




Speech By  
**Andrew Powell**

**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

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

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (4.03 pm): It is a rare occasion on which I agree with something said by the member for Maryborough, but this is a traditional Labor budget. It is a budget of higher taxes, higher debt and higher unemployment, so I concur with the member for Maryborough. He is on the money in that this is a traditional Labor budget. Here we have a budget that shows that economic growth is weaker, employment growth is falling and unemployment has been revised to stay higher for longer. Queensland has the worst unemployment rate in Australia, at 6½ per cent.

The Palaszczuk Labor government does not have an economic plan beyond more taxes and higher debt. Let us remember when those opposite said that they could build the infrastructure Queensland needs without raising taxes or increasing debt. Tuesday's budget shows that to be the lie that it was. There is absolutely no way a Labor government could deliver the infrastructure Queensland needs without raising taxes and debt.

There is \$2.25 billion in new taxes and fees over the next four years. There are five new taxes. Their election costings were \$491 million in new taxes, yet we now have a waste tax of \$1.32 billion. Government members cannot tell me that the residents of the Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay will not be paying part of that \$1.32 billion. Of course they will. That is to solve a problem in the Labor run Ipswich City Council. I am offended that residents in the electorate of Glass House will be contributing to a \$1.32 billion waste tax. There is also a wagering tax of \$367 million, land tax of \$311 million, a property investors tax of \$132 million and car stamp duty of \$100 million. That is on top of a whole lot of new fees.

With all of these new taxes that Queenslanders are being slugged and a massive boom in resources royalties, Labor has still—incredibly—managed to rack up a massive debt of \$83 billion. That is \$83 billion that our kids and grandkids will have to pay back. As others have said, that means an interest bill of \$3.7 billion a year, each and every year. That equates to \$7,000 a minute, over \$420,000 an hour, \$10 million a day or \$71 million a week.

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr POWELL:** I take that interjection. That is at current rates. Those rates could change at the drop of a hat and before you know it \$3.7 billion could become \$4.7 billion or \$5.7 billion a year. Unlike the ALP, the Liberal National Party, as enunciated this morning by our leader, Deb Frecklington, will not introduce any new taxes in our first term should we be elected to government in 2020.

While this classic Labor budget is taking more and more money off the residents of Glass House, the government is putting less and less back into the electorate. In the budget papers there was no mention of any roads in the electorate of Glass House, so I had to go to the Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program. There is nothing for the stretch of Mount Mee Road from Ocean View to Dayboro. There is nothing extra for the D'Aguilar Highway, other than the funds that Wyatt Roy, the former federal LNP member for Longman, and I fought hard to get and those extra overtaking lanes that are currently going in.

There is nothing new for Steve Irwin Way. There is nothing for Maleny Kenilworth Road—our goat track north of Conondale. Even when the federal government puts an extra \$800 million on the table to add extra lanes on the Bruce Highway between Caboolture and Caloundra, what do we get from those opposite? Zero, nothing, nada. There is one project only—that is, the Kilcoy Beerwah Road-Old Gympie Road intersection. How many years of lobbying, petitioning and pleading on behalf of and alongside the residents of Beerwah, Peachester, Glass House Mountains and Landsborough, not to mention the school community of Beerwah State School, did it take for the state Labor government, on the eve of last year's election, to come out with a \$4 million election promise? They only knew about it because we had been banging on for the last three years to try to get something done about it. We will see \$1.6 million go towards that this year. Let us hope it is not too late, that there will not be accidents on that intersection in the lead-up to that work starting.

What about other congestion-busting projects? There is not much for roads. What about rail? The government has squibbed it again. For the first time in the history of the north coast rail duplication project we have a federal government willing to contribute—and contribute significantly, to the tune of \$390 million. I am sorry, but the residents of the Sunshine Coast are fed up with the state and federal governments squabbling over who puts in what.

To be blunt, why would we knock back the offer of 50 per cent on a rail project that up until recently has been 100 per cent fully funded by both the Labor and the LNP sides of this House? I am so pleased to inform the residents of the Sunshine Coast that, as the Leader of the Opposition said this morning, we will build it. We will stop the arguments over funding. We will put the \$390 million on the table and this much needed piece of infrastructure will be built.

We heard the member for Maryborough waxing lyrical on just about every single school in Maryborough receiving an upgrade. I can tell members that not a single school in the electorate of Glass House is going to get an upgrade—nothing, nada, none. Again this morning we heard the Leader of the Opposition say that we will invest in our education system, we will declutter the curriculum and we will make sure English is a mandatory subject. We will also put air conditioning into our state schools. What a fantastic policy. I cannot tell members the number of times—

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr Robinson): Order! Those on my right will cease interjecting. The member has not taken your interjections.

**Mr POWELL:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. What a fantastic initiative. I cannot tell members the number of times that P&Cs from Montville, Peachester, Glass House Mountains and Wamuran have come to me asking for support as they apply for grants for air conditioning in their classrooms. I can now tell them that if an LNP government is elected in October 2020 those classrooms will be air conditioned. What a fantastic initiative.

Turning to the Maleny Rural Fire Brigade, what a botch-up! After three years of lobbying to try to find it a new home and ignorance from the then minister, a last-minute election announcement was made that the government would spend \$3 million to co-locate the Maleny Rural Fire Brigade on the premises of the Maleny auxiliary brigade. What do we find in the budget? It is there, but one has to read the fine print. It says—

Part of the \$3 million commitment for a new complex for emergency services in Maleny. \$1 million for this project is included in Strategic land acquisitions, offset by \$500,000 for property disposal.

