




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE
AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (2.24 pm): When the Deputy Premier and Treasurer handed down her first Queensland state budget in 2018 I said that it could only be described as one of spin and rhetoric. Twelve months later and we see a 2019 state budget that not only embraces the Palaszczuk Labor government's policy of spin and rhetoric, but indeed goes further and delivers higher taxes, more debt, fewer jobs and less infrastructure. In my budget reply speech last year I made the prediction that the legacy of the Treasurer would be one of tax, unemployment and debt. The Treasurer and Deputy Premier can certainly be confident that the Queensland budget handed down this week not only cements that but also firmly builds upon that terrible legacy.

Before further examining this year's state budget, it is important to look at the past 12 months and the lead-up to the state budget to fully understand and appreciate the precarious financial position that Queensland finds itself in thanks to the gross economic mismanagement of the Palaszczuk Labor government and its Treasurer. Over the past 12 months, the Palaszczuk Labor government has simply jumped from one crisis to the next. In our hospital and health system, ambulance ramping and bed block have once again become a permanent feature. Recently in South-East Queensland, 10 hospitals were on code yellow. At the time, the Premier and health minister blamed Campbell Newman, the Morrison federal coalition government, people with the flu, the elderly and even sick people in general.

There has also been the disgraceful renaming of the Lady Cilento children's hospital, whereby hundreds of thousands of dollars were wasted and a family was devastated through the process—all justified by a faulty and fraudulent survey. The recent findings of the Crime and Corruption Commission in relation to this matter are an indictment of the Labor government's dubious handling of the renaming process. It is high time the Palaszczuk Labor government understands that, when it comes to Queensland's health system, the primary role of government is service delivery and not rhetoric, not spin, not slogans and not dubious decision-making.

Let us look at Labor's record in health, because what Queenslanders who are seeking health care within the Queensland hospital and health system have had to endure in just the first few months of this year alone leaves a lot to be desired. Year on year the Palaszczuk Labor government allocates a record spend in health. This year's state budget includes a record \$19.2 billion spend in health on behalf of Queenslanders, which is an increase of \$929 million. Labor always throws dollars at problems without examining system issues, let alone implementing processes to measure outcomes on behalf of patients and the taxpayers of Queensland. However, Queenslanders have seen this all before under the failed Beattie and Bligh Labor governments, in which the Premier served as an apprentice and which were hopelessly infected with inertia and failed public administration.

It is also common knowledge that this Labor government is always desperate to avoid a negative headline rather than actually solving any crisis of its own making. Nurses, doctors, ambulance and paramedic staff and health professionals are being forced to shoulder the burden of Labor's gross incompetence and mismanagement of our health system. Labor always trumpets how they are the

friend of the worker. With friends like the Palaszczuk Labor government, the workers of our health and ambulance services have been badly let down. All this goes to the very heart of Labor's failed priorities. When Labor is called out for all of these failings and more, what happens? Labor often says, 'It is not our fault. It is not our problem. It is not our responsibility.'

Labor has also lost control of the justice system. There has been the farcical scene of a lavish prison wedding taking place. Meanwhile, prison guards continue to be assaulted as Labor's Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services fails to act comprehensively and decisively. The ABC's *Four Corners* program exposed the crisis in Queensland's youth system, with children as young as 10 being held for prolonged periods in maximum security watch houses designed for adults only. It was even revealed that senior officials from the Premier's department were warned multiple times about serious incidents and concerns regarding children being held in maximum security adult watch houses. There appears to be no end in sight with respect to this sorry saga.

Under Labor, the rail fail crisis continues to roll on. Just last month, Labor gave themselves a pat on the back for restoring 32 services. However, Labor still has 440 services to restore. The Liberal National Party shadow minister for transport and main roads, Steve Minnikin MP, said that based on the current projections of 32 services being restored in 2½ years it will take more than 36 years to give Queenslanders a fully restored schedule. Even so, Labor refuses to tell Queenslanders when they can finally expect all services to be restored. When it comes to fixing transport, we just cannot trust Labor.

Let us not ignore the mismanagement by this Labor government as it continues to bungle the transition to the full implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme here in Queensland. Despite years of knowing Queensland would transition on 1 July 2019, it is only during this sitting week—the last sitting week available—that the Disability Services and Other Legislation (NDIS) Amendment Bill was finally before the House, with Labor desperately playing catch-up, despite the minister trying to blame the federal government.

