




Speech By
Shane Knuth

MEMBER FOR HILL

Record of Proceedings, 14 June 2018

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

 **Mr KNUTH** (Hill—KAP) (11.11 pm): I rise to speak to the budget. I want to acknowledge the funding of \$4.7 million for the Palmerston Highway. I believe that will help. It probably needs about \$20 million. I thank the minister for responding to this need. He committed \$3 million last year for the particularly bad areas around Henrietta Creek. There were a number of accidents and near deaths in that area. Funding of \$4.7 million will help but we need a lot more for that major highway. It is being pounded day in and day out. I want to highlight to the government the importance of having extra funds allocated to this highway. I do acknowledge the \$4.7 million provided in this budget.

There is funding of \$9.5 million out of the \$70 million total spend for the Atherton Hospital. We fought for this for years. We had a petition with 6,000 signatures expressing the need for this redevelopment. There was an acknowledgement at the time of the Ravenshoe blast, in which a number of people were killed, that the Atherton Hospital did not have the capacity to take the patients. I acknowledge the former minister for health's work in securing that \$70 million. We are very appreciative of it. It will create jobs in the region. We look forward to that development starting. I know that it will kick off before the end of this year.

I acknowledge the funding of \$900,000 out of the total cost of \$1.8 million for the replacement of the El Arish auxiliary fire and rescue station. That will cover the areas surrounding Kurrimine Beach and Mission Beach. This is very important to the region, particularly given that the population has increased.

There is \$6.3 million to upgrade the Atherton Police Station. That is going to start this year. I have been pushing for this for at least five years. I believe the work is going to start before the end of the year. We are appreciative of that upgrade. It was a very cluttered station. People were not transferring to the Atherton Police Station because of the station itself. I think a new police station for the Atherton area will help greatly.

There is only \$68,000 for navua sedge. This is a big issue. It is noxious weed. It is taking over the north to the point that it is a catastrophe. The Cassowary Coast Regional Council, the Tablelands Regional Council, the Hinchinbrook Shire Council and the Cook Shire Council are coming on board to try to do something to resolve this problem. We need more than \$68,000. We need more than \$250,000 to help combat this noxious weed. To try to kill it we need chemical control. We have to remove the dairy cattle for three months every time we apply the chemical control. We need R&D funding. We need more funding and support. I am hoping the minister for agriculture will respond to this request. We have been lobbying for this for quite some time.

There is \$21.3 million in total spend for the banana industry with regard to Panama TR4. There is only \$40,000 over three years for aerial shooting. Pig owners cannot go onto banana farms because of the biosecurity risks. Banana farmers cannot move in and out and remove the pigs because of the concerns around spreading TR4. The only way to do this is by aerial shooting. There is only \$40,000

over three years for this. We thank the minister for giving us a million dollars for the Cassowary Coast area, but we need at least half a million dollars over the next three years for aerial shooting. It is vitally important for that industry.

With regard to school funding, I acknowledge the support of the education minister. There is \$250,000 to paint the Herberton State School. I contacted them the other day. They are wrapped about this funding. They have been trying to secure that funding for quite some years. There is \$75,000 for the Walkamin State School to refurbish block A. This is in addition to the air-conditioning of that school last year. They are only small schools. It is very important for those small schools to receive that funding.

There is \$50,000 for Mundoo State School for the refurbishment of block A. There is \$50,000 to remodel the science, prep and computer space at the Dimbulah State School. There is \$230,000 for the learning and community centre at Innisfail State College. They have applied for this for the last three years. They now have the funding. They are wrapped at the present time.

There is \$70,000 for the playground roof structure at Butchers Creek State School. I will be attending their sports day next Friday. They were excited to hear about the funding for their school. It might be a little playground, but to those schools a sandpit and a playground roof are everything.

There has been a commitment to widen the Bruce Highway between Cairns and Innisfail. There is \$2.4 million to complete the resurfacing work from Innisfail to Ingham. There is \$6.7 million for the Ash and Pine streets intersection. It has been a bad intersection. People have been killed there. That has been a problem intersection for quite some time. We are very appreciative of that funding.

I heard a number of members mention privatisation. I think the member for Theodore spent 10 minutes talking about Labor and privatisation. The privatisation of Queensland Rail was a bad move. I know that they sold the coal component in the Bowen Basin. There was \$1.7 million in profit each year coming from the coal component of Queensland Rail in the Bowen Basin. That is \$1.7 million that we do not have. Some \$500 million was coming from the above-rail component from Townsville to Mount Isa. That is \$500 million each year that we do not have. That is \$2.2 million that we do not have in the present budget.

Had we not sold that asset we would have had it at this time. That is why it is very important that we construct and own the railway line in the Galilee Basin and not give the money to an Indian company. We need to build and own it. That would mean there would be transport haulage for life. That would mean royalties for life. We would get the income. We would also take control and have ownership of that railway and the Galilee Basin.

It was a disappointment when the Labor government privatised the retail arm of the energy sector. We were told that energy prices were going to decrease as a matter of competition. Since that day they have tripled. Mr Deputy Speaker, you have to remember that the LNP supported them. They cheered them on and backed the Beattie government in privatising the retail arm of our energy sector. The member for Clayfield pleaded with them and said they were not going far enough. He said, 'Please sell the wires. Please sell the poles. Please sell the energy generators.' It is in the *Hansard*. The LNP begged them to sell our energy assets.

