




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.17 am): This is a budget of taxes, debt and unemployment. After 3½ years Labor's legacy for Queensland is no less than five taxes, an \$83 billion debt bomb and the worst unemployment in Australia. This is a budget of broken promises and broken dreams for Queensland's next generation. This is a budget that shows Labor have given up and have no plan for Queensland—just a plan for taxes. The Treasurer's five new taxes will see money taken from the pockets of Queenslanders and deposited in the government's coffers. These five new taxes will rip \$2.25 billion out of our economy. The five new taxes will hit households and businesses in every corner of this state.

Labor's addiction to taxes is predictable and mistaken. It is mistaken because increased taxes destroy jobs and economic confidence. No place on earth has ever taxed its way to prosperity. You cannot tax your way to prosperity—it is as simple as that—but you can tax your way to failure and decline, and these new taxes are an admission of failure by Labor. Labor have run this state for almost a generation but they still cannot keep Queensland afloat without imposing new taxes. Every Queenslanders should be disturbed by that, just as they should be disturbed by the broader economic picture in Queensland. After 3½ years in office Labor has no economic plan for Queensland. The Palaszczuk government has failed to create conditions for steady and sustainable domestic economic growth.

Prevailing national and international conditions have given some businesses a lift, but we continue to underperform across-the-board. Our tourism sector had the second lowest growth rate in international visitors of any state last year. They are spending less time in Queensland. We should be leading the tourism charge, but instead we are being beaten by Tasmania. Our retail sector is also weak, with only South Australia recording weaker growth in turnover.

Globally there has been good news for Queensland with the surge in commodity prices, but our royalties are being threatened with a \$2 billion hit because of Aurizon's dispute with the Queensland Competition Authority. It is Queenslanders who will pay for this dispute—a dispute that stems from Labor's decision to sell off the QR rail network.

Nothing illustrates Queensland's poor economic performance more clearly than unemployment. The April ABS statistics revealed that Queensland had the joint highest unemployment rate in Australia, at 6.5 per cent. The Premier had previously said she was targeting an unemployment rate with a '5' in front of it. This hollow rhetoric has been laid bare in the budget. The unemployment rate will be higher than previously forecast next year and remain unacceptably high for the next three years. After 3½ years in office, the Premier has failed to deliver on her own target.

Regions across the state including North Queensland, Wide Bay, Fitzroy and the outback are suffering unacceptably high levels of unemployment. In April, youth unemployment was 18 per cent in Townsville and 29 per cent in Wide Bay. In outback Queensland youth unemployment has now reached

54 per cent. The potential of too many young Queenslanders is being wasted under this government. A generation of Queenslanders are being denied the dignity of work by a government with no economic plan. Young people are missing out on opportunities in employment and in training. The number of completed apprenticeships has fallen by 14 per cent under Labor's watch. The capacity of the next generation to build our great state is shrinking.

We are failing the unemployed and we are failing employers too. Unlike most of those opposite, I am not a career politician. I know what it is like to run a small business—

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members to my right. I listened to the budget speech on Tuesday and I would like to hear the reply.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Unlike those opposite, I am not a career politician. I know what it is like to run a small business, to balance the books and to employ people. I got into politics because I saw how Labor, under Anna Bligh and Annastacia Palaszczuk, had squandered our mining boom. I want my three daughters to grow up in a Queensland where our best days are ahead of us.

Businesspeople have been angered, disappointed and frustrated by the Palaszczuk government's policies. According to the CCIQ Pulse survey, business confidence is now at its lowest point since September 2016. Confidence has been negative for most of the last four years. The Queensland government scored minus 19 per cent in the Sensis survey of small and medium sized businesses. Our government, along with that of South Australia, was judged to have the worst business policies in Australia.

The views of small and medium sized businesses matter, because they are our biggest employers. They decide when to hire, when to fire and when to give their workers a raise. If they are not confident about the future, the rest of us should be worried. This budget will do nothing to boost the confidence of small businesses. There is no relief on tax or electricity prices and no action to speed payments for small business. The Palaszczuk government continues to use small businesses as a bank and take them for granted. The LNP is the party of small business and we will not take small business for granted. Under the LNP fair pay policy, government contracts worth up to \$1 million would be paid between 20 calendar days, down from the current 30. Reducing the time it takes for state government to pay its bills will improve cash flow for small businesses.

