




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR NANANGO

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

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.17 am): On Tuesday, the Treasurer began her speech by stating that budgets are about choices. I think we can all safely agree on that, but the choices that she made on Tuesday were the wrong choices for Queensland. The Treasurer chose to take another \$1.25 billion in tax from Queenslanders. The Treasurer chose to cut spending on infrastructure by half a billion dollars in the next financial year. The Treasurer chose to create fewer jobs and the Treasurer chose to increase debt, yet again, to \$90 billion. That is a \$67,000 debt bill for the typical Queensland family. Labor is not borrowing to build; Queenslanders are borrowing to bail out this incompetent government.

It is clear that Queensland cannot afford Labor and Queensland cannot trust Labor either. Its fiscal principles are now in the waste bin and so are its forecasts. Unless it drastically changes course, the Palaszczuk government will break the \$100 billion debt barrier. Labor's wrong choices are destroying jobs and they are blighting the future of this state.

Five years ago the Premier promised to deliver jobs, jobs, jobs. The good times she promised have not arrived yet. The good times are never coming back under Labor. As this budget has proved, the Palaszczuk Labor government is anti resources, anti regions and anti jobs. That toxic combination will never work in Queensland. Instead of jobs, all the Premier has delivered is higher taxes, more debt, fewer jobs and less infrastructure.

Our state is stagnating. State final demand increased by just 0.3 per cent in the December quarter. Without net interstate migration to Queensland this anaemic figure would have been even lower. The construction industry is now in steep decline. The number of homes being built in Queensland has fallen to its lowest level since August 2012. The value of completed construction work has fallen to its lowest level since December 2006. That was almost 13 years ago. Investment has collapsed and so has confidence. The latest CCIQ survey showed that barely one in 10 businesses in the south-east expect our economy to improve.

The Palaszczuk Labor government continues to be rated the worst government in the nation in the census survey of small and medium sized businesses. It is no wonder that this Premier refuses to meet with her own business advisory council. The slump in confidence and investment is destroying jobs. In April more than 158,000 Queenslanders were looking for work. Our unemployment rate remains well above the national average. Our unemployment rate is far higher than Victoria and New South Wales.

Ms Jones: It's lower than yours!

Mr SPEAKER: Member for Cooper, you are warned under the standing orders. I have been clear about comments coming through the chair.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Queensland is now a second-tier economy with a third-rate government. When one looks beyond the headline unemployment figures the picture gets even worse. In Mount Isa and Western Queensland the unemployment rate is at 14 per cent. The number of people out of work in Western Queensland has surged by almost a fifth in the last year. In Townsville more than 9,000 people are looking for a job. In Cairns and the Gold Coast, jobs are being lost as international airlines axe routes into Queensland.

Employment is not just a problem in our regions. The job crisis is right on Brisbane's doorstep. In Caboolture, unemployment is at 9.4 per cent. More than 11,000 people are out of work in the northern Moreton Bay area. In Logan 13,200 people are unemployed. That total has surged from 11,500 just one year ago. These numbers do not tell the full story of this government's failure. Under Labor the workforce has actually shrunk across much of Queensland. Townsville has lost 4,800 jobs since Labor came to power. In Mackay employment is falling off a cliff. Some 9,600 jobs have been lost in the last year alone. Alarming, the government's own budget papers show a 26,000 drop in forecast job growth. These numbers speak for themselves. Let us remember that every number is a Queenslander, a Queenslander who does not know where the next pay cheque is coming from, a Queenslander who cannot pay their bills, a Queenslander who cannot provide for their children.

How did we get to this point? Why is our state falling behind while the rest of the country is moving ahead? The answer is simple: the Palaszczuk Labor government is anti resources, anti regions and anti jobs. Labor is draining billions of dollars from our economy in new taxes. Labor's taxes are toxic for business. Labor's taxes are destroying jobs. After ramping up charges and introducing new taxes in its first term, last year the Palaszczuk Labor government came back for another tax raid on Queenslanders. The Treasurer's first budget inflicted new taxes worth \$2.2 billion. The Treasurer's second budget picked up where she left off with even more taxes—another \$1.25 billion in new taxes.

In just two budgets Labor has ripped almost \$3.5 billion out of our economy with nine new or increased taxes. The LNG royalties hike will take \$476 million. The first land tax hike took \$540 million. The second land tax hike will take another \$238 million. The third land tax hike will take another \$311 million. The payroll tax hike will take \$544 million. The betting tax will take \$366 million. The property investors tax will take \$132 million. The car tax, also known as the grey nomad campervan tax, will take \$103 million. The waste levy—the biggest tax of the lot—will take \$1.3 billion.

