




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (10.53 pm): Queenslanders are paying more and getting less under this budget. Motorists are the biggest losers in this Labor budget, slugged with rego hikes yet again, making car rego some of the most expensive in Australia. Meanwhile, transport spending has been slashed by a billion dollars from the forward program for this year. As RACQ spokesperson Paul Turner noted, motorists are already paying through the nose for their registration. Under Labor, Queensland rego costs have risen by more than 10 per cent in the last three years. Annual jumps of 3.5 per cent are almost double the inflation rate and nothing more than a tax grab on motorists.

Only the LNP will give motorists a fair go. I endorse leader Tim Nicholls's announcement that if the LNP is elected at the next state election we will, in our budgets, freeze the family car rego for three years. Unlike Labor, whose maladministration of the public purse is legendary, we will put a focus back on treating taxpayers' hard-earned tax dollars with respect by ensuring that we use it to build the infrastructure that is needed in the most cost-effective way possible, that there is a steady pipeline of works for business and workers in the construction industry to have some certainty of future investment, and to give the economy the building blocks to grow the jobs in the private sector for Queenslanders rather than just growing the public sector over and above the rapid rate that we have seen in the past, and there have been warnings from the Auditor-General about the rate of growth. We all support there being a good, qualified public sector to service Queenslanders in front-line services, but the Auditor-General has warned that the rate of growth is outstripping the income for this state.

Cost of living matters to Queenslanders. It is not a laughing matter, so it is important that their taxpayers' dollars are invested carefully for a real return in cost-effective infrastructure and services. We have heard about a \$5.6 billion blowout in public sector expenses, which is a concern, because ultimately it is taxpayers' money and they are the ones who have to pay. All of Queensland has been duded by the transport cutbacks in critical areas with what is a bread and water budget for the delivery of transport infrastructure. As the RACQ's Paul Turner said, the club was disappointed overall that transport investment was less than last year. He said—

More than one billion dollars has been wiped from the government's own initial forecast spending on transport and infrastructure.

Based on the last Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program (QTRIP), we expected to see road and transport capital funding of at least \$4.8 billion next financial year, instead of the \$3.8 billion announced in today's Budget.

He went on to say—

Add to that the fact there's \$700 million that went unspent last year. We're concerned roads and transport aren't being given the priority they should be.

That means that every region, including the Sunshine Coast, is fighting over crumbs when they should have been seeing some meat put on the table to build the jobs and get our regions going, particularly with the transport infrastructure that is needed.

There are some small bright spots in the budget which you would expect have to be done such as the building of classrooms in our local schools, and I do welcome those and acknowledge that. It has been announced before that the Coolum State High School will get new classrooms, but they are about to commence and that is good to see even though we have heard it announced before. What is new in the budget papers is the announcement of \$100,000 to start the replacement program for the Coolum Police Station, something that I have been calling for and I welcome that forward commitment of \$2.7 million.

When we got the permanent site for the police station on South Coolum Road, initially we were able to have the police relocated in their existing building but a permanent solution was always going to be needed. We still, however, need to see a commitment to the upgrade of Maroochydore Police Station, which is well and truly overdue, and I call on the government to commit to funds to ensure that there is adequate accommodation provided for the Maroochydore Police Station which is at the hub of the Sunshine Coast operations. Maroochydore High has \$1.18 million being spent out of a \$1.612 million total to build additional classrooms. While this also has been announced before, I acknowledge this work and also the work of the school, which is keen to ensure that that money is addressed in the most necessary areas.

It is extremely disappointing that we are still to see serious funding—quite frankly, any funding—for the upgrade of the Bruce Highway south of the Caloundra interchange. The Sunshine Coast has a population of 340,000 people. I think the Moreton Bay region has a population of approximately 370,000 people. There are about 700,000 people living north of the boundary of Brisbane. The Bruce Highway is a critical lifeline for those two adjoining regions.

The federal government has announced half a billion dollars to go towards the upgrade of the Bruce Highway south of Caloundra and we are still to see the state government stump up its 20 per cent contribution. The traditional split between the Commonwealth and the state government is 80 to 20 and the state has to come to the party for this project. We must see the Bruce Highway upgraded. We must see this critical infrastructure improved.

It is also extremely disappointing that the duplication of the north coast rail line is still to make the budget papers. The LNP committed to this duplication in its last budget before it lost government. It was disappointing to lose government and to see that project removed. This government said, 'We'll put in a lift at Nambour Railway Station.' However, if the north coast rail line were upgraded, the Nambour Railway Station would have to be gutted and rebuilt, so that work would be redundant spending. There was nothing in this budget for the duplication of the north coast railway line. It is an 1880s alignment. It is incredible to see what was done in the 1880s. One would think that, in this day and age, we would see common sense prevail and we would have trains travelling along that track at speeds they can travel at on other areas of track. The tilt train cannot go more than 50 kilometres an hour through sections of the Sunshine Coast because that line was built in the 1880s. For goodness sake, it is time to see this track upgraded. It is time to stop mucking around. This is the third business case and still there is no commitment from this government. This upgrade must be done. The Bruce Highway is important, but we will never get ahead of the growth with Caloundra South—or Aura—coming on line along with all the other growth on the Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay unless that track is duplicated. It has to happen.

The other infrastructure is the access roads to our new hospital. Our new hospital is brilliant, but the roads to it are not. We have seen some tinkering around the edges with roundabouts, but goodness me, there needs to be an arterial network upgrade. The Mooloolah River interchange is critical to that infrastructure. The last section of the Sunshine Motorway heading north is only two lanes. It needs to be four lanes. There needs to be a new connecting road to Kawana Way and a proper rebuild of that interchange. That area is one of the black spots of the Sunshine Coast. The traffic statistics show very clearly that too many people have been injured or killed at that spot. The Mooloolah River interchange is critical.

It is time that we saw money spent on real transport infrastructure, rather than this rolling over of underspend and nonspend and government PR, but no construction. There has to be a pipeline of works that are meaningful and real to start the infrastructure for this region.