It is not just small businesses that have lost faith in this government. Big businesses have learned that the Palaszczuk Labor government simply cannot keep its word. ASF's \$3 billion Gold Coast project was killed off by this government on a whim, along with an estimated 13,000 jobs. All Queenslanders were left with was a reported \$13 million bill for costs. Labor's backflips on the Adani NAIF loan and the Logan housing renewal initiative have damaged Queensland's reputation as a place to do business. It comes as no surprise at all that business investment has plummeted by \$76 million under Labor—a 40 per cent drop.

As business investment declines, population growth is becoming a crucial economic driver for Queensland. That growth is being heavily driven by interstate migration from Sydney and Melbourne. The surging economies of New South Wales and Victoria are encouraging southerners to sell up, cash in the equity in their homes and head north. I say: good on them and welcome to Queensland. Obviously our rising population will require extra spending on schools, hospitals and other public services. We all know that a growing population needs more teachers, nurses, doctors and police. That is simply the government doing its job.

People should not be fooled by the big talk of the Treasurer about her so-called infrastructure budget. Labor has a sorry record of underinvestment in infrastructure. The first Palaszczuk government cut an average of \$3 billion a year from the state infrastructure program. Of this, \$2 billion a year was ripped from the regions. This meant that our bush roads, our regional hospitals or even boat ramps could not receive vital upgrades. As a proportion of gross state product last year's infrastructure budget was the joint lowest in living memory. The other record low year was 2016-17, when just 2.2 per cent of gross state product was invested in infrastructure. Queensland's infrastructure crisis has been caused by this Labor government.

The infrastructure increase announced in this budget will only restore spending to the long-term average level. Let us not forget that the last LNP government invested an average of 3.2 per cent of gross state product in infrastructure. We invested a greater share of our wealth in infrastructure than Labor because it is the right thing to do for our economy and our society. We invested in 11 new schools, the Gateway Upgrade North, the 10-year plan for the Bruce Highway and the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing, but Labor cut back investment and we are now all living with the consequences.

It is no wonder that congestion on our roads is increasing. It is no wonder construction spending is shrinking. Labor is sacrificing the infrastructure needs of the whole state for Cross River Rail. Just look at how Sunshine Coast commuters are being short-changed by this government. The federal government has pledged \$390 million to fund half the cost of duplicating the region's rail line. Labor has offered to pay 20 per cent of the project, leaving about a \$230 million shortfall and placing the project in doubt. While the Sunshine Coast gets a 20 per cent commitment, Cross River Rail gets a 100 per cent commitment from Labor. In fact, Labor's commitment to the Sunshine Coast is around one per cent of the real cost of the \$14 billion budget for Cross River Rail.

The first Palaszczuk government did not just squeeze the infrastructure budget; it also ripped \$6 billion from public servants' superannuation and \$3.4 billion from long service leave. Can members imagine the outcry from union leaders if an LNP government had done that? I do not know what is worse: Labor's greed or the unions' silence. Both those barrels have now been well and truly scraped. They are not the solution to the rising costs of this Labor government.

Under Labor the Public Service has continued to grow at a faster rate than population, with more than 20,000 FTEs added to the payroll since 2015. Of course public services must expand as our population grows, but the number of senior and senior executive public servants has grown by more than 30 per cent under the Palaszczuk government. Labor has hired an extra 4,158 senior and senior executive staff in just three years. These are not nurses on the ward. They are not teachers in the classroom. They are not police on the beat. This ballooning bureaucracy helps to explain why the Public Service pay bill has grown by \$5.2 billion under this government. That is a big increase, and what have Queenslanders got in return? Are we any safer on our streets or in our homes under the Palaszczuk government? Robberies are up 26 per cent, assaults are up 11 per cent, home invasions are up 12 per cent and car thefts are up 19 per cent. On top of that, our child protection services are still in crisis. We have had review after review, excuse after excuse, but still our children are not safe.

Is our health system any better or worse? More patients are spending longer stuck in ambulances before they even get into an emergency department and, when they do get into an ED, they are having to wait longer to be treated. The median wait for an elective surgery was down to just 28 days under the LNP, but it is back up to 50 days under Labor. Every Queenslanders who relies on the public health system should be concerned, but instead of reassuring patients all the Treasurer did this week was boast about a record Health budget. That boast could have been made by every Treasurer Queensland has ever had. Under the LNP government, the Health budget increased by an average of seven per cent a year. They were all record Health budgets too. The Treasurer's 4.6 per cent increase does not even come close to matching the LNP's record. For all its boasting, Labor is failing to deliver for patients. Queenslanders are not getting better and faster health services.

