




Speech By
Daniel Purdie

MEMBER FOR NINDERRY

Record of Proceedings, 13 June 2019

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

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (6.00 pm): I rise to speak on the 2019 budget. This is a budget covered in Labor Party DNA. It is a traditional Labor budget of higher taxes, more debt, fewer jobs and less infrastructure. This is a budget and a government that lacks leadership, lacks vision and fails to foster the economic conditions in which Queenslanders can thrive.

This week we have heard of a long line of Labor luminaries who have recently been tipping the bucket on this government, but it is the architect of the once-strong Queensland economy, former Treasury and investment boss Sir Leo Hielscher, to whom we should be listening. Last year he raised serious concerns when he said that this Labor state government had no strategy, no plan and no program to pay down their debt, which at that time was forecast to hit \$83 billion. He lamented the loss of our AAA credit rating at the hands of our current Treasurer's mentor, Anna Bligh. He said that our cash reserves and superannuation surpluses had been raided and debt was still rising. He said that our recent budgets have been balanced by the reallocation of our cash reserves. What the most respected Treasury boss of our time was saying was that this government was robbing Peter to pay Paul. Unfortunately, nothing has changed.

As most Queenslanders who regularly have to balance a family or small business budget will tell you, one day eventually the tide might go out and you can get caught with your pants down. That is exactly what all of Queensland witnessed on Tuesday when this budget was handed down. The government has been swimming with its pants down, the tide has gone out and Queenslanders are pointing and laughing. Unfortunately, it is no laughing matter.

Since Sir Leo Hielscher's dire warning one year ago, our state debt bomb has blown out to \$90 billion, that is, \$9,000 million. The yearly interest bill alone is \$3.5 billion, that is, \$3,500 million every year. That \$3,500 million could be spent on more nurses, more teachers and more police. That \$3,500 million could air-condition every classroom in the state more than twice over and it could deliver every infrastructure need, not only in my electorate but also across the whole of the Sunshine Coast. One year's interest bill alone could pay for fast rail to the coast, six-laning of the Bruce Highway and the duplication of the Sunshine Motorway.

This is the second budget handed down since I have come into this place and once again it is a budget that avoids tough decisions. This is a budget that shirks the hard work. This is a budget from a government content with standing still rather than building Queensland's ambition and prosperity. We have had more than a century of Labor administrations addicted to debt and taxes. Since Federation, Australia has had 10 Labor prime ministers and every single one of them has left our country in more debt. This state government is following lock step in that tradition.

When Labor run out of money they come after yours, but the people of Queensland are starting to see through the charade. This is not a budget to build; it is a budget to bail out. The government has now introduced nine new taxes. Those taxes will rip \$3.4 billion from the pockets of hardworking

Queenslanders. That \$3.4 billion will not even cover the state's annual interest bill. Next summer when the kids in my electorate are sweltering in 40-degree classrooms and the Premier tells them that the government cannot afford air conditioning, I will be reminding them that it is because we are paying \$400,000 an hour in interest, which is more than enough money to air-condition a number of schools in my electorate. Only a Labor government could get a massive coal royalty windfall, bring in nine new taxes and still have to increase borrowings to plug the budget black hole, while racking up more and more debt.

Labor always talks big on infrastructure but never delivers. The reality is that Labor is borrowing more and building less. Infrastructure spending across the forward estimates has actually decreased by \$23 million compared to last year. In an interstate analysis, in this country Queensland has the lowest capital expenditure as a percentage of revenue at 10.27 per cent. In the past financial year, the LNP government in New South Wales spent over \$24 billion on infrastructure. In Queensland, this government spent only \$6 billion. On nearly every recent economic indicator, Queensland is battling it out for the wooden spoon.

In my electorate and across the whole Sunshine Coast we are feeling the pain of a generation of Labor failure. For far too long the Sunshine Coast has been starving for infrastructure. Indeed, it is facing an infrastructure crisis. The government, as it consistently does, has tried to pass the buck and accept no responsibility for the crisis, but the people of the Sunshine Coast know better. They have watched consecutive state governments recklessly waste their money. History shows that in this state 25 out of the past 30 budgets have been delivered by Labor treasurers. There is no shying away from the fact that our infrastructure crisis and our alarming debt bomb are thanks to the recent 25 years of Labor rule in this state.

Just what are local residents of the Sunshine Coast receiving in exchange for their growing tax bill? This week's budget has failed to deliver any reprieve from cost-of-living expenses, car registration is going up and there is still no real plan to reduce hospital wait times and improve access to health services on the coast. There is no boost in police numbers to combat rising crime and deal with a youth crime epidemic. One of our most critical needs, local road infrastructure, continues to be underfunded while more and more of our taxpayer dollars are funnelled into big-ticket projects in the south-east, such as the \$5.4 billion Cross River Rail project. This budget is nothing more than an exercise in creative accounting, robbing Peter to pay Paul. It fails to recognise those who are doing the hard yards, dutifully paying taxes but not receiving the benefit of investment in critical infrastructure projects to help keep the Sunshine Coast moving.

