




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 14 June 2018

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

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.39 pm): The Palaszczuk Labor government's state budget for 2018-19 can only be described as one of spin and rhetoric—two words that go hand in hand with the Palaszczuk Labor government. Both sides of this chamber know that the Palaszczuk Labor government continually tries to hide the true economic picture that is facing everyday Queenslanders, including my constituents in Moggill, particularly with respect to higher cost-of-living pressures and state unemployment, which is currently at 6.5 per cent and is projected to stay at over six per cent for 2018-19. Employment growth is forecast to be down on the 2.75 per cent figure in 2017-18 to 1.5 per cent in 2018-19.

The Labor government's only economic plan is more taxes. After nearly four years in government, Labor still does not have a credible economic plan. The Palaszczuk Labor government's budget will damage Queensland with record debt, and households in the electorate of Moggill will be hurt with new taxes. Debt in Queensland is projected to increase to over \$83 billion in the next four years by 2021-22. This will lead to an interest bill of \$3.7 billion each year, which will be nearly \$7,000 a minute. At the same time cost-of-living pressures continue to increase for families and residents in my electorate of Moggill.

We are all being slugged with higher electricity prices, higher water costs and now a waste levy under this Labor government. What does this Labor government stand for? The answer is: tax, tax, tax and debt, debt and more debt. The legacy of the Treasurer's first budget—the member for South Brisbane—will be one of tax, unemployment and debt. This is a true Labor budget of taxes, debt and unemployment. We know those Labor members opposite are reckless debt deniers. Queenslanders want and expect more from their state government. However, it is evident that only the LNP can deliver them stable, sustainable and responsible economic management.

Over the last few years we have also seen the state Labor government slug local Moggill constituents and the people of Queensland with 3.5 per cent increases in car registration. Last term the Palaszczuk Labor government treated Queenslanders like cash cows and it is clear they are going to do that again with more taxes. It must be remembered that the Liberal National Party froze car registration for three years when last in government. Despite the Palaszczuk Labor government allocating \$18.3 billion to health, one-third of emergency department patients are not being seen within clinically recommended time frames; a fifth of all ambulance patients are not unloaded at emergency departments within 30 minutes; there has been a blowout in elective surgery waitlists; and median wait times have nearly doubled from 28 to 50 days under the Palaszczuk Labor government.

Whilst I am mentioning the discipline of surgery, can I take this opportunity to acknowledge and pay tribute to Dr David Ruddel Martin, one of Queensland's great and last true general surgeons, who is turning 80 this month. Dr Martin was one of five children born to decorated Second World War

Brigadier Eric Martin in Rockhampton. He went on to become a highly regarded, exceptionally skilled general surgeon who worked at Norwich in the UK and undertook an academic placement in San Francisco before returning to Queensland, where he was director of surgery at the Greenslopes hospital and one of the founders of the Wesley Breast Clinic.

My former role was deputy chief medical officer for UnitingCare Health, so I can attest to the fact that Dr Martin was one of the few surgeons who could perform complex surgery on all sites of the body with the highest level of skill and care. He was also a pioneer of laparoscopic—keyhole—surgery with first-class results. Dr Martin certainly understood the importance of lowering surgical waitlists within the public hospital system. He was the 'go to' surgeon when all else had failed. He will be celebrating his 80th birthday this weekend with his wife of nearly 58 years, Pam; his sons, Mark, a QC in Brisbane, Ian and David, both leading upper GI surgeons in Brisbane and Sydney respectively; their partners; and his 10 grandchildren.

In the electorate of Moggill and more broadly in the western suburbs of Brisbane there is a desperate need for an integrated and coordinated road and public transport plan funded collaboratively by all levels of government. Since first being elected at the 31 January 2015 Queensland state election, I have been consistently advocating and fighting for this plan. Appropriately considered and designed engineering solutions with respect to bridge and rail access can be an important part of regional transport infrastructure planning to ease traffic congestion. However, importantly, this planning requires good community consultation on locality and functionality to avoid unintended consequences and to deliver the desired outcomes.

