




Speech By  
**Ros Bates**

**MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA**

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

 **Ms BATES** (Mudgeeraba—LNP) (11.38 am): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the Appropriation Bill 2018. This budget is a typical Labor budget—a con job for Queensland and a shameless abandonment of my electorate of Mudgeeraba. There is a new face, a new approach, but the same debt. Worst of all, this budget actively strives to hurt local householders with five new taxes. Five new taxes, an \$83 billion debt bomb and the worst unemployment rate in Australia is Labor's plan for Queensland—from Biloela to Brisbane, from Lockhart River to Logan.

Seven months after being re-elected, it is business as usual for the do-nothing Palaszczuk Labor government, with corruption scandals, an ambulance ramping crisis, toll road fails, road congestion getting worse and a school curriculum crisis. Over the next four years, with this budget the cost of living will go up, debt will increase, jobs will be lost and the economy will stall. This budget places politics before the security of future generations of Queenslanders. Labor is short-sighted, seeking out easy political victories by drawing down on the wealth of future generations. This budget does nothing for Queensland, except bring more debt and more uncertainty.

The 2018 health budget is more about spin over substance and politics rather than patient care. Let us not forget that this health minister cannot even run his own office, so what else could one expect? Categories 1, 2 and 3 emergency patients all missed important targets about being seen within clinically recommended time frames. Those are patients with immediate, imminent or potentially life-threatening injuries. Ambulance ramping was way off target, with 22 per cent of Queensland patients being stuck on ambulance ramps for longer than 30 minutes. Key vaccination rates for children at one year, two years and five years of age were not met.

Labor is discontinuing obesity measures to hide the fact that the problem is getting worse, particularly for Queensland women, and it has failed to implement key election commitments around prevention. In fact, when it comes to obesity and the importance of preventive health measures, let us see what the AMA said about this budget. Dr Dilip Dhupelia, the President of the AMAQ, said—

For weeks now the government has been talking about the obesity scourge that we have in Queensland, and the AMA has asked for a whole of government solution to our obesity crisis.

This was not delivered today.

Labor like to talk about record investments, but the fact is that they failed to deliver \$115.5 million of the Queensland Health capital projects that they promised in 2017-18. Is it any wonder that much needed hospital upgrades are years away from delivery and waiting times continue to increase? Supplies and services to Queensland hospital and health services also see a cut of almost \$395 million between the adjusted budget of 2017-18 and the budget for 2018-19.

This budget also puts to bed the great mistruth about funding from Canberra, with almost \$4.8 billion coming in 2018-19. Let us compare that to 2012-13, when the Rudd-Gillard-Rudd government delivered only \$3.2 billion in funding to Queensland hospital services. There is record funding coming from Canberra. Queensland is still one of only two states that has not signed up to the new national partnership agreement on health that will provide an additional \$30 billion into Queensland hospitals over the five years after 2020, which is an increase of more than \$7 billion for Queensland. This Premier and this health minister continue to put politics ahead of patient care.

Let us look at some of the hospital and health boards. For 2018-19 the Cairns HHS still has a forecast operating deficit of \$15.8 million, which at least is a slight improvement. The Central West HHS has had a cut to staff of seven, based on the actual figure in 2017-18 versus the budgeted figure in 2018-19, with no excuse offered. Median wait times at our main children's hospital for both the emergency department and elective surgeries are way above the state average. The Children's Health Queensland HHS has a cut to staff of 92, based on the actual figure in 2017-18 versus the budgeted figure in 2018-19.

For 2018-19, the Darling Downs HHS has a forecast operating deficit of \$7.68 million, despite being in surplus previously. For 2018-19, the Mackay HHS has a forecast operating deficit of \$6.5 million. The Metro South HHS has a cut to staff of 393, based on the actual figure for 2017-18 versus the budgeted figure for 2018-19. The Sunshine Coast HHS has a cut to staff of 140, based on the actual figure in 2017-18 versus the budgeted figure in 2018-19. The Torres and Cape HHS has a cut to staff of 18, based on the actual figure for 2017-18 versus the budgeted figure for 2018-19, with no excuses offered. So much for closing the gap on Indigenous disadvantage. The Office of the Health Ombudsman has a cut of three staff, from 140 to 137, with no excuse offered.