Two top priorities that residents of the Sunshine Coast rightly demand are the north coast rail duplication to Nambour and the six-laning of the Bruce Highway to Caloundra. The LNP federal government has put on the table 50 per cent funding for both of those projects—\$1.25 billion—but this government is playing games and refusing to pay its fair share. The people of the Sunshine Coast are sick of the blame shifting and want results. Squabbling over who is responsible for what percentage is irrelevant to them.

That is why I am glad Deb Frecklington and the LNP have stood up for the Sunny Coast and confirmed our commitment to the six-laning of the Bruce Highway and the duplication of the rail line. The LNP understands that the north coast rail duplication and Bruce Highway upgrades are vital infrastructure projects, not just for the Sunshine Coast but for all of Queensland. It is not just commuters who rightly demand better. Connectivity and more reliable and efficient transport options to Brisbane are also imperative for freight and businesses across the state.

Local infrastructure investment is also an absolute priority across the Ninderry electorate. At the last state election the good people of Ninderry spoke loud and clear and endorsed a number of infrastructure upgrades across the electorate. Unsurprisingly, most of the infrastructure projects I spoke about this time last year are the same ones I will speak about again today. I spoke about projects such as the roundabout at Yandina Coolum Road and South Coolum Road, and a failing intersection that can no longer accommodate the 8,000-plus residents of Coolum and the thousands more tourists who visit. Each day, parents, teachers and kids from the Coolum State School need to negotiate that intersection as they travel to and from school.

It is not just a bottleneck but a serious safety concern as the backlog of vehicles tails back onto the Sunshine Motorway causing the motorway to fail. This has caused many accidents over the years, some fatal. I acknowledge the meeting I had on site with the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and thank him for authorising the ongoing safety audit. I look forward to the results of this audit and I continue to fight for this important local road upgrade.

I am happy to finally see funding allocated in this budget to build a new police station at Coolum. Our local police work around the clock to keep our community safe and they have worked out of a temporary donga for the past 13 years.

Mr Ryan interjected.

Mr PURDIE: Thank you. This long overdue facility will no doubt help them properly perform their important role in keeping our community safe.

In Eumundi many kids and families need to cross the North Maroochy River near Seib Road to get to and from school every day. Currently, they have to run the gauntlet and shimmy across the bridge on Eumundi Noosa Road, sharing the roadway with cars and trucks travelling at 80 kilometres an hour. This pedestrian bridge has a price tag of only \$550,000.

I appreciate that pedestrian access and connectivity of communities is a council responsibility, but I am pleased to advise that since my last speech about this bridge in parliament the Sunshine Coast council has agreed to fund 50 per cent of this bridge and has now allocated \$275,000 in its most recent budget for a joint venture with DTMR to see this vital piece of local infrastructure built. I have previously met with senior executives from DTMR on site at this location. I urge the minister to prioritise this project.

Also in Eumundi, another one of my election commitments back in 2017 was to provide funding for a new undercover area and upgraded facilities at Eumundi State School—a school that outgrew its current facilities a long time ago. After years of lobbying by the school principal, P&C and school community, I was pleased to see \$7 million allocated in this budget for these upgrades.

The electorate of Ninderry borders the Sunshine Coast airport which is undergoing a \$350 million expansion. We must leverage off this expansion and improve intracity interconnectivity so businesses, visitors and locals can move around safely and with ease. One of the main thoroughfares from the Bruce Highway to the airport is through Bli Bli. The residents of Bli Bli and the surrounding suburbs are daily negotiating dangerous, narrow bridges. The single-lane bridge over Caboolture Creek on Yandina Bli Bli Road has seen its fair share of accidents. I welcome the \$750,000 in funding recently allocated by DTMR to design a new, safer bridge at this location.

Similarly, the narrow David Low Bridge across the Maroochy River at Bli Bli is a constant safety concern. This bridge was originally built over half a century ago as a cane train bridge and is now the main arterial for the 8½ thousand residents of Bli Bli and many others travelling to and from the airport. These numbers will continue to rapidly grow with residential expansion continuing in Bli Bli and the planned increased capacity at the new Sunshine Coast airport.

Arguably, one of the coast's worst intersections is at the intersection of Killick Street and Maroochydore Road in Kunda Park, right in the heart of our region's industrial hub. Despite community petitions and DTMR's own detailed investigations, the Labor government has once again failed to commit any money to upgrade this dangerous intersection.

In closing, in the words of this state's most respected Treasury boss, Sir Leo Hielscher, when talking about this Labor government's debt bomb and economic incompetence, he said, 'Sorry, kids. Sorry, grandkids.' Only the LNP has the plan, the motivation and the capacity to return our state to the economic powerhouse it once was. Only the LNP will get this state back on its feet. Only the LNP will unite this state. Only the LNP will help every Queenslanders get a job and get ahead.