




Speech By  
**Michael Hart**

**MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 June 2018

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

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (2.00 pm): Following on from the member for Cooper, I rise to contribute to the debate on this year's state budget. I have to say that I normally enjoy following the member for Cooper because she does get quite animated in her speech. I thought she was very subdued today, but I will try to get that finger-pointing right. It may not look quite the same with me, but I will try.

I want to firstly touch on the budget as it relates to my electorate of Burleigh because, quite frankly, the Labor gravy train did not stop at my electorate: it went straight by. When I look at the 'Delivering for the Gold Coast' highlights in the budget there are only four things I can see that are somewhat close to my electorate. The biggest one, of course, is the funding for the M1. I thank the federal LNP government for putting forward the \$1 billion, which has now spurred on the state Labor government to come to the party after years of not doing anything.

It is very important to realise that in the last 30 years we have had 25 years of Labor governments in this state, so it is a bit rich for those opposite to blame the LNP for everything that happens in this state when they have been here for 25 of the last 30 years. We look forward to the M1—the Pacific Motorway, as it is known down on the Gold Coast—being widened to six lanes from Varsity Lakes to the border, but a bigger issue down there is going to be the M2.

I am very happy that the LNP is going to build the M2. It will absolutely fix congestion problems on the Gold Coast. Anybody who lives on the Gold Coast—especially on the southern end of the Gold Coast where I live—will tell you that the big issues on the M1 are the feeder roads that lead onto it. Bermuda Street in my area is a prime example. It runs basically the whole length of the Gold Coast and feeds quite a bit of traffic onto the M1 late in the afternoon, especially around three o'clock, at school finishing time. Widening the M1 south of there is the next big thing we need to do—widening the M1 from Varsity Lakes to the border will fix that—but the M2 is the big thing that we need now.

There is \$4.5 million for work at the Gold Coast Recreation Centre, which is in my electorate at Talleggera. It is a great facility and I am looking forward to that. The Palm Beach Currumbin State High School, which was in the member for Currumbin's area but I am grateful is now in my area—thank you, member for Currumbin, for passing that on to me—is getting \$1.5 million for some of its buildings. The final \$2 million of the \$10 million is for the next stage of the light rail which will be coming to Burleigh. I am looking forward to that, although I think I have made my feelings quite clear on the Gold Coast about where the next stage after that should go. If it goes down through Palm Beach, I do not think that is a very good idea. I will endeavour to meet with the Minister for Transport in the next few weeks to have a chat about that.

I would like to cover a few things in the budget that relate to my portfolio. As we have heard today, this is a budget of taxes, debt and unemployment. All three of those are going up and up under this government; it is completely out of control. This morning we heard the Treasurer say that she was honest with the people of Queensland before we went to the last election. She claimed that what she told the people of Queensland is exactly what the government did.

The interesting thing to note is that before the election—and only the day before the election when the media blackout had already stated—the government said there were going to be some new taxes in Queensland and they would raise about \$491 million. We have really seen a key promise broken, and it is obscene. It is a breach of trust with the people of Queensland because the waste tax will generate \$1.32 billion, the wagering tax \$367 million, the land tax \$311 million, the property investor tax \$132 million and the car stamp duty \$100 million.

All up, that is \$2.231 billion, not \$491 million. That is \$1.74 billion more than the government said it would be before the election. If that is not a breach of trust for the people of Queensland, then I do not know what is. That means that every Queenslanders, including all of us here, will pay \$3.7 billion every year in interest alone. That equates to \$7,000 a minute, over \$420,000 an hour, \$10 million a day and \$71 million a week.

When they were in opposition this government used to like to talk about net debt. If you turn to page 85 of Budget Paper No. 2, you will see at the bottom of the graph that net debt this year is \$1.6 billion, but in 2021 it goes out to \$13.7 billion. This is net debt blowing out by \$12 billion in the period 2017 to 2021. When you look at borrowings inside the government, let alone the GOCs, the borrowing in the government goes from \$31.367 billion to \$42.29 billion in the same period. That is an increase of 30 per cent in general government debt—30 per cent! That is what the Labor Party is going to push our debt out by in those five short years to 2021. That is a 30 per cent increase in debt. I really am staggered, but that is Labornomics for you. Even in a period where we have booming coal royalties and billions and billions of dollars coming into the state coffers, they still cannot cut down on debt. They are still binging on debt in this state.