Recently, Queenslanders saw the full incompetence of the Premier and her Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Transport on full display with the axing and reinstating of the Taxi Subsidy Scheme—a callous decision that had significant ramifications for some 10,000 Queenslanders. It has only been reinstated for a further 12 months after significant pressure by the Liberal National Party and 13 organisations in the disability sector.

Let us now turn to Queensland's economy and debt crisis under Labor. Queensland has one of Australia's worst unemployment rates—forecast in the 2019-20 state budget for unemployment to remain at six per cent and today announced to be at 6.2 per cent. Debt is now set to break through \$90 billion within four years. Wages are also stagnant under the Palaszczuk Labor government. Cost-of-living pressures continue to skyrocket for all. Queensland now also holds the unenviable title of being the strike capital of Australia. Recently it was revealed that around 2,700 working days were lost to industrial action in the March 2019 quarter, meaning 156,200 days have been lost under the two terms of the Palaszczuk Labor government. Some 18,000 jobs have been lost in the manufacturing sector alone.

This is not to mention the years of absolute negligent in providing the infrastructure Queensland desperately needs. In 2018-19 Queensland had the second lowest infrastructure spend as a percentage of gross state product at 1.75 per cent. Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk and her Treasurer always try to blame Canberra and the Morrison federal coalition government for their own Labor government economic disasters and infrastructure failures. On Tuesday this week the Treasurer again tried to blame Canberra over GST calculations. Over the federal budget forward estimates, the percentage of federal infrastructure spending for Queensland is at least three times as much as that of New South Wales.

Queensland is groaning and suffering under the weight of the new taxes announced by the Treasurer—new taxes ripping billions of dollars out of the Queensland economy. Treasurer Jackie Trad has piled more than \$3.45 billion in extra taxes and charges onto Queenslanders in just two budgets. We all recall in the dying days of the 2017 election campaign—in fact, on the eve of election day itself—the Labor Party announced four new taxes and tax increases on Queenslanders, including the staggering \$1.3 billion for Labor's waste tax. There is now also increases in land tax rates and the land tax absentee surcharge—another slug on many Queensland seniors, including members of the Australian Pensioners' and Superannuants' League Queensland.

At a time when our state economy is struggling under the poor economic leadership of Premier Palaszczuk and her Treasurer, when Labor continues to allow our debt to increase each and every day, when more and more Queenslanders are struggling to find a job as we suffer one of the nation's highest unemployment rates and when hardworking Queensland families continue to suffer the onslaught of skyrocketing cost-of-living pressures whilst having to navigate ever-congested roads, including in the electorate of Moggill and across the western suburbs of Brisbane, those opposite treat Queenslanders

as a relentless and unlimited source of revenue. It really takes a special level of arrogance by this Labor government to be so out of touch with hardworking Queenslanders, including local residents in the electorate of Moggill, as well as Queensland businesses. Local businesses in the western suburbs of Brisbane are doing it tough as it is without having to pay more to Labor's Deputy Premier and Treasurer.

The new Labor waste tax will undoubtedly mean that the disposing of commercial or industrial waste will cost our businesses more. Costs will inevitably be passed onto consumers. In my electorate of Moggill, according to the 2016 census data, almost 65 per cent of all blue-collar workers are in the construction industry. These are workers whose future work is under threat thanks to the additional costs that this Labor tax imposes on an industry that needs all the support it can possibly get.

Similarly, on the latest figures available, the Moggill electorate is home to more than 4,600 businesses—many of which are small businesses. That is nearly 4,600 businesses that will have to dig further into their pockets because Labor are too lazy and too addicted to tax, tax and more tax. There can be no doubt, whether it is costs directly through day-to-day waste disposal or costs that are passed on through the supply chain, that businesses in the electorate of Moggill will feel the full force of this new tax. Also, Labor has embarked upon another smoke and mirrors exercise, offering an \$885 million payroll tax relief package for Queensland's small businesses, but this comes at a huge cost to larger businesses with them being slugged to cover the cost.

Who can forget last year's rollout of the container refund deposit scheme—a rollout that already had to be pushed back and ended up being nothing short of a debacle. Whilst the intent and principles of the scheme are positive and have had my full support and that of the Liberal National Party, the Palaszczuk Labor government's implementation has been botched. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate my local Kenmore Rotary Club for the work they have done to date. In particular, I acknowledge Stuart Stoddart, Greg Adermann, Ken Ryan and the broader membership of the Kenmore Rotary Club.

