




Speech By
Marty Hunt

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

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

 **Mr HUNT** (Nicklin—LNP) (2.26 pm): I rise to speak to the Appropriation Bill 2018. So much paper was left on my desk yesterday—so much debt, so many new taxes for Queenslanders and, unfortunately, so little for the Nicklin electorate. The Nicklin community has felt neglected for some time. Our community is suffering from several hits over the years.

The hub of the electorate, the suburb of Nambour where the Sunshine Coast Regional Council is currently situated, has suffered the closure of its sugar mill and the ripping out of 1,800 staff from its hospital with no indication of when they will return, leading to business stress and several closures. The Sunshine Coast Regional Council has also announced that it will be moving to the coast. The opportunity was there for the government to deliver some good news for Nicklin. Nicklin needs some good news, some vital infrastructure improvements. I have provided the various departments and ministers with our priorities through questions on notice, letters and emails, only to be denied.

All I hear day after day in this parliament is the government blame, blame, blame. Labor has been in government for around 25 of the last 30 years and yet for anything it cannot or will not do it wants to blame the federal government and previous state LNP governments. If there is an infrastructure crisis, it is of the government's own doing and there are no excuses anymore for neglecting the Nicklin electorate. Unfortunately, today all I can do is point out the deficiencies in this budget. I would love to be able to talk about the great funding we have received and the fair and equitable share, but it just is not so. Despite \$2.2 billion in new taxes and huge borrowings for infrastructure, Nicklin still misses out on our share while its small businesses are put under further stress with higher power prices and extra new taxes.

Obi Obi Road is a state road connecting our beautiful Sunshine Coast hinterland with the rural area of Kenilworth. Visitors to the Sunshine Coast cannot visit the hinterland and then head out to Kenilworth with a caravan or camper on board as the road is not suitable. Until the recent opening of the ambulance station at Kenilworth, the Kenilworth community has had to supply its own community first responders emergency first-aid group because ambulances could not get through Obi Obi Road.

This road is a tourist gateway. The farming community of Kenilworth, particularly those in the dairy industry, have experienced hard times. The community has worked hard to provide some outstanding tourist attraction events, such as the Kenilworth Cheese, Wine and Food Fest, which attracts tens of thousands of people; the Kenilworth Show and Rodeo; and the Kenilworth car show, to name a few. The local bakery has become famous for its one-kilo doughnut, attracting visitors to the town—

Honourable members interjected.

Mr HUNT: Attracting police to the town—to take up the challenge of eating it. It has become a social media success and the town itself is reaping the benefits of having more visitors. The showgrounds, along with several other beautiful local camping spots, also host regular campers and

caravaners. Kenilworth deserves a road into town that allows access for all of these visitors. Unless people are game enough to drive the Obi Obi trail, they have to take the long way around via Eumundi to get into Kenilworth. Certainly, for those people who have a longer vehicle or anything in tow, it is impossible.

The upgrade of this road has been on the agenda for a long time and for a long time has been pushed into the too-hard basket. There must be a solution. The upgrade of this road has been costed. It just needs to be funded. Recently, I was told by the Department of Transport and Main Roads that the upgrade was a low priority because it does not have the necessary volume of traffic. Of course, it does not. People are choosing alternative and much longer routes to avoid the road.

To make matters worse, we see in the budget Labor feathering its own nest at the expense of the needs of regional areas. I understand there is not a bottomless pot of money for every possible project, but the people of Nicklin have waited patiently. When the Minister for Transport can find \$45 million to build a path for bike riders in his patch in Brisbane, people in my electorate become very frustrated. That amount of \$45 million for that project could easily fix this vital gateway road once and for all and provide Mapleton, Kenilworth and the Sunshine Coast hinterland tourist areas the roads that are needed to support locals, local jobs and tourism.

During the 2017 election campaign the LNP committed \$1 million to partner with the Sunshine Coast Council to provide streetscaping and traffic calming through the town of Palmwoods on the state controlled Woombye-Montville Road. This shovel-ready project is important for the safety of pedestrians and vehicles travelling through the town. The town is growing and businesses, such as Rick's Garage, often hold major community events, with people parking and crossing roads. The design of Woombye-Montville Road means that people enter the town on blind bends and the traffic needs to be slowed. This is a project that has been identified. Despite my representations to the minister on this relatively small but important project, again, the people of Palmwoods were denied.

