




Speech By
David Crisafulli

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

Record of Proceedings, 13 June 2019

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

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (11.13 pm): ‘Reckless, inappropriate and out of line.’ Those are not my words: they are in fact the words of Mr Steven Smythe from the CFMMEU. Whilst those words were used to describe the way in which the Deputy Premier spoke about those workers who show up every day in coalfields across this great state, they are words that could so aptly be used to describe this budget.

This evening in speaking to the Appropriation Bill I will speak in four parts: first, I will make some general comments; I will then move on to the portfolio responsibility that the Leader of the Opposition has given me the great honour to take on behalf of the LNP; I will talk about the Gold Coast; and I will speak about my electorate of Broadwater.

First, in general, if there is a headline for this budget that every one of us should come in and hang our heads in shame that we are not debating every minute of every day, it is the fact that for the first time in this state our debt level will go past \$90 billion. It will reach nearly \$91 billion. What is most disappointing about that is it is as though we have given up. It is as though we have given up on managing debt.

The Labor government said that they would work towards resolving the issue without selling assets, and I respect that mandate. That is the mandate of the Queensland people and it is something that both sides of this House have said very clearly. Only one side of this House has ever sold assets, and that is the Labor Party. The Labor Party has ruled that out, and I accept that. We have also said the same thing. The Labor Party said that it would embark on a debt reduction strategy, but it got too hard and so it has given up. It is easy to throw out numbers and say ‘\$90 billion’, but what does \$90 billion mean for everyday people?

Mr McDonald: \$90.7 million.

Mr CRISAFULLI: I will take the interjection from the member for Lockyer, because it is in fact closer to \$91 billion where we are going, and that is the best case scenario. I will tell members what \$90 billion means. It means that every day before each one of our constituents gets out of bed this state has to find \$10 million in interest repayments. When members show up to a community meeting and tell them that they are not able to have that little crossing or small bit of infrastructure, something for their kids, they have every right to look them in the eye and say, ‘Really? That is only one day’s worth of interest.’ When our credit rating is not what it should be and at a time when interest rates are at record low levels, I spare a thought for what the next generation will have in store for them if both of those things go against us.

I received a letter this week from a constituent of mine. It was a handwritten letter. In it he explained how tough life was for him. He used to work in the electricity industry. In the electricity industry he knew what costs were involved. He looked at the budget and he worked out that electricity was being used as a cash cow. When the raids occur and when public servants’ super funds are raided and when

the tin gets dry, everyone has to pay. Despite the rhetoric from the member for Gladstone, who is a lion in here but a mouse when he is talking to the Deputy Premier—or whichever faction he is in this term, because it is different to the term before—this budget has less for infrastructure than previous budgets.

Despite all the rhetoric about the number of health and front-line services, our hospitals have not been this poorly run since Anna Bligh described them as dysfunctional and said that they needed to be broken up. Despite all the rhetoric about being tough on crime, things have never been worse. Just ask the people who are living in fear. Ask people in the cities that have 24-hour police stations which have been closed for the first time where crime is out of control. Ask them how much they care about a line item that says 'record number'.

They just want a bed for their kids when they go to a hospital. They want to know that when some little cretin goes to take their car there is going to be a chap or a lady in a blue uniform to come and do something about it. That is not happening at the moment. Numbers in budget papers are all great when ministers stand up and parrot about 'record this' and 'record that', but Queenslanders see through that. It does not feel like a record at the moment. It does not feel like a record for them because it has never been so tough, they have never felt less safe and they have not seen hospitals run this poorly for a long, long time.

I will turn to my shadow portfolio of tourism and environment. When I hear the tourism minister say how tourism is booming in this state, oh how it must be ashes in the mouths of those people in places like Far North Queensland where businesses are closing every week and people have seen the worst conditions in tourism since the pilot strike of three decades ago. Yet they stand up and parrot about numbers in budget papers. I will give the House some numbers. It is the numbers of accountability. If governments are giving money out, they need to be held to account.

There is a better way for tourism in this state, and the LNP has a better way. That better way is to make sure when money is given out it is given out to airlines for the long haul so they continue to service great cities like Cairns, Townsville and the Gold Coast. Ministers turn up for the press release to cut the ribbon and to pop the champagne, but when those airlines disappear and the flights go then there is no press conference. There is just a feeling of disappointment in those communities. We are better than that and we can do better than that.