The election commitment was to build it on the site of the auxiliary brigade and now we find out that it has to go and find another block of land. The government had no idea what it was doing when it made the announcement, so the rural fire brigade is going to have to bump in and bump out of the cattle pavilion at the Maleny Show Society for at least another two years while this bumbling government goes running around trying to find a block of land that it never promised in the first place. I reassure the members of the Maleny Rural Fire Brigade: we will deliver for them and we will get this out of the government. We have also heard in the last weeks that water bills on the Sunshine Coast and Moreton Bay are going up—\$80 for a typical household on the Sunshine Coast and \$43 for a typical household in Moreton Bay. We see more taxes, more fees and more charges.

Turning to the portfolio of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning, the Treasurer's record \$1 billion coal windfall boost was not enough for this spending addicted government. Labor is also racking up a record-breaking \$83 billion on the credit card, as I said, and slugging taxpayers with five new taxes and four new fees costing \$2.25 billion. Despite Labor's cash funnelling, unless you live in an inner-city electorate like that of the Treasurer's under this government your infrastructure needs are not a priority. Let us take, for example, the statistical area that covers the electorate of Glass House. Compared to the LNP's last state budget, Labor has cut more than \$234 million and 725 jobs from capital spend infrastructure investment alone. Let us compare that with

the Treasurer's inner Brisbane statistical area which is receiving a massive year-on-year capital spend increase of \$613 million, generating nearly 2,000 jobs. It is very clear where this government's priorities are when it comes to infrastructure.

On top of that, \$500 million of promised infrastructure was not delivered last year. Labor has cut \$9 billion from infrastructure over this Premier's term. It has caused the infrastructure crisis it has been banging on about all this week. No-one else is to blame for the infrastructure crisis. It is. If we look at the department's funding, I have a bit of a concern here because the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning is virtually unfunded over the forward estimates. The funding is cut from \$600 million in 2018-19 to less than \$200 million in 2021.

It is clear that there is one of two things going on here. One option is that the government is using this to fudge the figures to make its out years look better than they actually are. The second is that it is going to severely decimate the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning, which would not surprise me for a green agenda driven Labor government that is focused on stopping farmers from agricultural production and stopping economic growth wherever it can find it. We have one of two options: either it is fudging the figures or it is going to decimate the Department of State Development, Manufacturing, Infrastructure and Planning.

I notice that that may have already started, because we see a drop in numbers of employees from 949 in 2017-18 to 936, so it is already cutting 13 jobs. Those jobs happen to be in areas like driving enterprise development, economic growth and job creation and in infrastructure policy and planning sections of the department. Given that Queensland has the highest unemployment rate in Australia under Labor and an infrastructure crisis caused by Labor cutting \$3 billion a year from the infrastructure budget in its first term, it seems extraordinary that Labor would cut any staff from these areas. However, those cuts are indicative of the underperformance of the department, full stop. We are facing a shambolic program delivery across a range of areas within the department. In market-led proposals, last year's budget mentioned the aquarium and Maritime Museum at South Bank.

**Mr Crisafulli** interjected.

**Mr POWELL:** That is hopelessly stalled; I take that interjection from the member for Broadwater. The proponent estimates that the project may attract up to 750,000 visitors a year, inject up to \$200 million a year into the Queensland economy and create ongoing employment. It was first spruiked back in March 2016, but under Labor nothing has happened. The project is hopelessly stalled—yet another example of Queensland being closed for business. Is it any wonder that business investment has fallen off a cliff under this government?

If we turn to manufacturing, ironically whilst the government is increasing the funding to attract businesses from overseas and interstate to Queensland it has stopped funding its Made in Queensland program. Not a single new dollar of funding will be available in 2018-19 for the Queensland manufacturing industry under Labor's Made in Queensland program. It is an indictment on Labor and its program that Jackie Trad has not allocated a single dollar for this year. For all the political posturing during the recent election campaign, Labor shows it is all talk when it comes to putting Queensland businesses and Queensland jobs first. It would rather have a Scottish brewing company coming to Queensland to sell beers than support our local brewing company.

I have spoken about the infrastructure situation. We have a situation where compared to the LNP's last state budget the following regions are facing infrastructure funding cuts and job opportunity losses: Wide Bay, nearly \$460 million and 1,423 jobs; Moreton Bay south, \$288 million and 892 jobs; Gold Coast, \$286 million and 888 jobs; Sunshine Coast, \$31 million and 688 jobs; Cairns, \$31 million and 96 jobs. Areas plagued by some of the highest unemployment rates in Australia such as Wide Bay, which has 9½ per cent unemployment, will miss out on hundreds of jobs from cuts to infrastructure investment. It is just not good enough.

Labor has failed to meet its efficiency target for administrative cost per decision made by the State Assessment and Referral Agency—an award-winning LNP program—and its flagship program, Economic Development Queensland, has failed dismally. It has missed its target to facilitate private sector investments by 40 per cent or over \$120 million. That is another example of why we have the worst unemployment in the nation. Economic Development Queensland has also discontinued four other measures after failing to achieve three of these targets. Basically it has given up, but then that is much like this Labor government, isn't it? It keeps shifting the goalposts. It shifts the goalposts on debt, it shifts the goalposts on its promises to Queenslanders regarding tax and it shifts the goalposts on unemployment and what you get, in the words of the member for Maryborough, is a typical Labor budget.