




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (2.44 pm): We have already heard what a con this budget is. This so-called jobs budget promises 80,000 fewer jobs. This so-called budget for builders predicts that dwelling investment will go backwards next year and the next, meaning less construction activity. This so-called budget for battlers continues to increase the cost of car registration at twice the inflation rate and continues to slug vulnerable Queenslanders with higher power prices. This so-called infrastructure budget delivers less infrastructure for the people of Queensland.

This government simply lacks vision. The Deputy Premier and infrastructure minister certainly lacks vision. The Deputy Premier's vision for infrastructure extends to just one project. She views the infrastructure portfolio as being solely focused on delivering one project to the detriment of all other projects. That one project is, of course, Cross River Rail.

This inner-city Deputy Premier does not understand the regions and does not get how major infrastructure investments like dams and bridges can transform all of Queensland for the better. All she is focused on is winning her inner-city Brisbane seat, and she sees Cross River Rail as her ticket back into the big house, but she is not so committed to the project to fund all of it. In typical Labor style, those opposite only do things in half-measures. This government has funded less than half of the capital cost of the project. Most of the funding is allocated in the final years of the project—certainly not shovel-ready, as proclaimed by Anastacia Palaszczuk back in 2013.

Labor is going to the election on the promise of building this project and the promise of finding the remaining funding for it, but just not yet. Like everything this Labor government does, it is surrounded in secrecy. Where is the full business case? Who is really paying for the full \$14.5 billion price tag of this project? At estimates last year we saw that the \$5.4 billion price tag did not include trains. The Deputy Premier had a tunnel without trains as Labor's only infrastructure priority.

Independent economists have described the Cross River Rail project as weak and Labor's approach to this project as a weak business case—but it has good, glossy brochures! We have to wait at least another two months before we will see the predicted heavily sanitised business case.

The \$14.5 billion price tag needs to be properly understood. We have seen it before with Labor's billion dollar water grid—dams without pipes and pipes without dams—and the wasteful investment that has seen bulk water prices increase by 350 per cent. We have seen it before with Labor's gold plating of the electricity network, contributing to 109 per cent price increases over the decade. It is clear that we cannot trust Labor.

How can Queenslanders trust this Labor government when this con job budget rips infrastructure out of regional Queensland? Some \$76 million is cut from the Darling Downs and Maranoa. Toowoomba will receive \$200 million less. There will be \$162 million less in infrastructure spending for the outback

and \$35 million less in the Fitzroy region. As I said yesterday, there is a savage cut for the Gold Coast of \$164 million. A whopping half a billion dollars of infrastructure spending is slashed from the good old sunny coast and Moreton Bay.

This is a budget which has ripped funding out of regional roads to pad the member for South Brisbane's inner-city seat. If the Deputy Premier visited regional Queensland she might learn just how much funding would mean for the north, out west and throughout Central Queensland. Compared to last year, over \$370 million has been ripped out of the regional road and transport infrastructure budget—the regions outside the south-east corner, and obviously a further \$30 million has been ripped out of that budget. Some \$370 million could go a long way to sealing rural roads, improving the flood resilience of our highways and upgrading and strengthening bridges. In the regions, road funding means better economic opportunities, more productivity for our primary producers and safer journeys for our families, who often have the longest commutes. Instead, this funding has been ripped out of regional communities to back a project for which we do not even have the full costing details.

The LNP will build infrastructure again and we will build the roads, the bridges and the dams that Queensland needs. We have already announced that the LNP will restore the very popular \$500 million—half a billion dollar—Royalties for Regions program to replace Labor's failed Building our Regions fund. This budget has exposed the embarrassing Building our Regions program for what it is—an obvious failure and a sham, so much so that it has been slashed from this budget. Tuesday's budget quietly scrapped the program which failed to deliver in the first year of the Palaszczuk government 99 per cent of the infrastructure promised in that year. We want our local governments and our community groups to make submissions for worthy projects, and the LNP team has already been talking to regional councils about candidate projects as we get around the state—and this is for real infrastructure projects, not little projects that could easily be funded by the Community Gambling Benefit Fund.