What we are getting is debt, and lots of it. Debt will hit \$83 billion under the Palaszczuk Labor government. It does not matter how you look at it, \$83 billion is a big number and that is a big problem for Queensland. Labor's massive debt will cost Queenslanders \$3.7 billion a year in interest payments. That is over \$10 million a day or over \$7,000 a minute. In the time allocated for my speech, Queenslanders will have paid \$420,000 in interest payments on Labor's debt bomb, so I was astonished that the Treasurer could not even bring herself to say the word 'debt' in her speech. I know it was not a very long speech, but surely debt was worth a mention. It seems the Treasurer has a bad case of debt denial and denial is not a solution to this problem.

The budget shows fiscal deficits as far as the eye can see. The budget shows that the Palaszczuk Labor government is in structural deficit. These deficits mean that our debt will exceed \$83 billion. Our huge debt is not just a number; it takes billions away from schools, hospitals, infrastructure and policing. It leaves Queensland vulnerable to economic downturns and natural disasters, but it is now clear that Labor has no intention of paying down debt. It is not even committed to stabilising debt. Under Labor, our debt will keep on growing. It will never be repaid, but I can assure Queenslanders that an LNP will make stabilising debt a fiscal principle. Once we stabilise Labor's debt we will start to repay the debt and we will target a debt level that will see the return of Queensland's AAA credit rating.

Unlike Labor we will deliver on our fiscal principles, but the LNP knows that there is no quick fix for this problem. Queensland's Labor debt is huge and it is the result of years of irresponsible financial management by Labor. Labor is simply unable or unwilling to tackle wasteful spending. For example, earlier this year we saw that ICT projects have blown out by nearly \$300 million under the Palaszczuk government. We have paid out \$41 million in overtime for train crews, even though we are getting 470 fewer services a week. Soon Queenslanders will pay for a multimillion-dollar advertising campaign to tell farmers that they are wrong about Labor's draconian vegetation management laws. These mistakes all have a financial price, and there have been many more mistakes like them. It is not bad luck that has caused \$83 billion worth of debt; it is bad government.

What is the response of the Palaszczuk Labor government to these economic and fiscal problems? After 3½ years, does this government have an economic plan? No, it does not. All it has on offer is more tax—and not just one tax but five new taxes. The first four of these were announced just 48 hours before the state election and after the advertising blackout had begun. Is this what Labor calls open and transparent government? It was a last-minute tax statement that looked pretty sneaky and like a political trick to me. Even the details of Labor's releases to voters were not accurate. The four new taxes were predicted to raise \$492 million, but now we have been told the figure is more like \$900 million. Labor does not want voters to know what is in store until it is too late.

Many thousands of Queenslanders had actually voted before Labor unveiled its new taxes. Labor did not want the hassle of having to justify more taxes. Voters might have asked the hard questions about Labor's tax plans and Labor answers are not any good. The Premier fobbed off the criticism by comparing herself to Robin Hood, and I do not think that is very fair on Robin Hood. Robin Hood did not go around levying new taxes on the people of Sherwood Forest. He took taxes off government and gave them back to the people. It was the Sheriff of Nottingham who spent his days squeezing more money out of taxpayers. The government now collects \$65.5 billion in revenue a year. That should be enough.

Taxes impact the whole economy. If treasurers could tax their way to growth they would all put up taxes, but in developed economies the trend is towards cutting taxes, not increasing them. The new Treasurer should be trying to give struggling families and businesses a lift, not taxing them more. However the Palaszczuk government spins it, the new taxes will affect us all. The increase in land tax will be passed on to tenants, which in most cases are business owners. In a stronger economy businesses might be able to absorb higher costs, but most of this tax will be passed on to the public. Targeting overseas property investors will inevitably have an impact on the level of activity in the construction sector. Less activity means fewer jobs.

The wagering tax also has a price. Stephen Conroy of Responsible Wagering Australia has warned the tax could put more than 300 jobs at risk in our betting and racing industries. You cannot have a successful racing industry without punters—or racetracks, for that matter. The extra duty on premium cars will impact motor dealerships and their sales. The fifth new tax, a waste tax, was not even included in last year's last-minute tax reveal. This tax perfectly illustrates Labor's 'tax first and ask questions later' approach. The Premier first claimed the tax was needed to stop the waste from New South Wales being dumped in Queensland, but the reality is only one city is a magnet for interstate waste—Ipswich. That is because Ipswich's Labor council gave the green light to private waste dumps to operate in the city.