The waste levy will pay for a new incinerator in Ipswich, but it will smash small businesses everywhere in Queensland, whether be it fish and chip shops or garages. Even hairdressers will be hit. The biggest hit of all will come to our struggling construction sector. Master Builders forecast the waste levy will add \$1,500 to the cost of a new home. Logan City Council will charge builders an extra \$100 for every time they take a trailer load to the waste dump. Labor's waste levy is nothing more than a tradie tax. It is a tax that will sting subbies on every worksite across Queensland. It is a tax on the tradies who build this state.

I am glad that Labor has implemented the payroll tax relief policy that the LNP took to the last state election. Fifteen hundred small businesses will pay no payroll tax as a result, but under Labor's budget a further 6,000 larger businesses will be stung with higher payroll tax. Queensland businesses will be taxed more for giving people a job. Labor's tax grab will also slow the growth of our LNG industry which has provided much needed employment in regional Queensland. Labor's latest land tax hike will be passed on to commercial tenants and then to Queenslanders.

Everyone will feel the impact of Labor's giant tax take. There is no safe space for Queenslanders when it comes to Labor's taxes. If these taxes were not enough, other government charges are soaring too. The Palaszczuk Labor government has now hiked rego more than \$48 since it came to power. Six-cylinder vehicles have been hit with a \$76 rise. Queenslanders are being squeezed by higher taxes and hikes in the cost of living. Queenslanders cannot afford Labor.

How much more is Labor planning to take? Nowhere has ever taxed its way to prosperity. Taxes make life tougher for ordinary Queenslanders and they damage business. Anyone who has ever run a business knows this. I know what I am talking about because I have run small businesses. I did not spend my working life in the Labor Party. I earned my wages in the real world. I learned that running a business is damn hard work. The people who run small and medium sized businesses are not the top end of town; they are the backbone of our economy and they are sick and tired of being undermined by Labor politicians, many of whom have never had a proper job in their lives.

If Labor ran businesses like they ran this state, they would have gone bust years ago. It is not just Labor's taxes that are holding back businesses; it is lack of demand. Under Labor, there are too many taxes and not enough contracts. We should be boosting job creation by investing in infrastructure, but Labor has slashed our infrastructure budget. More than \$9 billion was slashed from infrastructure during the first term of the Palaszczuk Labor government. This underinvestment in infrastructure has

continued in the government's second term. On Tuesday the Treasurer boasted about a \$49.5 billion infrastructure program. It is a big number, but let us have a look at the small print. It is less than the LNP was spending more than five years ago. It is less than Queensland's long-term average infrastructure spend. It is less than every other state is spending as a proportion of revenue. It is less than we need to get our regions firing.

The truth is that the Palaszczuk Labor government has gutted infrastructure investment. The 2019 budget papers show infrastructure investment next year will be more than half a billion dollars less than stated in the 2018 budget. The infrastructure budget has been gutted to fund Cross River Rail. The regions and outer suburbs are being robbed to pay for Labor's flagship program in South Brisbane, just like they are being robbed to pay for a new theatre in South Brisbane, as well as a new school in South Brisbane and an upgraded stadium in South Brisbane. The South Brisbane building boom might be good news for the Treasurer, but it will not create jobs in Townsville or Toowoomba.

Labor would argue that higher taxes are delivering higher spending on health and education, but the truth is that our services are not improving. In fact, most services are getting worse. Commuters in the south-east have now endured 32 months of Labor's rail fail. Just 32 of the 472 services that were axed by Labor in 2016 have been restored. At this rate it will take more than 36 years for Labor to restore the Citytrain timetable.

Crime is spiralling out of control under this Premier. Since 2015 robbery is up 62 per cent, car theft is up 45 per cent and assault is up 32 per cent. Labor promised more police, but all we have got is more criminals. Our youth justice system is in absolute crisis. The nation has been sickened by the inhumane treatment of juveniles by the Palaszczuk Labor government. I am not soft when it comes to crime, but the detention of kids in our watch houses is brutal and it is barbaric. We have juveniles locked up for 43 days at a time, frightened kids trying to hang themselves in our police stations and girls in detention alongside suspected sex offenders. This shameful situation has been caused entirely by the Palaszczuk Labor government. This arrogant and incompetent government has ignored our warnings. It alone decided to remove 17-year-olds from adult prisons without any plan whatsoever. Who has been held accountable for this outrageous failure? No-one! In Queensland, your job is only safe if you are in the Palaszczuk cabinet.

In the past year our health service has been rocked by sackings and scandals. If you are frail or sick, you can no longer count on Queensland Health—not under this government. In March hospitals across the south-east ordered patients to stay away because of a code yellow crisis. Our public health system could not treat the public. In April paramedics and nurses at Logan Hospital argued over which patients could be admitted. Our paramedics and nurses blamed each other for the crisis. I blame Labor.

