




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

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

 **Mr BOYCE** (Callide—LNP) (1.27 am): I rise to speak to the Appropriation Bill 2018. The Callide electorate is the economic engine room of Queensland. It generates in the vicinity of \$3 billion of income to the Queensland economy, and what have we got from the Trad budget? Absolutely nothing. What we do have is a reannouncement of some capital works programs that have already been announced, programs that have already been started. This is a shameful budget that ignores the money-making people of my electorate. As the mayor of the North Burnett council has said, this is a double-dipping budget that has no new money for Callide.

The Callide electorate is the energy hub of Queensland. We have two baseload coal-fired power stations and large renewable energy power generation that has helped lift power generation revenue to the dizzy heights of \$1.24 billion to the Queensland economy—\$759 million more than has been estimated. Callide has several large coalmines that have also helped to raise the royalties from coal exports to \$3.7 billion. Despite this, the Callide electorate has been ignored in the budget that was prepared and delivered by the Treasurer this week.

Agriculture is trying to flourish in the Callide electorate, despite the Labor government's efforts to stifle it. At Mundubbera, there is a \$100 million fruit industry. The Smart Berries farm alone is estimating a 1,000-tonne crop, with earnings projected at being between \$35 million to \$50 million. It employs up to 500 people at its peak, yet there is no mention of water security for agriculture or the construction of the Cooranga Weir on the Boyne River that these irrigators and farmers so desperately need.

Water supplies to this vibrant industry are expected to cease in August or September this year, with water levels in the Boondooma Dam reaching the 30 per cent level at which irrigation water allocations will cease. Citrus on the Boyne is also expecting a \$20 million production and employs 300 people. That is another 300 jobs at a time when the unemployment figures need assistance, especially the youth market where unemployment levels are approaching 50 per cent in rural Queensland. Imagine the benefits of investing in water security for this reason. It is very simple: if you have water, you have jobs. Other industries that would benefit include pecan nuts, melons, grapes, mangoes, lucerne and piggeries, all of which contribute to the revenue stream of Queensland. Yet all we get is a kick in the guts from a government that is more interested in vote grabbing than supporting vital infrastructure.

When the people of Callide realise that the Labor government would rather spend \$45 million to build a bike track in inner-city Brisbane they will know of the contempt the Labor government holds for farmers. The people who supply them with their food, the ones who give the basic necessities of life, will once more be 'Trad-den' on. A \$45 million investment in water security would build the Cooranga Weir. If the Labor government would only access some of the federal government's \$2.5 billion water infrastructure fund, the cost would be far less.

The Queensland Farmers' Federation today highlighted 'that the state government spending on agriculture has decreased at an average annual rate of 1.7 per cent over the past 15 years'. Agriculture is the fastest growing industry in Australia, but the Labor government is determined to destroy its potential. In a world where food production may have to double by the year 2050, it is imperative that agriculture gets the water infrastructure investment that it needs.

Also hindering agriculture are the roads and the state they are in. These roads and highways are the essential networks to link our hardworking agricultural environmentalists to the hungry mouths in the south-east electorates. Many of these roads require major upgrades. There are at least 2,800 kilometres of state controlled roads in Callide. Some of these roads have sections that remain unsealed and they are dangerous. We have had recent road fatalities as a result.

I have recently invited the shadow minister for transport and main roads, Steve Minnikin—and he has accepted—to join me on a tour of some of the roads in the Callide electorate in a semitrailer so he can see for himself and have a firsthand experience of just what it is like to travel these roads in a big truck and understand the ramifications of this failing infrastructure. I have also extended the same invitation to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Mark Bailey, but alas I have had no reply. Callide roads do not even rate a mention in the Queensland government's plan for road infrastructure. The Warrego Highway got a mention but just another reannouncement of a project that is already well underway. The Callide local roads are the five regional councils' responsibility and they will be worse off with Labor cutting funding to local government departments to the tune of \$50 million. Maybe this was money that was used to fund the \$45 million bikeway in Brisbane.

Queensland has among the highest registration charges in the nation. There are approximately 41,000 registered vehicles in the Callide electorate. The LNP election promise was to freeze car registration fees to assist our fellow Queenslanders with cost-of-living pressures. The increase of 3.5 per cent to register a vehicle will equate to over a \$1.2 million expense to the people of Callide.

Make no mistake: the vegetation management laws will impact on all electorates in the coming years as farmers and graziers are forced to pay additional costs to continue to produce the world-class food and fibre products they are known for. These costs will be passed on to consumers at the checkout, where they might start to feel the impact of overregulation of an industry that finds itself with minimal assistance from the ALP budget after six years of drought. Yet Labor has been able to kick back money to their greenie mates such as \$1.8 million of public funds for political advocacy group the Australian Conservation Foundation. It is a pity that some of that money was not spent on getting the science correct in the vegetation management laws that were forced through parliament last month.

Even tourism is feeling the detrimental effect of the Labor government, with its insistence that the Great Barrier Reef is being destroyed by farmers. An amount of \$181 million will be cut from Queensland tourism industry development next year, accounting for an overwhelming 58 per cent of the total budget. Perhaps Labor feels that it will save money by driving the tourism industry into the ground, deterring tourists from visiting our state. Queensland is now lagging behind most of the other states, with the third least number of nights spent here by international visitors. Surely tourism should be supported, particularly in the regions where our travellers should be encouraged to visit and spend their tourist dollars.

Digital communications are another area where my electorate struggles to meet worldwide market expectations, again hampering our progression in all industries, tourism and employment opportunities. Constituents are missing out on jobs because of their lack of internet connectivity and speed. School students are also disadvantaged as schools struggle to cope with the increasing need and demand for faster and better technology. The new secondary school at Calliope has finally appeared in the budget and, again, is another reannouncement of much needed education infrastructure.

Callide has all the major gas lines to Curtis Island passing through the electorate as well as a large proportion of the CSG industry, which also makes a substantial contribution to the economy of Queensland. The forecast from the budget papers is for approximately \$1.78 billion in royalties. Mr Turner, the APPEA Queensland director, stated, 'To put it in context, the royalties forecast to be paid by the natural gas industry are enough to support the jobs of over 4,000 teachers, nurses or emergency workers each year.'

Speaking of nurses, surely some of these funds could have gone to support the health services in my electorate. Only Gayndah and Eidsvold rated a mention and again were reannouncements of projects already begun. The hospital at Chinchilla, the largest district in the Callide electorate, has received no funding, and maternity services have been on bypass. The Queensland hospital health supplies and services are having their budgets slashed by almost \$395 million. This comes at a time

when the federal government has assisted with almost \$4.8 billion coming this year, putting to rest the mistruth about exactly what funding has come from the federal government. Queenslanders deserve a world-class health system no matter where they live, but the Labor government does not support the health needs of Callide.

The LNP created the 16 hospital and health boards across Queensland as part of a plan to empower local communities, increase local accountability and value our health workers. The LNP doubled the subsidy to help patients travel to hospitals, helping rural and regional Queenslanders get access to the services they need. We reopened regional maternity services that previous Labor governments shut down. At the last state election, Labor did not even promise a single additional hospital bed outside South-East Queensland.

This budget has delivered very little for the Callide electorate, a major economic generator for the Queensland economy. Queensland debt is to rise to \$83 billion. Spending growth is projected at 2.1 per cent and revenue growth at 1.7 per cent over four years. I am a businessman and can say that when spending outstrips income that is a recipe for ruin.

What we have here is the government of Brisbane delivering a budget for Brisbane with no attempt at addressing our growing debt level or the needs of the rest of the state. It is a disgrace. On a scale of one to 10, since there are no zeros they get a one.