




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE

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REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 2); AND APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2)

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (3.30 pm): I rise to address the Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) and the Appropriation Bill (No. 2). What a contribution to follow, a contribution from the assistant Treasurer of this state who made the comment that the only other alternative to taxing is to sell assets—this coming from a member of the Labor government and the Labor Party that not only taxes, taxes, taxes and taxes but sells, sells, sells and sells. The only party in this state that has sold public assets is the Australian Labor Party. Why do I know that? I know because when I was first elected in 2009 guess what those opposite did? They flogged off the forestry, they flogged off the motorways, they flogged off the port and they flogged off the airports.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr POWELL: The Premier and other ministers who are now sitting around the cabinet table were sitting around that cabinet table at that time making those decisions.

What we have here is a debate on a bill that again demonstrates that those opposite do not know how to manage the economy of the state of Queensland. For the assistant Treasurer to say that the only solution is to tax Queenslanders is absolutely abhorrent. When in government the LNP demonstrated that we could cut taxes and charges for the Queensland people. We halved the public transport fares being imposed by those opposite. In fact, we provided the first ever reduction in public transport fares. We froze registration on the family vehicle. We delivered real savings that meant that we could invest in the infrastructure that this state desperately needed.

Let me suspend reality for a moment and accept what the assistant Treasurer said, that they must tax to build the infrastructure that this state needs. If they were doing it we might actually believe it. However, there is no infrastructure happening here that has not happened as a result of either—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members to my right, thank you.

Mr POWELL:—the former LNP government or pressure being placed on those opposite by the federal coalition government. If members opposite want an example—

Government members: Ha, ha!

Mr POWELL: I know they are laughing, but it is quite simple. They can go to the committee's report on the appropriation bills where those Department of Transport and Main Roads projects requiring additional appropriation are listed. There is the Bruce Highway, Caloundra Road to the Sunshine Motorway. That only happened because of the lobbying by the Sunshine Coast LNP members alongside Andrew Wallace and Ted O'Brien as well as 'Team Queensland' at the federal level to ensure that—

Mr Mickelberg: Dragged kicking and screaming.

Mr POWELL: I take that interjection from the member for Buderim. Those opposite had to be dragged kicking and screaming to actually deliver that. In relation to the Bruce Highway, Cooroy to Curra section A, if I recall correctly, it was actually the LNP government that got that one underway, working with a then Labor federal government to make that happen. There is the Bruce Highway, Caboolture-Bribie road to Steve Irwin Way, upgrade to six lanes. They cannot even deliver the plan; they were given \$14 million by the federal government to undertake that piece of work so we can get that much needed infrastructure upgrade happening. There is also the Bruce Highway, Cooroy to Curra section C. Again, I say thank you, federal coalition government. There is the Bruce Highway, Cooroy to Curra section D, again, thanks to Llew O'Brien, 'Team Queensland' and the federal coalition government. There is the Gateway Motorway North, again, thank you to the LNP state government and our federal coalition partners.

There is also the Pacific Motorway (Rochedale South)—and the Minister for Transport and Main Roads basically acted like a toddler throwing his toys out of the cot, kicking and screaming saying, 'We're not getting any money for the Pacific Motorway'. If it had not been for the federal coalition we would still be waiting for that project to happen. There is also the Warrego Highway. We can add on top of that what the LNP state government was able to achieve in three years in terms of the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing, all of the additional funding and \$8½ billion of a 10-year action plan for the Bruce Highway. Those opposite will say that they have to tax to provide infrastructure. The LNP proved they do not. Those opposite will say that if they do not tax, they have to sell assets. They have also proven that if they do tax, they do sell assets as well; they are the only mob that have. Again, the LNP government proved that it was not necessary and we could get on with the job of delivering.

If there was an opportunity through increased taxes and increased funding to see an improvement in some of the key indicators in the state, we might forgive them. However, what are we seeing? Debt is going up, unemployment is going up, public sector numbers are going up. As I said, taxes are going up. What are we getting in return? Reduced business confidence, reduced investment in infrastructure, reduced service delivery—and I want to come back to that in a little while. What is happening to Queensland? We are slipping further and further down the leader board in the nation of Australia when it comes to economic performance. It kills me to think that Queensland is now rating lower than states like South Australia and Tasmania. That is completely and utterly unacceptable. The only reason we are there is that this Labor government are in charge of the Treasury coffers.

If the Premier cannot even manage her own ministerial office budget and at the end of the year has to go cap in hand to ask for an additional \$300,000, is it any wonder that the minister and his colleagues opposite cannot manage the state budget any better? In fact, even worse, imagine a family household who sat around the kitchen table and worked out their budget. At the end of the year they find they have spent \$300,000 more than their budget had allocated. They cannot go cap in hand to the state coffers and say, 'Can I have another \$300,000?'

Mr Molhoek: Borrow more.

Mr POWELL: They would have to borrow more. That is exactly what has happened here. I take that interjection from the member for Southport, and chances are they would not be able to borrow that money because the banks would not lend it. This mentality that they can just spend other people's money is not acceptable and it must change.

I want to come back to this concept of increased taxes delivering better services. That is not what we are seeing in this state, either. My constituents know that ramping is back at their hospitals, their wait lists have blown out and in particular we are seeing for the first time ever in the electorate of Glass House an extraordinary increase in the time taken for our hardworking police officers to get to call-outs. Why? It is not because they are not doing their job; quite the contrary, they are doing a fantastic job. There just simply is not enough of them to cover a growing population in the electorate of Glass House and to cover the increasing amount of crime, particularly from those dealing with drug addiction. As my good friend the member for Toowoomba North often says, crime is up, budget is down. Despite all of this extra money that we are debating today, none of it is going to the Police Service; none of it is going to put more officers on the beat or ensure they have the vehicles, the iPads and all of the assistance and resources they need to do their job.

I have never turned up at mobile offices and had the kind of feedback I have received over the last couple of months. I have never received the number of emails and phone calls from across the electorate, from Mooloolah to Glasshouse Mountains. Now we are getting a spate of robberies in places like Wamuran, Woodford, D'Aguilar and Delaneys Creek. It is not acceptable. I know that the officers on the ground are doing their best and I call on the constituents of Glass House to understand that. The problem is not those officers; it is this government that is unable to resource our Police Service the way

they should. They have cut the budget for the Queensland Police Service, which means that the number of our officers is not keeping pace with our population growth and is not keeping pace with the increasing crime in this state and as a result the constituents of Glass House and right across Queensland are suffering.

There is currently a petition out amongst the electorate, and I call on all members of Glass House communities to sign that petition. We need to demonstrate to this government that if you are going to impose five new taxes, if you are going to drive up debt and if you are going to increase the number of public servants in this state, then the result should be better service delivery. That means more police officers on the beat, more doctors and nurses, waitlists reduced and delivering the health and education services that our communities desperately need.