The government's argument was looking shaky, but then Ipswich's Labor council messed up again. When the Ipswich City Council announced that it was ending the recycling, the Treasurer did not waste a moment before declaring that she would fast-track the waste tax. When the Ipswich City Council announced just a day later that it would continue recycling, there was no change of heart by the Treasurer. The Treasurer had found another excuse for the tax and the facts were not going to get in the way.

Despite initially welcoming the principle of a waste tax, the LGAQ soon started to have doubts. This month, the LGAQ warned that the state government was not being up-front about the waste tax. I could have told them that. That is exactly what I have been saying about this waste tax. The new waste tax is twice as high as that imposed by the Bligh government and it will hurt Queenslanders from the Cape to Coolangatta. It all began with an incompetent Labor council in Ipswich and a Labor council that is now in disgrace.

The Master Builders say that the tax will add \$1,400 to the cost of a new home at a time when young Queenslanders are struggling to get on the property ladder. Together with Labor's other property taxes, an estimated \$3,000 will be added to the cost of a new home. The tax will hit small businesses everywhere. The Palaszczuk government does not have a waste strategy; it has a tax strategy. Labor simply cannot kick its addiction to taxes. Its taxes destroy jobs and economic confidence. This government is big on tax, but short on results. Queensland can do better than this. Queenslanders deserve to do better than this.

I have said where we are going wrong, but I also want to say where we are going to put things right. I know that in a world outside of politics people have to solve problems if they want to be a success. No-one gets ahead without knowing where they want to go and having a plan to get there. Success does not just happen. It will not get anywhere without a sound plan and hard work to back it up.

Unlike Labor, the Liberal National Party has a plan for Queensland. Our plan is designed to make it easier for Queenslanders to get a job and get ahead. Today, I am launching the LNP's economic plan because it is clear that this state is stagnating. If Queensland is to start climbing the economic ladder

again, we need to take action. I am more interested in solutions than spin. Politics is not a game to me. Politics affects the lives of millions of Queenslanders. I am launching our economic plan because I respect Queenslanders. I want them to know that I have the energy and the ideas that this state needs. Make no mistake, I will keep calling out this government and hold it accountable, but I will not just say where Labor has gone wrong; I will say where we should go.

Our economic plan is the right path for Queensland. The LNP's plan will help businesses grow and create more jobs for people in every corner of this state. It will get Queensland's economy back on track, but I want to do more than that. I want to improve education for our kids and health care for our sick. I want to build communities that are secure and strong. I want every Queenslanders to be confident that, once again, we are heading in the right direction. My plan lays out five goals and how the LNP would deliver each of them: bust congestion, provide cheaper electricity, ensure better health and education services, deliver water security, and guarantee no new taxes.

Everyone who lives in South-East Queensland knows that our roads are getting worse. Average peak hour speeds are slowing. More congestion means that each morning drivers have to leave home earlier and get home later. More congestion means that people will spend less time with their families and have less time to unwind. More congestion damages our quality of life and our economy. The productivity of Queensland suffers because we spend so much time sitting in traffic.

I was relieved when the Palaszczuk government finally agreed to match the federal government's \$1 billion investment in the M1. It is a win for the Gold Coast, but more action is needed. The upgrade of the M1 is the beginning of the LNP's transport plan for the Gold Coast, not the end. It is clear that the Gold Coast needs another major road connection between Brisbane and Logan. The motorway is the busiest road in Queensland, carrying 145,000 vehicles a day. The M1 was built by an LNP government 20 years ago and population growth has now exceeded the road's capacity. The congestion on this road is simply unacceptable. We cannot keep adding lanes to the M1 and cutting the speed limit is a bandaid, not a solution.

The LNP's plan includes building a second M1, taking up to 60,000 vehicles a day off the existing road. The proposed corridor between the northern Gold Coast and Beenleigh exists already; we just need to commence planning and design work. The need for this road is clear. I promise motorists that a future LNP government will begin the second M1.

As our population grows, the need for new routes is not confined to the Gold Coast. Our major arterial roads, including the Centenary Motorway and Old Cleveland Road, are choked with congestion, but in the past decade there has been no comprehensive study of alternative road corridors in Queensland. In partnership with the South-East Queensland Council of Mayors, an LNP government will provide better coordination of state and local roads. We will preserve future road corridors and begin planning for what we need over the next two decades. We will develop a road infrastructure plan to keep Queensland moving. Under the LNP's economic plan, we will invest in smaller roads, too.

