




Speech By
Brent Mickelberg

MEMBER FOR BUDERIM

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

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (12.57 am): The member for Stretton's contribution was like being hit with a piece of wet lettuce. I am really looking forward to hearing his future contributions in this House.

This is a budget that will hurt Queenslanders. This is a budget of taxes and debt. This is a budget that by the time of the next election will see the burden of \$16,600 debt hung around the neck of each and every Queenslander. Our five millionth Queenslander, little Elizabeth, and my one-year-old son will both grow up with a millstone of debt that will take generations to pay off.

We have heard this described time and time again by those opposite as a good Labor budget. If a good Labor budget is more debt and more taxes then I can see how one would reach that conclusion. This budget has no plan beyond debt and taxes. This is a Labor budget that fails to address the youth job crisis or even unemployment more generally. This is a Labor budget that fails to take responsibility and leaves the problem of growing debt for our children and for their children. It is not good enough and our children deserve better.

This budget fails to deliver any relief for the people of the Sunshine Coast. It fails to deliver any relief for the thousands of Sunshine Coast locals who commute to Brisbane for work or for the thousands of tourists who sit in the car park that is the Bruce Highway every Sunday afternoon. Just last week I was stopped in the main street of Buderim by a man who works as a foreman in Brisbane. He explained to me that every day he leaves home at 5 am to get to his work site and to do battle with the Bruce Highway. Every night he gets home after his kids have gone to bed because on the way home he also has to battle congestion just to make a dollar. His story is not unique. The Bruce Highway between Caloundra and Caboolture needs to be upgraded now. It needs to be upgraded so that parents can get home and spend time with their children and so that tourists can enjoy their time at the beach rather than sit in traffic.

People are sick and tired of their political representatives passing the buck and avoiding their responsibilities. Since entering this House all I have heard from the Labor government is pathetic excuses blaming the federal government or past LNP state governments. Frankly, those opposite should be ashamed. Labor has been in government in Queensland for 25 of the past 30 years. It is time to step up and take the good with the bad. You cannot claim credit for all of the good while abrogating responsibility for anything that is remotely challenging.

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): Order! I cannot hear the member for Buderim, and that is saying something. Can we keep it down? Member for Buderim, direct your comments through the chair please.

Mr MICKELBERG: Thank you for your protection, Mr Deputy Speaker. Never before has this approach been more evident than in relation to the duplication of the north coast rail line. Despite the fact that in 2009 the then Labor government promised to fund 100 per cent to duplicate the north coast line, this pathetic shell of a government has now decided to play politics at a time when the federal government has gifted it \$390 million to help solve this problem. If the Minister for Transport and Main Roads is genuinely committed to getting Queenslanders off the Bruce Highway and on to public transport then he will take the money that is on the table and stump up the matching state government contribution.

Sadly, rather than fixing it, we are still talking about the outdated, dangerous and convoluted Mooloolah River interchange. It is a critical link to the Sunshine Coast University Hospital and the new Maroochydore city centre. In its current form, the interchange is an accident waiting to happen and, as long as the project remains in abeyance, our regional economy will be stuck in traffic along with the emergency vehicles that go to the hospital.

Residents in Mountain Creek have to deal with the dangerous merge onto the Sunshine Motorway, and residents of Buderim and Sippy Downs know that traffic grinds to a halt as soon as they approach that single-lane stretch of the Sunshine Motorway. Congestion and road safety affect all Queenslanders. On the Sunshine Coast we rely on the road network more than most because we have inadequate public transport. While the provisioning of \$7.5 million for the preparation of a business case to upgrade the Mooloolah River interchange is welcome, I urge the minister to make upgrading this dangerous and outdated stretch of road a priority.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr MICKELBERG: Don't hold your breath, mate. I am extremely frustrated with the government's reluctance to accept responsibility for the gridlock that exists in my electorate on Scholars Drive. This is the result of construction of a public school at the end of a cul-de-sac. Scholars Drive is choked morning and afternoon and this is severely impacting the Sippy Downs community. When I questioned the Premier about what the government plans to do about this issue, she simply passed the buck to the Sunshine Coast council. The LNP committed \$1 million to work with the council to find a solution, so why can't Labor? I am sure if Scholars Drive sat in South Brisbane or Inala it would have been funded in this budget.

It should not take the death or injury of a child to get this government to act. I call on the government to work collaboratively with the Sunshine Coast council to help solve this problem. The longstanding issue of traffic congestion in Buderim's CBD must be addressed and could be alleviated with the provision of a drop-off and pick-up zone for school families. I have appealed to both the Minister for Education and the Minister for Transport and Main Roads to work together to address traffic congestion around the Buderim Mountain State School, and I will continue to lobby them until common sense prevails and the buck-passing stops.

The Sugar Road-Mooloolaba Road intersection is a daily nightmare for locals and, while the government continues to skirt around what might be a solution in upgrading the Buderim-Mooloolaba interchange, there is still no money in this budget to fund this much needed fix. The central location of this clumsy and congested interchange in the densely populated area of one of the Sunshine Coast's busiest business districts is negatively affecting small business owners and driving down our local economy.