Queensland Health has been deteriorating ever since the Palaszczuk Labor government took office. Treatment times in our emergency departments have been increasing for years. In April a staggering 60 per cent of ED patients were not treated on time at the Gold Coast University Hospital. Ambulance ramping is back. Thirty-five per cent of ambulance patients arriving at Logan Hospital now spend at least 30 minutes stuck in their ambulance before being admitted. At the Gold Coast's biggest hospital, the number is 44 per cent. In the bush, maternity unit closures are putting country mums and bubs in danger.

Queensland is facing a health emergency and what has been Labor's response? It was to sack men such as Dr Stephen Ayre, the hospital chief executive who dared defend a doctor. The Palaszczuk government does not have a clue how to fix our broken hospital system. The only things that get fixed under this government are polls, such as the dodgy poll that was used to rename the Lady Cilento children's hospital. Every day in Queensland our doctors and nurses go to work to save lives and treat the sick, but our health minister goes to work to insult the memory of one of our greatest medical pioneers. Could he be any more out of touch?

This arrogant and incompetent government has the wrong priorities for the state. Unfortunately, this government's incompetence does not come cheap. It costs a lot of money to be this bad at running Queensland. Labor's debt is now on course to hit \$90 billion. Debt is soaring far beyond the projection made just one year ago. Alarmingly, the Palaszczuk Labor government no longer even pretends it has a plan to control this enormous debt. The Treasurer's attitude to debt is, 'Don't worry, she'll be right.' I do not believe this is a she'll-be-right situation. Labor is increasing taxes and increasing debt year after year after year. Queenslanders cannot afford Labor. When Labor run out of money, they come after yours, either through higher taxes or loading debt onto the taxpayer credit card. This reckless and irresponsible approach has to end.

A future LNP government will stop Labor's waste and treat taxpayers' money with respect. The LNP will stabilise Labor's debt and then begin repaying it, with a target of regaining the state's AAA credit rating. We will achieve that without asset sales and without forced redundancies in the Public

Service. The LNP will maintain a fiscal principle that, over the economic cycle, we will have a fiscal balance—that is, we will not spend more than we receive. We will report against that fiscal principle in every budget. It will take time, but there is clearly scope for saving when you consider Labor's wasteful record. The LNP has identified over \$1 billion of Labor waste in the past 12 months and that is just from the publicly available data. We have seen \$460 million lost on IT project blowouts and \$111 million lost on a dodgy prison deal to appease union bosses. Anyone can see that Labor cannot continue on this course. The Palaszczuk Labor government cannot keep blundering on. It will either collapse or be kicked out. I hope it is the later.

I want Queenslanders to know that the LNP is ready to lead this state. We have fixed Labor's failures before and we are ready to do it again. Twelve months ago I unveiled the LNP's plan for Queensland. The LNP's plan is the most advanced program of action that any Queensland opposition has put forward. We announced it in the very first year of this parliament. Our plan has a simple aim: helping Queenslanders to get a job and get ahead.

Queenslanders are battlers. They are not afraid of hard work. They do not envy others. They simply want better lives for themselves and for their kids, and to get ahead. Queenslanders will roll up their sleeves. They will make sacrifices. They will struggle and they will fight, but they are sick of having to fight their own state government to get ahead. They are sick of the taxes and the bureaucracy that Labor has put in their path. They want a government that backs them not breaks them. I promise that an LNP government will back them all the way. It does not matter if you are a builder in Brisbane or a miner in Mackay; the LNP is on your side. Our plan will give every Queensland a go.

Under Labor, businesses dread a Labor state budget. It means only one thing—more tax. In the last two budgets Labor ripped almost \$3.5 billion in extra taxes out of the economy. Under my plan, the next LNP government will give Queensland a no new tax guarantee. There will be not a single new tax under the LNP. Queenslanders will be able to breathe easy at budget time. We will spend responsibly and end Labor's waste. We will make stabilising our chronic debt a fiscal principle. We will improve our finances by expanding the economy. We will give businesses certainty on tax and allow them to plan for growth.

We will also give Queenslanders certainty about our Olympics bid. Disappointingly, the Treasurer failed to back the games in her budget speech. The Palaszczuk government has failed to provide any leadership on this issue. The LNP wants Queensland to go for gold. We are backing a bid for the Queensland Olympic Games. The games would supercharge our tourism industry, showcasing Queensland to the world. It would ensure that future-proofing infrastructure is delivered. Queensland will need this infrastructure with or without the Olympic Games, but a games bid will ensure the infrastructure is delivered.