Motorists are sick of the buck-passing and the blame game. They are tired of it taking longer to get to work, to drop the kids off to school or to go to the shops. The LNP will work with councils to deliver upgrades to strategic intersections and local traffic bottlenecks. We will also work with councils to draw up a priority list of bottleneck upgrades before the 2020 election. We will bust bottlenecks in cities and communities across the state.

Our plan will also finish the task of building a better Bruce Highway—a task that the LNP began in 2012. Because of years of neglect by Labor, the Bruce Highway used to be known as the deadliest road in Australia. The LNP's \$8.5 billion Bruce Highway Action Plan, funded in partnership with the federal government, has resulted in road upgrades from Cairns to Brisbane, but there is more to be done. Queenslanders do not need a Bruce Highway trust; they need action.

Our economic plan includes a commitment to accept the federal coalition government's \$3.3 billion boost for the Bruce Highway. We will provide the \$825 million that is required by the state government to get to work on three major projects: six-laning the Bruce Highway between Caboolture and Caloundra, upgrading the Dohles Rocks Road interchange and the final stage of the Gympie bypass. We will also accept the federal government's \$200 million commitment for road safety improvements and fund the state government's share. The LNP believes in working with the federal government to deliver better roads. That is how we delivered section A of the Cooroy to Curra Bruce Highway upgrade. That is how we delivered the Toowoomba Second Range Crossing and the Gateway North Upgrade projects.

It is not just our roads that have been badly neglected by Labor. Rail passengers have never before experienced such chaos, confusion and incompetence. Labor was gifted the most reliable rail network in Australia and in just three years it has made it the nation's worst. What a shambles. Just like his predecessors, the transport minister has tried to dodge any responsibility for this epic rail fail. If he

were as good at finding drivers as he is at finding excuses, our trains would run like clockwork. Instead we have 470 fewer services a week, trains skipping stations to meet punctuality targets and a \$41 million overtime bill. Under this minister, the only train that runs smoothly is the union gravy train.

This government should have stood up to the RTBU years ago and got on with recruiting the 200 drivers our system needs. Under my economic plan I promise to get the drivers we need and to restore the high levels of service commuters enjoyed under an LNP government. I know the LNP can fix the rail network because we have done it before. We will not just deliver a better rail network, we will deliver a bigger rail network too.

The Sunshine Coast is now one of Australia's 10 largest urban centres but its rail line is an absolute shocker. The coast is expected to grow by almost 200,000 new residents over the next two decades. This growth is being directed by the state government, but Labor is refusing to properly fund the infrastructure the region needs. Commuters were first promised the Sunshine Coast rail line duplication in 2009. Annastacia Palaszczuk was the transport minister under the Bligh government.

Mr SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I ask you to refer to people by their correct titles in the House.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The member for Inala was the transport minister under the Bligh government. The member for Inala failed the Sunshine Coast then and she is failing the Sunshine Coast now. The project has been assessed by Infrastructure Australia. It is shovel ready, but a petty argument over the funding split is causing more commuter uncertainty. If elected, an LNP government would accept the federal coalition's \$390 million funding offer to deliver stage 1 of the Sunshine Coast rail duplication upgrade. We would match the \$390 million and the \$780 million project would be built once and for all. Duplication will provide more than 150 weekly services, improve transport reliability for Sunshine Coast residents and ease congestion on the Bruce Highway. This project is ready to go. Under our economic plan this project will finally leave the station.

The LNP will also back the Brisbane Metro project. Two-thirds of public transport passengers in Brisbane now use the bus, but the network is under increasing pressure. The Brisbane Metro project will boost busway capacity by 22,000 seats per hour between Roma Street and Mater Hill and end the bus logjam that impacts all road users. Metro is Infrastructure Australia's highest ranked project in Queensland. It is needed now, but for political reasons the Labor state government is refusing to work with the LNP Brisbane City Council on this project. If elected the LNP will contribute \$20 million of state government land at Rochedale and South Brisbane to ensure this project is delivered. The LNP will also provide the regulatory approvals needed. Whether you drive, take the bus or use the train, the LNP's plan will get you home safer and sooner.

The second part of my economic plan will bring relief to every household in Queensland. From our elderly to our most disadvantaged to young people just trying to get ahead, Labor's secret tax and record high bills hurt Queenslanders. Labor's secret tax on every Queensland electricity customer is well documented. A staggering 47 per cent of network charges paid by Queenslanders go straight to the government. That is about \$470 a year taken from the typical family. This price gouging must stop and will stop under an LNP government.