Over 70 per cent of Labor's funding for the Building Better Hospitals capital program is not being spent until 2020-21 or 2021-22, meaning that Labor's promised hospital upgrades are years away from delivery. In the meantime, ambulance ramping is back, our emergency departments are overcrowded and elective surgery wait times keep getting worse. Labor has failed to plan for future growth and our public health system is under severe strain right now.

Queenslanders deserve a world-class health system that the Palaszczuk Labor government is not delivering. Unfortunately, Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk and Labor are not delivering and our public health system is lurching back to the dark old days under Anna Bligh. The latest Queensland Health hospital performance data shows that our elective surgery wait times are blowing out. Since Labor was elected, the median wait time for elective surgery has almost doubled from 28 days to 50 days. More patients are not being seen within clinically recommended times, putting their health and recovery at risk. Those are not just numbers on a spread sheet; it is your mother, it is your son, it is your close family friend. It is simply not good enough.

Our front-line nurses, doctors and paramedics need more support on the front line. It is time for Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk and the Minister for Health to stop playing politics and start putting patients first. The AMA Queensland labelled the state government's budget health initiatives a bandaid solution. Treasurer Trad talked up the public health system's record \$17.3 billion operating budget and the additional \$985 million in capital spending on services and facilities outlined in the budget. However, the AMA Queensland and the Heart Foundation Queensland have labelled that mere lip service to serious health issues. The AMA Queensland president believes that extra health funding has been allocated towards health workers to treat patients' symptoms rather than addressing the root cause of their illnesses. He also wants funding to be more evenly spread among urban and regional hospitals, to ensure patients in remote areas have access to treatment.

Steven Vines, Chief Executive Officer of the Heart Foundation Queensland, was disappointed that the government had talked tough on the importance of preventive health measures, but failed to follow through with enough money to address the scope of health issues amongst Queenslanders. With two-thirds of Queenslanders overweight or obese, we have some very high physical inactivity levels, particularly in regional and rural Queensland where those things are at their worst levels. The state budget outlined no investment in preventive health to reduce the burden on our hospital system. It is great that we have a record health budget, but we could reduce costs if instead we invested in prevention.

Queenslanders deserve a world-class health system no matter where they live. Regional Queenslanders have been dudded by this Labor government. Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk and Labor are too busy worrying about hospital upgrades in South-East Queensland to support rural and regional health care. In the last state election, Labor did not promise a single additional hospital bed outside South-East Queensland.

Under Labor, we saw a monolithic and centralised control of Queensland Health, but the LNP created 16 hospital and health boards across Queensland as part of our plan to empower local communities, increase local accountability and value our health workers. We doubled the subsidy to help patients travel to our hospitals, helping rural and regional Queenslanders get access to the services they need. We reopened regional maternity services that were shut down by the previous Bligh Labor government. Mums and bubs across the state also benefitted from a new \$28.9 million program over four years that provided mums with two home visits by a midwife or a child health nurse during their baby's first four weeks. Regional women also benefitted from an over 40 per cent increase in the flying hours of the flying obstetric and gynaecological service.

The LNP appointed this state's first-ever mental health commissioner and ensured that the new Mental Health Commission received the resources it needed to improve mental health and minimise the harmful impacts of substance abuse in our communities. We delivered major improvements to surgery waiting times for our children. As of June 2014, 100 per cent of all children requiring urgent category 1 surgery were seen on time within the clinically recommended 30 days, compared to 97 per cent at the change of government. The LNP's record investment in Queensland Health meant a similar improvement in emergency departments, with 87 per cent of children being seen within the clinically recommended four hours, compared to just 81 per cent at the change of government.