As a result of the asset sales, the ETU and the CFMEU campaigned against the Bligh government because it cost this state millions of dollars in lost revenue. That money could have been in the budget. They campaigned against the Labor government and the Labor Party was reduced to seven seats. The LNP government came in. I hear many of the LNP members speaking here tonight about how terrible Labor are.

The first thing the Newman government did was cut the pensioners' lawn mower vouchers. Then they cut the number of health workers. Then they declared war on the doctors and sacked 14,000 public servants. This relates to the budget because there is a cost factor in doing this. The budget would have been much more significant if those 14,000 workers had not been sacked. RoadTek workers were not staying in motels anymore, so those businesses lost. Those workers were not spending in the towns. The health workers were not spending money in rural and regional Queensland. Our towns were dying as a result.

After that Campbell Newman asked for a \$70,000 pay rise. The ministers in the Newman government asked for a \$50,000 pay rise. Then he declared war on the unions. Then he announced that he was going to privatise our energy assets.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McArdle): Members!

Mr KNUTH: Do not give us this rubbish about how wonderful the great LNP are—cut, sack and sell. I was in there amongst it all.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Members!

Mr KNUTH: They will go down as the worst government in 150 years.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Hill, resume your seat! When I am on my feet, you sit down immediately.

Mr KNUTH: I am obeying, sir.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I call the member for Hill.

Mr KNUTH: The disappointing thing about this budget is the infrastructure spending. We have not seen a major infrastructure project in the last 30 years. I do remember that at the time of the construction of the Burdekin Dam we also had the October stock market crash. They were saying that Australia was doing it tough, but we were prospering because we had just finished the construction of the Burdekin Dam. Infrastructure is very important in our region. We need the ministers to go up there and start to invest in rural infrastructure projects like the North Johnstone transfer.

An opposition member: Good luck.

Mr KNUTH: I remember when Newman was in power and handed down three budgets in a row. I asked the Parliamentary Library to search what my electorate received in funding. They took about two weeks. They might have found a handover of an ambulance but that was about it. That was after three years of the Newman government. Do not give us this wonderful, great Newman government—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Hill, direct your comments through the chair.

Mr KNUTH: Mr Deputy Speaker, the LNP went from 78 seats to 42. Who are they blaming? The KAP and the Labor Party. They need to have a good look at themselves. As I said, they were the worst government in 150 years. They are still blaming everyone else. It is the Labor Party's fault. It is One Nation's fault. Have a look at yourselves—an absolute disgrace.

Mr Mickelberg: Labor in the north. You don't stand for the north; you stand for unions and Labor.

Mr KNUTH: Did they back the budget last year? They put their hand on their heart and said how terrible the budget was but they still voted for it.

Mr Millar: What are you achieving?

Mr KNUTH: What are you achieving? I am after the North Johnstone transfer. That is very important. It was designed at the time of the construction of the Tinaroo Dam.

Mr Mickelberg: What the hell are you talking about? What have we got here?

Mr KNUTH: Can you shut this squawking parrot up, Mr Deputy Speaker?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Hill, that language is unparliamentary. I ask you to withdraw it.

Mr KNUTH: I withdraw. The North Johnstone transfer is about infrastructure development. It is important for our region. At the time of the construction of the Tinaroo Dam, there was an acknowledgement that that area could not take in—

Mr Mickelberg: Come on, mate. We're spellbound.

Mr Purdie: Have a Bex and a lie down.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock.

Mr KNUTH: Stop sulking, you poor buggers. The truth must hurt, you poor beggars.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Hill, resume your seat, please. Members, it is a late night. It is going to get later. I ask members to listen to each other in silence. Member for Hill, you have the call.

Mr KNUTH: I am supportive of Nullinga Dam. There have been feasibility studies for the last 30 years. Even the Borbidge government promised the construction of Nullinga Dam. We are looking at about a \$600 million or \$700 million project. I do not have faith in the LNP and I do not have faith in this government to construct that dam. I do not have faith in either.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr KNUTH: I do not have faith in you either. You had three years. You lost government. The North Johnstone transfer—

Mr Mickelberg: Why don't you just go over there with the unions, mate? You might as well. You are representing them anyway.

Mr KNUTH: Remember something—

Mr Mickelberg: KAP—Labor in the north.

Mr KNUTH: Can you shut this parrot up, Mr Deputy Speaker?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Hill—

Mr KNUTH: Yes. Sorry, Mr Deputy Speaker.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: No. That language is unparliamentary. I ask you to withdraw it.

Mr KNUTH: I withdraw, Mr Deputy Speaker. We are looking at a \$30 million project to transfer water from the North Johnstone River into the Barron River into the Tinaroo Dam. The Cape River Bridge was a \$34 million project. You are looking at about a \$30 million to \$40 million project. It would provide about 10,000 or 20,000 megalitres into the Tinaroo Dam which would help alleviate the problems for irrigators and for all of the water users. It would also help the flood inundation issues on the coast. The Tully hydro is also a very important project for our region.

(Time expired)