The first part of our plan for cheaper electricity would see the LNP restructure our government owned power generators from two to three entities. The government's own modelling shows that creating three state owned generation companies will reduce wholesale prices by more than eight per cent. This is a long-term structural reform that is backed by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission as well as small businesses and consumer advocates. The LNP will also support additional jobs and investment in Queensland's renewable energy sector.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members, the Leader of the Opposition is not taking interjections.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: South Australia's headlong rush to a 50 per cent renewable energy target has resulted in blackouts and volatile prices. Queensland cannot afford to go down that path. As green technology becomes cheaper and more reliable it could generate a growing share of our power needs. An LNP government would mandate government owned energy companies to support renewable energy generation. We would work with the Australian Energy Market Operator to find the right mix of energy generation to ensure our electricity supply is affordable, secure and clean. I promise Queenslanders that the LNP will plan for a future beyond coal. These government owned businesses need a future beyond the current generation stock and should be allowed to look at new technologies when it makes economic sense to do so.

We will protect the environment and ensure that Queensland is as beautiful in the future as it is today. That includes protecting the Great Barrier Reef for our children and grandchildren and beyond. I can also promise Queenslanders that their electricity assets will be run in their interests. We know that

union stacked boards will put the demands of union bosses above the needs of consumers, so we will make electricity board appointments on merit and not use them for union paybacks. Our electricity reforms will not stop there.

The LNP believes free competition in the marketplace is the best way to drive down prices, and that is why the last LNP government introduced competition into the retail electricity market in South-East Queensland. Labor decided to block this reform and its delay ended up costing households in South-East Queensland around \$400 a year. We are seeing competition deliver real savings in the South-East. Competition drives efficiencies and it cuts bills. That is why market reform and increasing competition is part of the LNP's DNA.

Today I am announcing that a future LNP government will extend retail competition to the whole of Queensland. Regional Queenslanders are being squeezed by an energy market that is stacked against them. Labor has allowed Ergon to enjoy a monopoly in the regional areas, despite the Productivity Commission calling for greater competition outside the south-east over a year ago. If elected, the LNP will implement the recommendations of the Productivity Commission's report into electricity pricing. The LNP will end the electricity divide between the south-east and the rest of Queensland. Queenslanders north of Gympie and west of Toowoomba should not be treated like second-class consumers. Allowing retail competition everywhere will ensure all Queenslanders can look for better deals. We will do this by providing a community service obligation to Ergon Energy's distribution businesses to reduce the cost of energy distribution across regional Queensland. This will make it more attractive for retail operators to freely compete in the regions. This would also maintain the uniform tariff policy. Giving households in the regions an opportunity to shop around should save them up to \$300 per year.

Our economic plan will help drivers too. Fuel prices in Queensland are among the highest in the country. I know how much high fuel prices hurt families and that is why I led the campaign to introduce real-time fuel price monitoring to Queensland. Real-time fuel price monitoring sharpens competition and according to the RACQ could save Queensland motorists \$70 million a year. The NRMA has said it could save families up to \$500 a year.

What are we waiting for? Why does Labor have to drag their feet on every good idea? Their two-year trial shows that their heart is not in it. They would rather back big fuel companies than struggling motorists. I promise that a future LNP government will make it compulsory for every retailer to provide full price information in real time. We will provide competition and drive down the cost of fuel. Queenslanders are doing it tough, but the LNP will deliver cheaper fuel and cheaper electricity.

I believe we should give the regions a break and that is just what our economic plan will give them. An investment in water security is an investment in jobs. It is now 13 years since the last dam was built outside of South-East Queensland. The Commonwealth government has billions of dollars available for dams, but it has gone begging under this Brisbane focused Labor government.

A future LNP government will boost agriculture and industry by investing in dams. We would immediately begin work on advancing the Nullinga Dam on the Atherton Tableland and the Urannah Dam near Mackay, and raising the Burdekin Falls Dam near Townsville. We would also work with the federal government to finally deliver the Rookwood Weir for Central Queensland. Labor has been talking about the Rookwood Weir since 2006. Peter Beattie promised it, but over a decade later Labor is still arguing about the costs. There is already strong local demand for extra water from the region's beef and macadamia industries. Queensland industries need water, not waffle. The LNP will not just talk about it; we will build it.