Despite raising this issue in the Queensland parliament on numerous occasions and asking questions about various issues in correspondence to the relevant ministers and departments, the Palaszczuk Labor government has once again failed to act by including it in this state budget. Due to their consistent mismanagement in government, Labor has still failed to progress such local road and transport infrastructure, and it must be remembered that Labor has been in power in Queensland for 25 of the past 29 years.

Traffic congestion on Moggill Road, the Western Freeway and the Centenary Motorway is at crisis point and it must be addressed. Labor has also conveniently and continually ignored the plight of residents in the electorate of Moggill and also many residents in the adjacent electorate of Ipswich West with respect to additional high school infrastructure. Investing in a new high school for the residents of Mount Crosby, Karana Downs, Lake Manchester, Karalee, Chuwar and Barellan Point is very much needed. Local residents are overwhelmingly calling for this investment to occur.

Why will the Labor Minister for Education, the Hon. Grace Grace MP, not act on this not only for the residents of the Moggill electorate but also for the residents of the electorate of Ipswich West? The Labor member for Ipswich West, Jim Madden MP, is still right behind the campaign to get an additional high school, and I thank him for that. Once again, I ask the Minister for Education to please listen to a member of her own government in relation to the educational infrastructure that is needed.

There is also a requirement for a continued financial investment in classrooms and facilities at our local Kenmore State High School. Local residents, parents, students and teachers as well as P&C representatives are all in agreement about this and have been calling on the Labor government to deliver this for many years. Why has the Labor government not allocated additional infrastructure funding out of its over \$200 million education infrastructure boost to help make Kenmore State High School 2020 ready? It is clear that Labor does not care about students in the Moggill electorate or local residents who sit in traffic congestion each and every day.

Labor's election costings included \$1.3 billion of recurrent initiatives and \$1.4 billion of capital projects. The major measures to offset the new commitments announced at the time were four new taxes, ripping out nearly \$500 million from the Queensland economy. What we have with the state budget for 2018-19 is \$2.25 billion of new taxes and fees, ripping money out of our economy and hurting businesses and households across the electorate of Moggill and also Queensland.

There are five new taxes worth \$2.2 billion but the election costings were for \$491 million of new taxes. There is a waste tax, \$1.3 billion; a wagering tax, \$367 million; a land tax, \$311 million; a property investors tax, \$132 million; and changes to car stamp duty, another \$100 million. There is reprioritisation of all government departments' operating budgets, excluding Queensland Health, and reprioritisation of the State Infrastructure Fund and other unallocated capital programs. Queensland desperately needs a Frecklington LNP state government.

Government members interjected.

Dr ROWAN: They do not like it, but that is what Queensland needs: a Frecklington LNP state government who will work to truly bust traffic congestion and ensure sensible and sustainable urban development, secure Queensland's water supply, provide cheaper electricity and deliver better health and education outcomes including making English a mandatory component of the ATAR tertiary entrance system. We have also announced a guarantee of no new taxes in the first term of a Frecklington LNP government.

The LNP has already committed to fixing the trains and fixing Labor's rail fail debacle, providing a new 10-year plan for the Bruce Highway, busting traffic bottlenecks in South-East Queensland, providing better parking in order to access public transport, and we will back the Brisbane Metro. The LNP will secure Queensland's water supply via our dams plan with respect to the Nullinga Dam, the Urannah Dam, raising the wall of the Burdekin Falls Dam and by delivering the Rookwood Weir, providing water security, importantly, for agriculture and industry, which is vital for our state of Queensland.

The LNP has a plan to deliver cheaper electricity by restructuring our government owned generators from two to three entities, which will drive down prices through more competition and introducing retail competition to regional Queensland. The LNP will deliver better health and education results by: supporting our world-class public health system, partnering with the private sector to clear waiting lists, providing more rehabilitation and detoxification centres to tackle crystalline methamphetamine addiction and other substance dependency disorders, protecting our independent public schools, getting back to basics in our schools and committing to air-condition every classroom in Queensland.

Finally, the LNP will lower taxes whilst seeking to improve Queensland's tax competitiveness for all businesses. What we have in Queensland is an arrogant and out-of-touch Palaszczuk Labor government.