The residents of Cooroy have two of the worst intersections in my electorate. For many years the community has been advocating to fix the intersection of Elm and Myall streets and the intersection of Elm and Diamond streets. The community of Cooroy has waited and waited for government action, with various proposals but no solutions. Once again, this project was put to the minister and brushed aside as not being a priority.

Those are just a few examples of road spending that the government could have done but chose not to. In this budget, there is not one cent specified for roads in the electorate of Nicklin. That is unfair and unacceptable to my community. As I said, when the government can find millions for pet projects in Brisbane, the regions suffer and the electorate of Nicklin has suffered for long enough.

This government has also completely dropped the ball on the Nambour General Hospital project. In 2015, the then minister for health, the current member for Woodridge, said—

For a period, after the opening of the—

Sunshine Coast University Hospital—

... in late 2016, this will be reduced to 129 beds while necessary refurbishment takes place.

However in accordance with Health Service planning requirements, in 2018 Nambour General Hospital will increase to its long term bed number of 248. This will ensure that it has the capacity to continue its role as a major hospital.

In 2018 it was to be ready and opened again. What do we have in 2018? Nothing but a business case that took three years to do. This go-slow saw 1,800 staff pulled out of the hospital early last year with no indication of a return date. Several businesses around the hospital have closed and the area is like a ghost town.

During the election campaign last year I was contacted by a number of business operators near the hospital who pleaded with me to get some action on the return of services and staff as their businesses faced incredible stress. The owner of one of the businesses, a hamburger shop, was working a day job and hiring a junior casual just to try to keep the doors open. Unfortunately, because of Labor's go-slow, that business is no longer there. It is one of the many businesses around the hospital that have closed owing to the mismanagement and go-slow of this government. These local businesses employed local people and they are gone. Jobs have been lost, opportunities have been lost and people have been left in financial hardship.

Wishlist is a local hospital foundation charity that provides much needed extra equipment and support for our hospitals. The bulk of Wishlist's operating income comes from the Nambour General Hospital car park. Over the past year, owing to the slashing of staff and services at that hospital, there has been a serious downturn that has affected the ability of Wishlist to meet its operating costs. Elderly people have been forced to travel regularly down the coast to receive services at the Sunshine Coast

University Hospital. This budget has only drip-fed the funding to the hospital. This is not good enough. The people of the Nicklin electorate are suffering because the government has taken its eye off the ball and has neglected this project for too long.

During the election campaign the Minister for Police came to Nambour to announce that, finally, Nambour was getting its long overdue police station. It was a \$9 million commitment to replace the demountable police station that was delivered on the back of a truck around 10 years ago. In the last few days I got a tip from the local police that the government was going to push out the program for another year. When I read the budget papers, that tip was confirmed. The police in my area deserve better. When the government makes promises about their facilities and then lets them down, that affects the morale of officers who are already doing a difficult job. I call on the minister to get on with the job and get this station built. There was no excuse to push out the project until next year. Construction of the station needs to start this year.

On Tuesday morning I had some optimism when the Minister for Education said in a ministerial statement words to the effect that we on this side of the House might be pleasantly surprised by the allocation of school funding in our areas. I read the budget papers with anticipation. Sadly, that funding did not include the Nicklin electorate. Just one solitary school in the Nicklin electorate received any capital funding.

The Nicklin electorate misses out on road funding, education funding, law and order funding, health funding. Fail, fail, fail, fail. In every respect this budget is bad news for the Nicklin electorate. There are more taxes and next to no funding in all areas and, where there is funding, that funding is trickling out or being pushed out to next year in a go-slow.

Finally, I want to touch on the Sunshine Coast rail duplication. In 2009, Labor was going to fully fund this project. In 2015, the LNP agreed to fully fund it. Now, we have the federal government gifting us 50 per cent of the project cost. It is time to get it done. People are sick of the politics over this project. They just want to see it done. A future LNP government will fund the other 50 per cent of this project and it is shame that Labor will not.

I am disappointed but not surprised. During the election period the LNP committed to several projects around Nicklin and these have been put to ministers as community priorities and denied. Yet once again we see pet projects and money for cycling in Brisbane while our roads are neglected, our hospitals are neglected, our police are neglected and our schools are neglected. No-one could argue Nicklin got its fair share of anything in this budget. The government can look forward to me continuing to fight for our fair and equitable share of capital expenditure in Nicklin.