Water is the lifeblood of agriculture. Agriculture drives the economy and creates jobs in much of regional Queensland. As well as feeding Australia, our agriculture also contributes to feeding and clothing the world. After resources, rural produce is Queensland's second biggest export. Our food and fibre exports are now worth around \$10 billion a year. The demand for food from China, India and other Asian economies is only going to increase. Labor is hurting agriculture just when the opportunities in that industry have never been greater. I want us to seize those opportunities and create new jobs and businesses in our regions. The careful allocation of water will be essential for the future production of our world-class food and fibre.

An LNP government will work with Seqwater, SunWater and councils to develop a 30-year water security plan for Queensland. We believe there is capacity to support more jobs in regional Queensland, but we also need to ensure our water is affordable. Labor has approved above-inflation price rises until June 2019, but we believe those should be reviewed in consultation with the industry. The 30-year water security plan we develop will also look at further dam and water infrastructure such as the Hell's Gate Dam and the Tully-Millstream hydro-electricity project. If you have water, you have jobs. Our dams program is about securing the future for regional Queensland.

I have spoken about the LNP's economic plan and how it will help business create jobs and lower the cost of living. However, government is about more than creating prosperity. Queenslanders rely on the state government to provide the most essential services of all. We rely on our teachers to educate our young. We count on our doctors and nurses to care for our sick. I am proud—very proud—of the LNP's record in government. I am proud—very proud—of the LNP's record of improving health services. In 2012 Queensland Health was in a critical condition. It was a complete basket case. Day after day the system let down Queenslanders. That is Labor's legacy and we will never let them forget it.

The last LNP government reduced waiting times for surgery. We reduced the public dental long waitlist. We reopened regional maternity services that were shut down by a Labor government. We reduced ambulance ramping. However, Queensland Health is sickening again under the Palaszczuk government. Our emergency department waiting times are blowing out with almost one-third of patients not being seen in time. Ambulance ramping is back. As of March this year, 23 per cent of patients were left waiting in the back of ambulances for more than 30 minutes. We have also seen the public dental waitlist blow out by over 100 days in just over a year. Queenslanders are now waiting more than 400 days for general dental treatment. Elective surgery wait times are up too, with the median wait time almost doubling under the Palaszczuk government. The public deserve better than that.

Queensland Health's performance should be improving, not declining. The present Minister for Health is a doctor, but not a doctor of medicine. He is far more interested in politics than patients. He is more interested in scoring points than cutting waiting lists. Patients are our priority. We need a public health system that is focused on better outcomes for them. Our hardworking doctors, nurses and paramedics clearly need more help.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Minister for Tourism and Minister for Small Business, the Leader of the Opposition is not taking interjections. I ask you to cease interjecting.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: To get resources where they are needed, the LNP will introduce incentive funding pools for health and hospital services that are tied to the care that patients receive. Incentive based funding will ensure that hospital directors focus their attention on improving front-line services, not expanding backroom bureaucracy. We will give our nurses, doctors and paramedics the resources they need to treat the sick. We will partner with the private sector to slash waiting lists and ensure elective surgery is completed on time. We will ensure dental waiting lists are reduced by increasing the options for care. We will ensure the Surgery Connect program is reviewed as part of our health initiative.

The LNP's plan will help Queenslanders where they need it most. It will help those who are battling addiction as well as those who are battling disease. Across Queensland, particularly in regional and remote communities, ice use has exploded. A future LNP government will build four new rehabilitation centres across the state, with more detox facilities to help people kick their addiction and stay clean. Our focus is on more treatment, more prevention and more rehabilitation. However, we will also shut down the criminal gangs that peddle drugs to the young and vulnerable. We will fight the war on ice at every front. I refuse to give in to drug dealers who profit from the misery of others. They cannot be allowed to win.

There are many impressive public schools in this state. They are schools where everyone in our school communities, including principals, teachers, parents and students, all pull together. I do not believe we can create a great school system from the top down. I believe we can only create great schools from the ground up.

That is why the LNP government introduced independent public schools in 2013. That is why more than 250 school communities have seized the opportunity to take more control over their own affairs. More power for schools means less power for the unions. Labor has slammed the brakes on the IPS system. This government is not neutral on independent public schools and I fear its review will be a cover for axing independent public schools altogether.

Queenslanders pay for our schools and they should be allowed a say on how they are run. We want to have the best schools and the smartest kids in Australia. The IPS system will help us get there and so will decluttering the curriculum. The curriculum is the bedrock of our school system, but it has been weighed down by the extra demands placed on it over the last several years. Teachers and P&Cs have the same concerns.