Government members interjected.

Dr ROWAN: I hear members opposite interjecting. They do not care whether students have air conditioning in schools, but we believe that is very important for the children of Queensland. At the 2015 election Labor promised to reduce the number of ministers from 19 to 14, then they backflipped last term and extended their cabinet to 18 ministers and five assistant ministers. Labor promised to reduce Queensland's debt with a debt reduction strategy, but now that has been forgotten as Queensland's debt rushes towards \$83 billion in four years.

I will now make some comments with respect to my shadow ministerial portfolios. With respect to the arts, \$150 million has been allocated for a theatre addition to QPAC, while the market-led proposal by foundation theatres for a new \$100 million commercial theatre which could cost taxpayers only \$25,000 has received absolutely nothing. Queenslanders will fork out six times more than they need to. It appears there is a reduction in staff numbers at the Performing Arts Trust and the State Library of Queensland. However, having visited the Thomas Dixon Centre and having good discussions with the Queensland Ballet, I know that the funding that has been allocated in this budget will be welcomed by them.

With respect to the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, both the LNP and I have provided bipartisan support to the Labor government's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Reconciliation Action Plan 2018-2021, but why is the Labor government not supporting the IDEAS Van? Up to 2,500 patients have been referred to the IDEAS Van for treatment to save their eyesight. Thousands more diabetic patients have had vital screenings, but why can't a little bit of funding be found from the \$18.3 billion Health budget to assist with closing the gap with respect to diabetes in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population? We know that Indigenous councils in remote Queensland communities have seen their infrastructure funding placed in jeopardy due to Labor's inability to negotiate in good faith with the Turnbull federal coalition government.

In relation to communities, disabilities services and seniors, the National Disability Insurance Scheme is rolling out stage by stage but with no real leadership from the state Labor other than to blame the Commonwealth government when things go wrong. Our Queensland minister will not step up and outline how Queensland will provide continuity of support for people with a disability who are ineligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Meanwhile, the Queensland Audit Office has said that fewer than 60 per cent of all people who are eligible for the National Disability Insurance Scheme in Queensland are likely to be in the scheme by the time it reaches its full rollout, and only seven per cent of the total projected number of Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participants for 2019 were reported by the Queensland Audit Office to be in the NDIS so far. However, I will acknowledge the government's commitment to peer-to-peer advocacy services and enhanced electronic platforms as part of the NDIS planning process. I think it is very important to do that in a bipartisan manner.

I also acknowledge the Labor government's \$ 5.5 billion to be spent on concessions, although Queenslanders need to be able to access them and told how to do so. Queensland needs a credible economic strategy to maintain such concessions longer and into subsequent years. Without a credible economic plan for Queensland, that is going to be extremely difficult to do. World Elder Abuse Awareness Day is tomorrow, 15 June. We must all work together to address this issue. I certainly acknowledge the minister's additional funding in relation to new elder abuse prevention services. We continue to see Queenslanders struggle as the Labor government's fees and charges go up at almost double the rate of inflation in some cases. Importantly, the Liberal National Party had a plan at the last state election to help seniors by offering a number of sensible support measures.

The legacy of Labor is always mismanagement, broken promises and economic vandalism. Only the Liberal National Party will tackle rising water and electricity costs and get the finances of our great state of Queensland back on track. This year's Labor state budget must be seen in the context of the Palaszczuk Labor government's previous raids, rip-offs and writedowns, which included ripping \$6 billion from public servants' superannuation; ripping \$3.4 billion from public servants' long service leave entitlements; and raiding \$5.1 billion of equity from government owned corporations. The Public Service has also grown much faster than population growth, with a 7.1 per cent increase in 2015-16 and 2016-17, followed by an estimated 3.9 per cent this year. With Public Service numbers likely to be in excess of 224,000 full-time-equivalent positions this year, Queensland's Public Service wages bill is growing at more it than \$1 billion a year.

Queensland's prosperous future is being squandered by a taxing, debt ridden Labor government. Only the Liberal National Party has a plan to build a better future for the residents of my electorate of Moggill and all Queenslanders.