In this budget it was revealed that the Deputy Premier has spent a further \$93 million on spin doctors in her infrastructure department. That is \$93 million of expenses blowout which this government could have used to actually build infrastructure—to build roads, to fix up bridges, put towards the dams across this state—but instead this Labor government has hired an extra 31 spin doctors in Brisbane to mock up a glossy brochure for Cross River Rail with propaganda pamphlets delivered to half of South-East Queensland. When the Deputy Premier is next travelling around the state as the Acting Premier, which she will be next week, I would really like the Acting Premier to front up to these regional towns and explain to them why that \$93 million would not have been better used for infrastructure and actually building something. It is obvious that underspending on infrastructure is the way of Labor governments. Last year it failed to get \$1.7 billion out the door. That is what this Deputy Premier was doing—squirreling it away, not getting this money out the door, not spending it in those regions that need it. The figure the year before was much higher—\$2 billion—so over two years we have seen \$3.7 billion of infrastructure that has not been delivered. No wonder Queenslanders are giving up on this government!

While the Premier and the trade minister like to bask in the success of farm productivity, they should not look for any increased support in the budget. In fact, funding for the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries—not forestry—has been cut, down \$14.21 million. Funding for the department's agricultural services has been slashed, down nine per cent. This clearly demonstrates that Labor and the agriculture minister are not interested in our important commodities—in grain, sugar cane, horticulture, beef, dairy, research and development services. It is once again the trade off the back of our solid agricultural industry and trade from our booming coal prices that have saved the day for this government with higher coal prices and higher trade. This is good luck for the government, not good management, yet the government is still too embarrassed to talk about coal. The agricultural sector is still reeling. Queensland Farmers' Federation President Stuart Armitage said this about the budget—

Queensland agriculture needs a government that not only talks up agriculture, but delivers upon its words by providing the right frameworks for our sector to continue growing and realizing its potential.

QFF has seen through the spin—talk is cheap—and it has seen through this do-nothing government's budget. AgForce is the same. President Grant Maudsley said—

While there are billions of dollars set aside for ... rail projects in southeast Queensland, there appears to be no ... new funding for regional and rural transport initiatives that would make it safer, easier and cheaper to get farm goods to market.

Then of course Dan Galligan from Queensland Canegrowers hoped that there would be more details of benefits to his sector. He said—

We haven't seen too much in the budget that's in it for anyone in the cane industry.

You would not know that the Palaszczuk government had a Minister for Rural Economic Development when you look at those budget papers. There is not a rural economic development measure or plan in sight. The Minister for Rural Economic Development is all hat and no cattle. The Palaszczuk government's record on agriculture is inflicting failed minister after failed minister on to this most important sector.

I turn now to the budget's impact on the electorate of Nanango. It is indeed bittersweet. Firstly, the Kingaroy Hospital has been named as one of the hospitals receiving part funding for redevelopment, and it is about time. Labor has finally recognised that Kingaroy Hospital is in need of an urgent upgrade. When we left government it was the LNP that had listed Kingaroy as the No. 1 regional hospital that most needed it. Whilst that funding went to Roma in the first budget—it was much needed for Roma as well—I can tell members that the feedback in the last couple of years about why Kingaroy has missed out has been astronomical. The former LNP government had identified Kingaroy as one of the 12 ageing regional hospitals in need of critical maintenance and upgrade, neglected by years and years of Labor governments. However, in the last couple of years our community did not give up. We put petitions before the parliament and have repeatedly called on the minister to attend the hospital so he can see for himself.