A crowded curriculum compromises literacy and numeracy, especially in the early years of school education. Under my plan, a future LNP government would ensure a greater focus on literacy, language and numeracy. To achieve this we would partner with teachers, parents and principals to develop guidance for teachers through the Queensland Curriculum Assessment Authority. This is similar to the model adopted in New South Wales under the K-10 curriculum framework.

Our plan is to get back to basics and declutter the curriculum, giving kids a better chance of acquiring the skills they need while taking the pressure off our teaching staff. Our plan will also ensure that English retains its importance throughout the school system. It was recently revealed that English will not be a mandatory component of the new ATAR education system. This foolishly diminishes the importance of this subject. It sends the wrong message to our kids. A future LNP government would overturn this decision and ensure Queensland schools give English the same importance schools in Victoria and New South Wales do—two states which outperform Queensland.

I recognise that our schools sometimes have different needs to schools elsewhere. For instance, it gets hotter in Queensland than it does in the southern states—a lot hotter. 2017 was the hottest year on record. Many communities in southern and South-East Queensland recorded their highest ever temperatures—Gatton hit 45.7 degrees; Dalby, 43 degrees; Warwick, 42.2 degrees; Toowoomba, 40.8 degrees. Brisbane is not much cooler. In January the city's maximum was 37.5 degrees.

Imagine a child in a classroom with no air conditioning when the mercury hits 37.5 degrees or even 45.7 degrees. How can they possibly learn in these conditions? How can teachers teach? They cannot. That is why my LNP team is today committing to air-conditioning every classroom in this state. Cool kids are smart kids.

I remember taking a phone call this year from a gentleman called Ian. He said, 'Deb, my grandchild goes to school in Yarraman and it is hot—very hot. Please help them get air conditioning.' Ian Winks, today I can say I can. Right now the Queensland government only funds air conditioning in state schools in tropical and Western Queensland. I want air conditioning in each and every school. We air-condition our hospitals, our prisons, our parliament, but we let our kids swelter.

In our worst hotspots teachers are sending kids home with heat exhaustion. Labor has been in power for a generation, but they have let this problem go on and on. It is just not good enough. I want our schoolkids to be cool kids. That is what the LNP will deliver in government. It will take time and require significant investment, but I will not accept the status quo. Kids deserve better protection and teachers deserve more respect. The LNP's plan will give it to them.

The LNP will back extra investment in public services like our schools and our hospitals. When extra money is spent wisely it makes a difference. We will never forget that every cent comes from the pockets of taxpayers. The LNP's economic plan recognises that Queensland has to reform its high-tax, low-growth economic model. We want Queensland to be a state of opportunity once more.

That is why an LNP government will guarantee no new taxes if we are elected at the next state election. I will not introduce job-destroying taxes under the radar. I will not introduce a single tax. We will also make stabilising debt a fiscal principle and once we stabilise debt we will start to repay Labor's debt.

We will target a debt level that will see the return of Queensland's AAA credit rating. A future LNP government will focus on the conditions for growth, including a level playing field for Queensland businesses. We have seen the Palaszczuk government give out handouts to too many interstate and international businesses. Corporate welfare for Scottish breweries makes no sense when we have an abundance of homegrown breweries right here in Queensland. If elected the LNP would ensure that government assistance is provided to Queensland businesses as a priority.

Government members interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I have asked members to cease their interjections. The Leader of the Opposition is not accepting those interjections.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: The Treasury will also report on existing grant programs and whether those deals are in the best interest of Queensland taxpayers. I do not believe it is smart to bet our money on individual firms. If the private sector will not risk the bet why should the rest of us.

The one thing people can stake a bet on is more energy and more ideas from the Liberal National Party. Our economic plan includes policies that will lower bills, create jobs and improve our schools and hospitals. Our plan already has more depth, more detail and more imagination than the policies that Labor offered at the last election. We have a plan for Queensland, Labor does not. This government does not know where it is going and it never has. Labor is content for Queensland to stand still as long as it keeps office.

I want to deliver a better future for each and every Queenslanders. The LNP's economic plan outlines what we would do right now and what we plan to do from 2020. It is the beginning not the end of our commitment to Queensland. There will be much more to come because we want Queenslanders everywhere to have jobs and great opportunities. We want Queensland's best days to be ahead of us not behind us. We want substance not spin, actions not excuses, policies not postures. Only the LNP has a plan to get this state moving again and ensure Queensland's best days are ahead of us.