treasurer before. The latest ABS statistics are saying 69,300 jobs have been created since the election in 2015. They are the latest figures. This budget is going to support 40,000 jobs for Queenslanders. That is a great outcome. It goes to show that they may talk it down but they can never match our record on job creation.

The following are Labor and Queensland values that we see reflected in this budget: if you get ill, do not worry—we will be there to help you and you will be looked after; and the government will help you keep your hard-earned wages in your pocket. These are the values and aspirations of Queenslanders. They are at the heart of what we do as Labor. They are at the core of this budget. For the LNP to say we are doing this project or that initiative to preserve the career of individual members of parliament reveals how they regard politics. I think it reveals their true values. It says more about them than it says about us.

Before I finish I want to counter some spurious arguments we have heard from the LNP today. On the issue of electricity, let me state it again, as the Minister for Energy is here: under Labor, household electricity bill rises have shrunk. They have gone up 1.9 per cent on average per year compared to—and members have heard this before—the 43 per cent that we saw over the term of the Newman-Nicholls government.

On the issue of car registration, if they had won in 2015, they would have introduced a 3.5 per cent car registration increase from 1 July 2015. They had factored it into their midyear review released on 18 December 2014. Under the LNP government, the forward estimates across all years reflected a 3.5 per cent increase in fees and charges from July 2015. I think we need to keep pointing this out. They planned a 3.5 per cent increase in car registration. Their policy on car registration that they have announced today indicates a cut—another LNP cut—in road projects across Queensland.

Mr Pitt: They're cutters.

Mr WHITING: They are cutters. That is all they know to do. If there was a freeze from 2015, that would have cost the state over \$53 million in 2016-17 and more than \$563 million over the forward estimates. What they are proposing represents about a half a billion dollar cut from the road construction budget. That is not something you will hear them telling the people of Queensland. They insist on more infrastructure but they want to keep cutting the funds for it.

The Leader of the Opposition also said he wants to get rid of red tape. Let me be clear to the people of Murrumbidgee and Bannockburn as to what this means. It means getting rid of environmental protections. It means getting rid of Queenslanders' rights to object to mining projects. Yet this is a team that cannot even say yes to getting rid of the red tape on trading hours. They have gone to water on the easiest of tests on red tape.

This mantra of a 'do-nothing government' will never be believed by the people who lived under the Newman-Nicholls regime. Ask the people of Deception Bay and North Lakes what happened in the last term. The LNP did nothing. Nothing happened. The only project they promised in Deception Bay was a Deception Bay bus transfer station—a \$5.8 million project. They promised it in their first budget, yet they could not deliver it by the end of their term. All that was there when I became an MP was two blue pop-up pergolas. We finished it for them and we saved \$800,000. Not only that; they cut the Deception Bay Road overpass from the QTRIP program, which has come back in today. It was a \$150 million project. We have committed \$30 million to that as well. That is their record—the 'did-nothing' Newman-Nicholls government.

Compare that to what is happening in Deception Bay now. There is \$6 million to be spent on Deception Bay Road compared to \$369,000 that they spent in their term. The people know what they see. The LNP did nothing in my area. They know that only Labor delivers infrastructure to our local communities. All the LNP ever delivers is cuts. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*. I confirm that I have cleared it with you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and sent it to *Hansard* and I have a hard copy.

Leave granted.

Here is a list of more funding initiatives from the 2017 State Budget that benefits local residents in the electorate of Murrumbidgee.

\$250,000 to refurbish Block 4 at Deception Bay North State School.

\$250,000 to refurbish Blocks N and L at Hercules Road State School.

\$250,000 to refurbish the Special Education Unit at Moreton Downs State School.

\$3 million in 2017-18 to complete resurfacing of Anzac Avenue.

\$1.444 million in 2017-18 to carry out network construction works at the Deception Bay substation.

\$99,000 in 2017-18 to replace the communications cable between South Pine and Hayes Inlet Substations to improve network performance.

\$72,281 as part of a \$722,911 commitment to install lighting and construct a clubhouse, storage facilities, car park and path ways at North Lakes.

\$10 million in 2017-18 to continue the upgrade of the Bruce Highway Boundary Road Interchange at a total cost of \$100.4 million.

\$9,622,600 of \$14 million to commence construction of additional classrooms at North Lakes State College.

\$4,966,714 of \$7 million to construct additional classrooms at Mango Hill State School.

\$4,044,900 of \$5 million to construct a multi-purpose hall at Bounty Boulevard State School.

\$284,090 of \$300,000 to refurbish the Home Economics Area at Deception Bay State High School.

\$1,683,766 as part of a \$6,735,065 commitment over four years to provide family support services to work with vulnerable families to help improve parenting skills and give parents the support they need to prevent problems from escalating to crisis point.

\$244,566 as part of the \$978,265 commitment over four years to provide support to vulnerable individuals and assist them to get their lives back on track.

\$115,376 as part of a \$461,502 commitment over four years to provide programs to increase the ability for individuals and community groups to participate positively in their community.

\$289,073 as part of a \$1,156,291 commitment over four years to provide support for young people at risk of disconnection, focusing service delivery efforts on building their connections to their family and the community.

\$12,940,287 to assist people with a disability and their family to access the support and services they need as they move through the different stages of their life.