I want to touch briefly on small business and housing, because the \$1.3 billion waste tax that has been imposed on the people of Queensland is going to have quite an effect on building a house. When somebody goes to get a mini skip in the future, you can imagine how much extra that will cost. How much will that all add—

**An opposition member:** It will add \$1,400.

**Mr HART:** Approximately \$1,400. There you go. Paul Bidwell from Master Builders said—

This is a triple whammy for housing builders, with Treasury calling an end to the first-homeowners boost, the recently announced waste levy and the impact of land tax increases, which together will raise the cost of building a new home.

That is what Master Builders is really concerned about.

I want to move on to energy, because I saw a few puzzled looks over there when the Leader of the Opposition was outlining where we will go on energy in the future. Quite clearly, the Labor Party has been using energy as a hidden tax, and that is well proven now. We have laid that out for the people of Queensland. We have shown exactly how this is happening. Billions and billions of dollars are being ripped out of people's pockets and into the coffers of the government, and Queenslanders are just getting a small proportion of that back.

We intend to transition to renewables in a sensible way. We are not going to rush into this ridiculous 50 per cent target that those opposite want to set for this state. Quite frankly, it will not work. We will split the GOCs from two into three. It was the Labor Party that took us from three to two and tried to go to one in the last few years, but we said it should go from two back to three. We want to introduce some renewable energy into those companies.

This morning I heard the Premier say that she would look to see how many times I had said I am anti renewables. She will find that it is none. What I have said every step of the way is that the LNP and I are technology neutral. We are very happy to have renewable energy, but it has to make sense. It has to be reliable—

**Mr Bennett:** It has to stack up.

**Mr HART:** It has to stack up financially. It means that when people come home at night and they turn on the light switch the lights come on and they can afford the bill when they get it. That is what the LNP is all about. We think the correct mix of renewables, base load power and some storage inside these GOCs—one way or the other—will lead to far more competition. Competition is what will help in this marketplace.

We have said that we will extend retail competition into the Ergon area by shifting the CSO that is presently paid into the network costs. That is exactly why Ergon Retail gets the CSO to start with—because there is an inflated network cost because of the distance that has to be covered in delivering electricity in regional Queensland. It gets the CSO specifically to reduce those network costs. We are saying, 'Let us take that CSO off those network costs for everyone and introduce competition in regional Queensland.' Then we can have lots of companies, as we are now starting to see in South-East Queensland, enter the regional market. That will make quite a difference to the price of electricity in regional Queensland.

As I said earlier, the Labor Party has been gouging people on electricity. There is no clearer evidence than last year's budget papers. Electricity generation earnings were budgeted to be \$482 million and the estimated actual was \$892 million, an increase of \$410 million. I thought, 'Wow, suddenly they have stumbled across an extra \$410 million in electricity earnings from the generators.' In this year's papers the actual is \$1.24 billion—\$759 million more than they had budgeted for. One would think that these budget figures are prepared in May or something like that so people would have a fair idea of the earnings of the two generators. That is what goes into the budget papers. In fact, just a couple of weeks later they had made another \$349 million! That is a great coincidence. That is a great accident to come across.

Let us talk about the \$759 million. A few days ago we heard that the Queensland population had hit five million, when baby Elizabeth was born. Members should get their calculators and divide \$759 million divided by five million. It comes to \$154 per head. That is how much extra this government made in electricity in 2016-17. That is \$154 per head more than it expected to make. If we assume that a typical family has two parents and two kids, that equates to an extra \$600 per household—on top of what was budgeted. This is extra money that the government was not expecting to get. Its response to that is to give back an asset ownership bonus of \$50 per household—not per person but per household—for two years. It is ripping \$600 out of people's pockets. In fact, based on the \$1.24 billion it made it is \$250 per head, or for a household of four people \$1,000—that is just on the earnings of generators; I am not talking about networks, retailers or anything else—and it is going to give back \$100. Don't people feel happy about that! Is it any wonder that the government wants this tax to continue? It wants this to go on year after year.

Debt, price gouging and hidden taxes are what this government is all about. It is all about Labornomics. I do not see this changing anytime soon. Unfortunately, 15 minutes is not long enough for me to say everything I would like to say. I say to the minister that I fully support something happening in the Daintree. I have been up there several times. I notice from the SDS that we are looking at that. I am very happy to support the government in whatever it decides to do there. I have seen Russell O'Doherty up there a couple of times. I encourage the minister to speak to him. I will go with the minister, if that is of any assistance. I think the people there deserve to have grid power.