




Speech By  
**Patrick Weir**

**MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2017

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

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (11.54 am): I rise today to make my contribution to the Appropriation Bill 2017 presented to this House by the Treasurer, the member for Mulgrave, the Hon. Curtis Pitt, on Tuesday, 14 June 2017. This is yet another nothing budget from the Labor Palaszczuk government, especially for rural and regional Queensland. Once you get over the range there is very little spending on education, health, roads and infrastructure. In 2015-16 Labor failed to deliver \$2 billion, or 20 per cent of its total infrastructure spend, and failed to spend \$1.7 billion of its capital program. Labor governments always talk up their spending on infrastructure but always fail to deliver on much needed infrastructure projects that would provide jobs.

**Mr Stevens:** Is Cross River Rail good for you, Pat?

**Mr WEIR:** Cross River Rail is not good for me and they are not interested in it in Condamine, I can tell you.

Our local councils have seen their grants funding slashed since the last budget. From 2016-17 to 2017-18 the Local Government Grants and Subsidies Program has been slashed by over \$17 million. This funding is essential for local governments, particularly those in small regional and rural communities. What the Palaszczuk Labor government does not seem to grasp is that council infrastructure spending means jobs for these communities. The importance of local government to the economy of rural and regional communities cannot be understated. An LNP government led by Tim Nicholls will invest in councils and communities by providing \$500 million for the Royalties for Regions infrastructure program and the TIDS regional roads guarantee to ensure jobs are created in the rural and regional areas of Queensland.

Labor have done nothing to improve health outcomes in Queensland with this latest budget. In 2016-17 Labor blew the budget on supplies and services across the health system by almost \$700 million, putting pressure on the ability to deliver future services. We see ramping increasing across Queensland with no solutions being offered by the Labor government. Almost 50 per cent of category 1 and 2 patients are on waiting lists. Surely this cannot be good for patient outcomes. There have been a record number of Health public servants hired, yet the outcome for patients continues to grow worse. It was inspiring to hear the member for Southern Downs' contribution early today, and he will be sorely missed from this House.

Regional Queensland hospitals have been short-changed by this Labor government, with more than \$22.2 million in promised capital works in 2016-17 not delivered. Mental health has been largely forgotten in Condamine with very little funding for youth mental health issues in particular. There is a great need for mental health services to be available for the future of our young people and rural and regional Queensland. The last thing we need is for the youth of these areas having to move to the city to obtain the mental health services they require. There is no funding for either Dalby or Oakey in this budget for mental health.

Unfortunately, crime continues to rise under Labor. The LNP committed to an additional 1,100 police officers over a four-year period whilst in government. This budget will see an additional 40 officers. Drugs and crimes associated with either drug users or dealers is a massive problem in many parts of rural and regional Queensland. It would appear as if the Labor government does not want to confront the ice epidemic we are facing in towns like Dalby. In the electorate of Condamine many police stations are only manned part-time or have only one officer in attendance.

The racing industry is yet again in tatters, with cuts to prize money and the sacking of the entire Racing Queensland board and the CEO of Queensland Racing. It has been turned upside down and left Queensland racing stagnating while the big race states of New South Wales and Victoria are powering ahead with record prize money.

This industry needs some leadership, not a minister who would not know the front of a horse from the back of one. Racing needs its confidence restored, certainty returned and a plan to grow the industry that is driven by the industry. Labor has put a freeze on new racing infrastructure for 2½ years. Why? Country racing is the fabric of many communities, with a race meeting being one of the few occasions country people have to gather and socialise while putting money back into the local community. The seat of Condamine is one of the largest thoroughbred breeding areas in the country.

Small business is the backbone of the economy, yet Labor have not offered any new measures in this budget targeted at small business. There was no tax relief for small business owners already struggling with costs like payroll tax. The red tape that was removed by the LNP is back for small business. Electricity costs are out of control, and the government are offering no relief to those running a small business and trying to juggle a family as well. Electricity prices are one of the highest imposts that our irrigators out on the Downs suffer.

In the electorate of Condamine, the budget was a nothing. It was old money being recycled to look like we have something new. There was an announcement of funding for the Warrego Highway, with overtaking lanes between Oakey and Dalby, but it is well on its way to completion; it was an old announcement. The duplication of the Warrego Highway from Charlton to Kingsthorpe is also well on its way down the construction pathway, and the upgrade to the eastern access of the Warrego Highway through Dalby has commenced. As for the Toowoomba second range crossing, it is difficult not to notice the activity with this massive construction well underway. Once again, they are all old announcements and mostly federal funding. The Myall Creek development in Dalby for the upgrade of the pedestrian bridge was started about a month ago. The Charlton North stormwater catchment detention basin project commenced in November 2016. This was another old announcement.

I welcome the announcement of the new ambulance station at Drayton; however, the \$100,000 in this year's budget will hardly be enough to get the architects out of bed and design what should be a state-of-the-art facility to service the growth areas of Toowoomba. The Labor government have stated a total spend of \$4 million on this new station. Is this yet another plan that will be announced again if they get another chance? The Oakey Auxiliary Fire and Rescue Station relocation and upgrade was announced in the 2016-17 budget, with spending of \$1.5 million. That spend is now \$1.3 million, and to date only \$415,000 has been spent. That is an underspend of \$1 million for the people of Oakey. There will be no funding in this budget for the flyover on the second range crossing at the Wellcamp Airport. This was a very disappointing decision for an infrastructure project that was funded wholly by private enterprise and delivered ahead of time.

This Labor government has done a fantastic job of pork-barrelling the communities of Cairns, Townsville and Mackay to garner votes, with nothing for the communities west of the range. Who knows what the impact of \$5.4 billion for the Cross River Rail will have on future budgets? The budget announcement of an extra 15,300 public servants to be employed on top of the already 15,100 who have been employed since this government was elected is not exactly music to the ears of the people in rural and regional Queensland who have actually lost public servants in their communities. This is a government that has no plan to boost employment in this state outside the government sector.

In closing, this is a nothing budget for Queensland and in particular rural and regional Queensland, unless you are in an area the Premier wants to retain to hold on to her unstable government.