Ambulance ramping significantly reduced by over 20 per cent under the LNP and we cleared Labor's long wait lists for public dental patients who had been left on the waiting lists for more than two years. At the change of government, Labor had left 61,405 dental patients waiting for more than two years. By mid-2014 this was reduced to zero.

The LNP's economic plan announced by the Leader of the Opposition is one I am very proud to support. Unlike Labor, whose only plan is for increased taxes, we want a state where our best days are ahead of us. Queensland used to be the economic powerhouse of Australia, but we are now battling for the wooden spoon.

Stagnating wages growth, high unemployment, a youth jobs crisis in regional Queensland and flatlining business confidence are all symptoms of Labor's economic management. The LNP has an economic plan to: bust congestion, provide cheaper electricity and fuel, ensure better health and education, deliver water security and stand for lower taxes. In terms of health, our focus will be on patient care, as it should be. We will introduce incentive funding for local health and hospital service boards that is tied to better performance. We want to treat more patients, more quickly and restore confidence in our public health services.

This forms part of our patient care guarantee to improve health services for Queenslanders, no matter where they live. I notice that the government is taking our stand on that and actually using our words. We will also partner with the private sector to slash waiting lists and ensure elective surgery is completed in medically recommended time frames.

The health minister carried on about this element of our plan yesterday and then the Premier trots off to the Herston quarter development next to the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital and supports the project being managed by Australian Unity as the development partner. For those who may not be aware, Australian Unity is a private health provider. Labor's hypocrisy knows no bounds. It is just another example of a minister who puts politics ahead of patient care.

The LNP will also tackle the ice epidemic in Queensland with a comprehensive plan to build more rehab and detox facilities across the state. We have a comprehensive ice plan that will increase treatment and crack down on the organised crime gangs peddling drugs to our kids. Ice addicts need more help to kick the habit and get their lives back on track. Labor's business as usual approach will not fix this problem.

In this budget we again see the needs of Mudgeeraba completely ignored. We have been blatantly disregarded and our local area will miss out once again as a result. Labor can spin the facts any way they like, but residents know Labor is nowhere to be seen on our local issues. All Labor has been able to muster up is: \$13.9 million announced to remediate barter slopes on the Gold Coast-Springbrook Road; \$5.898 million for upgrades to Nerang-Murwillumbah Road; and \$3.941 million for upgrades to Beechmont Road. These are all 18 months too late after Cyclone Debbie. The funding is to fix damage which occurred 18 months ago.

For the M1 we finally see some funding commitments from Labor. There was \$70 million for an extra lane to be built from Mudgeeraba to Varsity Lakes. Again, this is too little, too late. In 2007 Paul Lucas was given matching funding from the Howard government to eight lane the M1 from Nerang to Tugun. I know this because I was there. Only now, on the eve of a federal election, has state Labor been railroaded by both the Turnbull government and the federal opposition into finally fixing this crucial piece of infrastructure.

Labor has consistently ignored the need to upgrade the Gold Coast portion of the M1. It was the LNP who shamed Labor into funding the next M1 upgrade. It was the LNP that funded the \$8 million Carrara roundabout upgrade. Locals in my electorate know that only the LNP will build a better Mudgeeraba and a better Queensland.

We missed out on numerous other funding announcements. There was nothing for our Mudgeeraba schools. There was nothing for anti-hooning upgrades at the intersection of Pine Creek Road. There was no funding for flashing school zone signage at Numinbah Valley State School. There was no funding to clean up Mudgeeraba Creek. There is also no funding for vital safety upgrades and congestion busting at the Mudgeeraba Road-Tallai Road intersection. I am hugely disappointed again that Labor is playing politics and is not funding the Robina Community Legal Centre which provides crucial community services to those in need, particularly in relation to domestic violence.

In classic Labor style, the government is spending more than it can afford and leaving the debt to future generations. They are stealing from our children and their children. In classic Labor style, the government is going for cheap political victories in health rather than delivering real change to our public health system.