




Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

Record of Proceedings, 13 June 2019

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

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (12.42 am): I rise to speak to the 2019-20 budget. I start by offering my congratulations to the Treasurer for delivering a very smart Labor budget. Listening to the other side we are hearing a lot of whinging and whining about the budget—there is too much of this and not enough of that. Let me address some of the whinging and whining from the other side.

Those opposite have talked a lot about debt tonight. The LNP have a record of embracing debt and racking it up all over Australia. Exhibit 1 is their federal colleagues. Under the federal LNP government net debt has doubled over the coalition's two terms in government.

A government member: It's in their DNA.

Mr WHITING: I take that interjection. It is in their DNA. It has gone up from \$174.6 billion in September 2013 to \$354.5 billion in October 2018.

Ms Grace: That's all right. Don't worry about that.

Mr WHITING: I will take the interjection from the Minister for Education. They are not going to worry about that. They are not going to remind us about that. I will remind them that under Labor in 2013 Australia's gross debt to GDP ratio was 16.8 per cent. Today's figure is 42 per cent under the Morrison government.

Exhibit 2 is the Brisbane City Council. We will not hear those on the other side of the chamber say anything about the Brisbane City Council's debt. Let me quote what Brisbane City Council Mayor Adrian Schrinner said about his debt. He stated—

You can't build a city without building infrastructure. This budget has good debt that funds long-term infrastructure. It's a fiscal responsibility to invest in infrastructure for the long term.

He has a \$3.1 billion budget servicing a \$2.6 billion debt. You will not hear the LNP talk about that. Raising debt is in their DNA. It shows their hypocrisy that they will never actually admit it or talk about it. They will just whinge and whine about what we are doing.

Those opposite talked a little about manufacturing jobs. They have outlined a proposal today for what I believe is a \$20 million fund. I point out that we already have a \$40 million fund—the Made in Queensland fund. That provides small to medium Queensland manufacturers with matched funding between \$50,000 and \$2.5 million. I will not even talk about Advance Queensland—one of the most spectacularly successful programs that helps all kinds of businesses, including manufacturers. That is leading Australia and helping transform our economy. We have not heard them make a squeak about manufacturing jobs until today. Once again it is an example of their hypocrisy.

They did not have a lot to say about climate change—not a word. As the Treasurer said the other day, there is no greater threat to job creation than climate change. Ten years ago in Melbourne I heard Al Gore say that we are going to be facing more extreme and costly weather events. In the last 10 years

in Queensland we have had 84 disasters causing more than \$15 billion worth of damage to public infrastructure. As the Treasurer said on Tuesday, if we do not act now climate change will cut jobs and growth, lift prices and inflation and destabilise our insurance and banking systems.

If the LNP are concerned about debt and future budgets, they have to be concerned about climate change because the greatest threat to agriculture in this state is climate change. The LNP will never talk about it. They will whinge and whine about the need for extra dams but they will never address the reason there is less rainfall in Queensland. That is due to climate change.

Let me spell it out. We are facing more extreme days of heat that will kill livestock and crops, and our rainfall could decrease by up to 21 per cent by 2050. Drought will be followed by devastating extreme rain and floods, like the recent events.

Mr MICKELBERG: I rise to a point of order, Mr Deputy Speaker, in relation to standing order 118(b)—relevance. The member is talking about climate change. I am not sure how that is relevant to the budget.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McArdle): There is no point of order.

Mr WHITING: I want to turn to what this budget means for Queensland. This budget means more for Queensland—more jobs and more job security; more schoolrooms and more teachers; more hospitals beds, more doctors and more nurses. There will be less too—less payroll tax for small business; less time on roads for commuters; and less money out of people's pockets to pay electricity bills.

In terms of education, across the state we are putting \$1.46 billion into refurbishing schools and building new schools. That is a 55 per cent increase from last year. In Deception Bay, \$350,000 will go to Deception Bay North State School to build a play area and an outdoor learning area. In North Lakes, \$320,000 will go to Bounty Boulevard State School to upgrade classrooms and enclose the old assembly area. There is also a very welcome \$100 million commitment to help put air conditioning into priority schools. Since 2015 the Palaszczuk government has built and opened 26 new schools; 3,700 new teachers will be brought into our schools over the next four years; and there will be 1,000 new teachers and 200 teacher aides put on over the coming year as a result of this budget.

In terms of health, Redcliffe Hospital is undergoing a \$114 million rejuvenation over three years. That includes an upgraded maternity ward and birthing suites. I congratulate the Minister for Health for such a great achievement in our local area. They will be putting in 30 kilometres of new cabling as part of a \$6.8 million electrical upgrade at that hospital. At Caboolture Hospital there is a \$350 million new development going on that will see 130 new beds and a \$20 million upgrade of their emergency department. There will also be a \$41 million investment for a new adolescent mental health unit at Prince Charles Hospital. That will be a great addition to our area as well.

If you are from North Lakes, Deception Bay or Burpengary East, you can have the confidence that when you go to a local public hospital you will be getting care in the best local hospitals at the best possible service level. The doctors and nurses are superb as well. Since 2015 the Palaszczuk government has put on 5,988 new nurses, 2,020 new doctors and over 508 new ambos. Over the next year we will put on 800 nurses and 200 doctors.

In terms of energy, the good news from this budget continues. What we can say is that electricity prices are dropping for Queenslanders, and the Queensland budget this year will keep downward pressure on electricity prices. The Minister for Energy said this week that a typical household will pay \$62 less on average this coming year for electricity and a typical small business will be paying \$144 less. I want to congratulate the minister on that as well. There have been two \$50 rebates for each household to help reduce those electricity costs for Queensland families.

A government member interjected.

Mr WHITING: I take that interjection. Compare that to the 43 per cent rise under the last LNP government. We will never let them forget that. There are two reasons why Queenslanders are paying the lowest average electricity prices of any mainland state in the National Electricity Market. Firstly, Queensland owns our power assets, so the state can put money back into the pockets of power users. Secondly, there is a record amount of renewable energy—not 'renewal' energy—coming back into the network, and that is rapidly reducing the cost of producing electricity. The good news keeps on coming for Queensland.

Mr Boyce interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McArdle): Stop the clock. Member for Callide, resume your seat if you wish to interject.

Mr WHITING: The last bit of good news I want to give to the electors in Bancroft is that there is \$36 million going to the first stage of the Deception Bay Road overpass over the Bruce Highway. The member for Kurwongbah and I are very excited about that. The member for Murrumba and I are very excited about the \$5 million going to the Morris Road-Deception Bay Road intersection as well. That will greatly improve safety in our region.

I also want to point out a project that I have been chasing for nearly 10 years since I was a councillor, and that is the installation of a pontoon and the widening of a boat ramp at the end of Uhlmann Road in Burpengary East. That is a \$1.9 million project. It will secure the 30 to 40 jobs at the marine manufacturer that is based at that boat ramp. It is not only helping out recreational boaties but also helping to save jobs in our area. That is what this budget is doing. I commend it because it is saving the jobs of Queenslanders.