I turn to the mixture of the two portfolios that I have the great privilege of representing as shadow minister. Again, I give great credit to the Leader of the Opposition for putting together these two portfolios. Nothing sums it up better than the Wangetti Trail. There is a great will and a great desire to see ecotourism in this state, but, unfortunately, there are those both within the government and certainly a noisy green army outside it who do not want to see a single thing happen in national parks. They will not stop campaigning until national parks have a big fence around them and the only people who can enjoy them are the feral animals and weeds, and I disagree with that. I believe the best thing we can do for a national park is to sensibly open it up and allow people to go in there and make a few dollars and put that money back into maintaining it. In doing so, people will fall in love and become great environmental champions for it.

In this budget, the jig is up. It shows just how little faith the minister has, even if she does want to see ecotourism occur. There is only \$200,000 in this year's budget for Wangetti, and they are not budgeting any revenue from it until 2023. That should give the House an indication of just how hopeful those opposite are of unleashing ecotourism after talking about it for 15 years.

Every time I speak about the environment in this place, I talk about the need for action on koalas. One line item on koalas is not going to change what is happening at the moment—that is, a massive decline in the koala population in South-East Queensland, particularly on the northern Gold Coast. We need action now. We need a sensible, balanced planning policy. We need a protection of people's land rights. We need money set aside to buy valuable corridor, otherwise we will continue to see the decline we have seen in koala populations.

There is no additional money in the budget to ensure that those rolling out the container deposit scheme can put it into places that are not currently represented, particularly in Western Queensland and the growth corridors like the northern Gold Coast. Despite raising \$1.3 billion over the next four years, there is so little money going back to the environment from the waste levy. Let me again put on the table that I believe there is going to be a sea of misery from 1 July when businesses realise just how much this tax is going to take from their hip pocket and when the minister realises just how poorly she has prepared the implementation of this scheme. We will again see another failed rollout. I shake my head at how poorly planned it has been.

In my remaining time, let me briefly talk about the biggest issue on the Gold Coast—that is, the missing next stage of the light rail. During the federal election, both sides of politics promised the same amount for the light rail. During the federal election, there was a lot of criticism about one side of politics

because I had a feeling those opposite might have been backing the wrong horse. Having the election decided and having the money set aside for what is a state project, the greatest gift the minister could give us is to just get on and build it. There is money there. The council has put money aside. The council has a desire. If only the minister could have a bit of faith and get on and deliver it, it would be a great project for the city long term.

For my electorate, I want to make a couple of points. Firstly, the Gold Coast Waterways Authority has had its budget cut. Predominantly, that comes through lack of dredging. We have already seen not enough dredging. There will be a reduction of dredging in this budget. There is again no money for the duplication of Jabiru Island crossing. That is a vital project and I will continue to put that forward. I thank the minister for making his staff available to hear my concerns on that the other day.

I want to talk briefly about the two state schools in my electorate. They are great schools—Biggera Waters State School and Coombabah State School. I thank the minister for giving me a briefing ahead of the budget about some small amounts of money that have been allocated. Biggera Waters State School have been given a small amount of money to upgrade one of their buildings. I will continue to advocate because there is asbestos in some of those buildings at Biggera Waters and that needs to be done immediately. I am not convinced there is enough money to do that. It is a welcome upgrade but there is not enough. There is also half a million dollars for Coombabah primary to upgrade the library. Again, that is a great project and I am most grateful.

Those two schools, which are older schools, are in areas that are becoming more and more gentrified with young people coming in. Those schools need to be upgraded. The fact that we still have buildings that were brought in on the back of a semitrailer decades ago that do not have cooling or heating is a disgrace. Between those two schools, there are not three air-conditioned buildings. What the Leader of the Opposition did in her budget reply was put people on notice about what an LNP government will do. We have a plan and a vision—not to replace existing air conditioners that need a lick and a promise, but to air-condition every school because that is fair and reasonable. In a state where it is hot and getting hotter, kids deserve every opportunity to be their best and to learn.

I conclude by saying that the Deputy Premier and Treasurer said in her budget speech that it was about choices. I will again frame those choices through the eyes of Stephen Smythe, who summed it up so well. The choice is those opposite who are reckless versus us who are responsible, those opposite who will be inappropriate with money versus us who will be measured, and those opposite who will be out of line with the LNP who will be in step every day with what Queenslanders need and deserve.