In turning to more of the specific detail of this year's roads and transport budget, once again the needs and concerns of the electorate of Moggill have been completely ignored by the Premier and her Labor government. Since being elected to this House in 2015 and as the state member for Moggill, I have consistently advocated on behalf of local constituents and residents of Brisbane's western suburbs to get the Labor government to take action and implement a comprehensive, integrated road and public transport plan to reduce traffic congestion on our state controlled roads.

As this latest excuse of a budget shows, these calls continue to be ignored. However, I will not give up. I will continue to fight to ensure that motorists, cyclists and public transport users in the electorate of Moggill and the greater western suburbs of Brisbane get the road and public transport infrastructure and solutions they rightly deserve.

I would also like to know what the Palaszczuk Labor government intends to do about state funding for the Kenmore roundabout given the federal Morrison coalition government has already committed \$12.5 million to this roundabout. I would like to note that, while it appears some funding has been allocated to the upgrade of the Mount Crosby Road-Warrego Highway interchange, the Palaszczuk Labor government must make the delivery of this vital safety upgrade a priority. This includes working collaboratively with the federal Morrison coalition government after years of delayed inaction by this Palaszczuk Labor government.

Education is a fundamental right and it is also fundamental to empowerment, personal development and our economy. I am proud to be a member of the Liberal National Party—a party which has a strong record of supporting our teachers and providing career advancement opportunities for teachers to excel and professionally develop. I am also just as proud to be the Liberal National Party state member for Moggill, an electorate that has nine high-performing state schools and two incredible first-class independent schools.

In the electorate of Moggill just some of the critical infrastructure our schools desperately need includes: at Kenmore State High School an upgraded library and new hall; at Pullenvale State School, parking solutions; at Brookfield State School, playground upgrades; at Chapel Hill State School, more modern, permanent classrooms; at Kenmore State School, a new administration block with disability access and refurbished classrooms—just to name a few.

I certainly hope that when further information becomes available from this state Labor government, constituents of the electorate of Moggill will see funding allocated for such critical school and educational infrastructure via the State Infrastructure Enhancement Program. Whilst I am pleased that Moggill State School will receive \$5.9 million for additional classrooms—something I have been fighting for; in fact, it was allocated \$1.775 million in 2019-20—there is still so much more that needs to be done. I do acknowledge the funding that has been allocated to the Moggill koala hospital.

On a number of other matters related to my shadow portfolio, I do note the Labor government's \$2 million to access options for a new first nation's cultural centre in Brisbane, as well as the \$25 million for its Deadly Choices program, targeted at improving Indigenous health outcomes. Both of these are welcomed, along with the government's \$6.9 million for Indigenous youth mental health and wellbeing initiatives. However, this Palaszczuk Labor government is failing on developing comprehensive economic development opportunities for Indigenous communities as well as failing on meaningful improvements on meeting Closing the Gap targets, with Queensland shamefully at the bottom of the league table when compared with other state jurisdictions.

I would like to acknowledge the increase in this year's state budget in concessions for Queensland's seniors and pensioners, as well as concessions made available to other groups, including families and young people. That being said, it is incumbent on this Labor government to ensure both the knowledge of and access to these concessions. Unfortunately, too many Queenslanders are not aware of the availability of such concessions, as I am sure most in this House can attest.

I do acknowledge the Labor government's \$5 million commitment over two years for LED lights at QPAC and the \$4 million in additional funding for the Queensland Art Gallery, which will certainly assist in attracting significant future exhibitions.

However, in concluding, under the LNP debt will always be lower and the LNP will always implement a responsible debt stabilisation plan, unlike the Palaszczuk Labor government. The Palaszczuk Labor government is simply a state Labor government of higher taxes, more debt, fewer jobs and less infrastructure.

Labor's state budget fails to address Queensland's ever-growing debt bill with rampant Labor government spending. Queenslanders, including residents of the electorate of Moggill, simply cannot afford Labor. Also, it is clear that Queensland simply cannot trust Labor. When Labor runs out of money they come after yours. This state Labor government is not managing the economy. They are running up debt. Unemployment is higher. It is simply not good enough for the people of the electorate of Moggill and the people of Queensland.