A new hospital for the South Burnett has been my No. 1 priority since becoming the local state member. I spoke about this issue in my maiden speech, especially around the maternity ward—one of the busiest in the state. I understand that it is actually the second busiest maternity ward outside of Mount Isa, with mums needing to move from an upstairs birthing suite down into the main ward. The Kingaroy Hospital has the best staff in Queensland working in the worst hospital facility, and I thank Dr Richard Lewandowski, the med super in Kingaroy, who even brought this issue up at the rural doctors conference with my colleague and our shadow health minister, John-Paul Langbroek, just last weekend. I want to thank all of those hardworking staff for working there in less than ideal conditions, but we need to remember that there is only \$8 million in this year's budget. We need to keep the pressure up and make sure that we continue to see funding in the out years because that is only 13 per cent of the total needed.

While the South Burnett community is cautiously optimistic about that hospital announcement, it is commiserating the loss of the state network roads funding, because buried in the Wide Bay-Burnett Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program we find that only two per cent funding for the entire Wide Bay state road network has been set aside for the South Burnett. It is even worse in North Burnett. It is, I think, around zero per cent. South Burnett gets two per cent and North Burnett, ably represented by the member for Callide which takes in a new part of my electorate, get less than zero per cent, as is my understanding. It is simply unacceptable. Our state road networks like the Bunya Highway, Burnett Highway and the D'Aguilar Highway need funding injections and major connection roads like the Bunya Mountain-Maidenwell road and Burrandowan Road just seem to have been forgotten. As I have spoken about in this House previously, this Labor government has almost entirely cut spending on our South Burnett roads and there is nothing in the pipeline for at least three years. As we know, that is typical of Labor governments. This budget underlines the Palaszczuk Labor government's failure to understand and deliver what communities like mine—the Somerset and the South Burnett communities—really need.

Nowhere is there any genuine relief for spiralling electricity and water charges. Nowhere is there any relief for the highest vehicle registration charges in the nation. There are people in my electorate who are so angry they have started petitions about the never-ending rego rises. They are desperately trying to let Labor know of the negative impact that this increase has on their family budget. Only the LNP has a plan to freeze family car registration. I am proud to be a member of a party that will save a family with two six-cylinder cars over \$200 in three years. The LNP understands that every little bit helps and that, like governments, families simply need to live within their means.

Essentially, Labor is continuing to rip money out of regional Queensland. As I have said before, agriculture is the backbone of the Nanango electorate. In my region, primary producers are very disappointed with this budget. It does not contain any vision or new initiatives to help the agricultural sector. One thing that is clear is that regional Queensland has simply been forgotten.

As I travel around my electorate and this great state, I see that Queenslanders have been encouraged that in this state there is a party that has a plan to deliver infrastructure and build a better Queensland and that that is the LNP. Our new deal for regional Queensland gives hope to all of those out there that the LNP has a plan to create jobs, build infrastructure and support safe and livable communities.

We pledge to act on energy security, granting priority project status to a new, low-emission coal-fired power station for North Queensland. Following on from the \$8.5 billion partnership with the federal coalition that we delivered when in government, we will ensure that there is a fully funded

10-year Bruce Highway Action Plan. Of course, we have our upgraded \$500 million Royalties for the Regions fund to focus on projects that will foster job creation in rural and regional Queensland, lead to more investment in the regions and help regional and rural communities become economically sustainable—just like we did when we were in government and unlike this incompetent Labor government’s failed project, which has not been able to get the money out the door, which has not been able to identify major projects and which is simply not able to build the roads, the dams, or fix the bridges that people need in regional Queensland.

The LNP has also given a regional road guarantee to councils. Under the LNP, there will be no changes to TIDS funding. Our new deal for regional Queensland is a plan to build new infrastructure across the state—dams for water security and job-creating agricultural projects.

Queenslanders can trust the LNP to build a better Queensland, because we have done it before. The last time the LNP was in government it finalised \$1.6 billion for the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing, creating over 1,800 jobs. We started the \$3 billion Queen’s Wharf project, a world-class integrated resort development creating 10,000 jobs. We started or completed 11 new schools. We launched a 10-year \$10 billion Bruce Highway Action Plan. We partnered in a \$1.1 billion Gateway Upgrade North Project. We delivered more than \$700 million worth of projects off the back of our Royalties for the Regions program. It is only the LNP that can deliver for Queensland.