On other matters close to my heart, the government has not seen fit to match the LNP's commitment of \$1 million to support the groundbreaking work of the Thompson Institute, nor \$600,000 to support the Buderim Men's Shed. Investment in mental health should be above political games and must be a priority. I call on the government to meet the needs of the Thompson Institute which, under the leadership of Professor Jim Lagopoulos, is conducting world-leading research to benefit our youth, seniors, veterans and first responders.

Although they utilise a different model, the Buderim Men's Shed also deliver first-class mental and preventative health outcomes, which is much needed. Indeed, the Buderim Men's Shed under the leadership of president Barry Cheales has one of the largest memberships of any men's shed in Australia. Just this week the Buderim Men's Shed conducted an event to celebrate Men's Health Week where it conducted a wellbeing 'pit stop crew' along with students from the University of the Sunshine Coast nursing program. Budgets are about balancing priorities. However, given the community benefit

that both of these organisations provide, I would welcome the opportunity to work with the responsible minister to deliver the much needed funding so that both the Thompson Institute and the Buderim Men's Shed can continue its great work.

For the most part, this is a budget of new taxes, new fees and recycled commitments—recycled commitments like the \$7 million previously announced to upgrade the University of the Sunshine Coast stadium. However, I welcome the government's investment in this critical piece of infrastructure, which serves as the home of the university's high-performance sports program and as the home of the Sunshine Coast Lightning netball team.

I was pleased to see that the community's voice has been heard and that long overdue funding has been allocated to three overcrowded schools within my electorate, being Chancellor State College, Mountain Creek State High School and Brightwater State School. Each will receive funding to construct new classrooms, which are sorely needed just to keep up with current demand. Continued investment in each of these schools is required because of the significant growth that has been experienced in student numbers.

Disappointingly, there is no funding within this budget for a new primary or secondary school within the Palmview area—an area that is expected to become home to 16,000 residents in the near future. It is abundantly clear that, without new schools to cater for the anticipated student numbers in this area, students will be crammed into existing schools that are already bursting at the seams. I call on the government to recognise the needs of this priority development area and prioritise the construction of new schools to support the growth in population.

Mr McDonald: The minister will work with you.

Mr MICKELBERG: I am sure she will work with me. I take that interjection. I recognise that every government has to balance competing priorities. However, this budget does not get the balance right. Throwing money at a problem is not always the answer. Pork-barrelling in marginal Brisbane seats is most certainly not the answer. The Treasurer has squandered an opportunity to build a better future for our children and she has instead left them with the legacy of a lifetime of debt.

The people of Buderim can see, however, a light on the horizon. In the Leader of the Opposition's contribution, I was heartened to hear a fresh, constructive and considered plan for the future of Queensland—a plan that will bust congestion, provide cheaper electricity, ensure better health and education services and deliver water security and, importantly, guarantee that a Deb Frecklington LNP government will not impose any new taxes.

In particular, I welcome the Leader of the Opposition's plan to invest in the Bruce Highway and to stop the political back and forth in relation to the duplication of the north coast rail line. The LNP commitment to match the federal government's contribution for this critical piece of public transport infrastructure is what is needed so we can just get on with the job of upgrading the rail line and delivering more train services for the Sunshine Coast.

I welcome the Leader of the Opposition's announcement today that a future LNP government will air-condition every public school in Queensland. This is something that parents, teachers and P&Cs have been crying out for for years.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): Order! Member for Chatsworth and member for McConnel, there will be no banter across the table. Comments are to be directed through the chair.

Mr MICKELBERG: As I said, this is something that parents, teachers and P&Cs have been crying out for for years. I was speaking to Mr Conor Walsh, the President of the Brightwater P&C, about this issue just last week. Our students should be afforded every opportunity to learn in a comfortable environment. If it is good enough for Parliament House to be air-conditioned, why should our classrooms not be air-conditioned as well?

The focus on tackling the ice epidemic by building four new rehabilitation centres and targeting the criminal drug gangs is what is needed to address this crippling problem that reaches into every community within Queensland. During the ice forums that the LNP conducted across the state earlier this year, we heard harrowing accounts from family members. You might want to listen so you can get some ideas about addressing ice.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Direct your comments through the chair, member for Buderim.

Mr MICKELBERG: Clearly, those opposite are not interested in hearing about how to address the insidious problem of ice. During the ice forums that the LNP conducted earlier in the year, we heard harrowing accounts from family members, reformed addicts and first responders about the damage that ice brings to all who come within its path. It is an issue that affects us all and it is an issue that we need to tackle across the state. All Labor has offered in this budget is five new taxes, ripping \$2.2 billion out of Queenslanders' pockets. It cannot tax its way to growth. By contrast, the LNP wants a secure economic future for all Queenslanders where we live within our means. Only the LNP has a plan for Queensland and only the LNP will deliver for the Sunshine Coast.