Our economic plan will support Queenslanders in every corner of this state. The high price of electricity is one of the biggest complaints I hear from Queenslanders, especially in the regions. The Palaszczuk Labor government treats regional Queenslanders like second-class citizens. While consumers in the south-east have benefited from more competition between energy retailers, regional consumers are stuck with Ergon's rip-off rates. The LNP's plan will introduce retail price competition across the whole state. We will bring down bills for every home north of Gympie and west of Toowoomba. We will bring down the average regional bill by \$1,200 over the next parliament. That is \$1,200 that the LNP will put back into the pockets of regional households.

Our reforms will not just benefit the regions. Restructuring our power companies from two to three, as recommended by the Queensland Productivity Commission, will drive down wholesale power prices for everyone. The LNP will also unlock the benefits of green energy by mandating our power companies invest in renewables. Power workers have been laid off at Stanwell because our generators have been banned from competing with renewables. CS Energy's credit rating is under pressure because it cannot compete either. After two years of talk, the long-awaited CleanCo has yet to invest a single dollar in renewable energy capacity.

Labor's energy policy is a disaster. It is costing jobs. It is costing households. Labor's energy policy is costing our environment too. The LNP's plan will not just unlock the potential of our energy market; it will also unlock the potential of Queensland's water. Regional Queensland has had enough of the Palaszczuk Labor government's anti-farming agenda. Time and time again Labor has ignored the pleas of producers and only listened to the voices of environmental extremists. Labor's Brisbane based ministers do not care about the bush. They only care about their own backyards.

The LNP has never turned its back on our farmers and a future LNP government will get behind agriculture. We will begin with our plans for new dams because the LNP knows that water means jobs. We will progress both the Nullinga and Urannah dams, providing water for agriculture and industry in Central and North Queensland. We will also begin raising the Burdekin Falls Dam. Regional Queensland is crying out for new dams and new jobs. We will deliver both.

The LNP will also create a new government owned corporation in Townsville—the Queensland dam company—to implement our water projects. Under Labor Townsville residents saw millions of litres of water flood their homes then run out to the sea. Under the LNP we will harness water and create a flood of new jobs across Queensland. Cheaper power and water will give regional businesses the lift they desperately need.

Businesses will also benefit from the LNP's investment in infrastructure. Under Labor transport projects have been stuck in the slow lane, just like our commuters. Labor's congestion crisis is yet another brake on job creation. Congestion costs time and money. Small and medium sized businesses cannot afford it either. We will need spending to solve this crisis, but we all know Labor is only spending big in South Brisbane.

The LNP's plan will ensure the rest of Queensland gets its fair share. We will build a transport network that is fit for the 21st century. We will start by busting gridlock on the Gold Coast. We have committed \$550 million towards the second M1. We will work with Canberra to secure a fifty-fifty funding deal for the road.

Labor are not big fans of the second M1. The member for Macalister says that it could take 40 years to plan. If it were left to Labor it probably would take 40 years. That is if they decided to fast-track it. Fortunately, the LNP will not need 40 years. We will build the second M1 just like we built the first M1. The LNP will also stop the petty political bickering with Canberra that the Palaszczuk Labor government has practised since day one. Queenslanders are fed up with Labor's never-ending blame game. Voters on the Gold Coast want Labor to grow up and get on with it. They think the Premier has the wrong priorities and they are right.

The Premier rolls out the red carpet for Dora the Explorer. She throws public money at Hollywood to get a snap with the stars, but she refuses to work with our own Prime Minister to build infrastructure on the Gold Coast. This Premier is more interested in Instagram pictures than infrastructure. If she insists on bringing more kids characters to the Gold Coast then I have a suggestion to make. Forget Dora the Explorer, let us bring on Bob the Builder. Labor cannot get the job done, but Bob will definitely fix it.

Unlike Labor, I backed the federal government's M1 funding for the Varsity Lakes to Tugun and Eight Mile Plains to Daisy Hill upgrades. Unlike Labor, I will work with Canberra to get Gold Coast Light Rail Stage 3A finally built. The LNP will build the infrastructure that Queensland needs.

In Central Queensland we will build stage 2 of the Mackay Ring Road. Stage 2 is vital to the future of Mackay. It will link its port with the Bowen Basin, the Galilee Basin and prime agricultural regions further west. Some 500 jobs will be created during construction. That is why the federal government has agreed to fund 80 per cent of stage 2. Canberra is kicking in \$350 million, but the Palaszczuk Labor government will not commit a cent. It is another stab in the back for Central Queensland. I promise the people of Mackay that I will not waste a minute in getting this road built. The LNP will back Mackay by providing the \$70 million that is needed to finish that ring-road.

We will also invest in the Sunshine Coast. Labor started talking about duplicating the Sunshine Coast rail line over a decade ago, and they are still talking about it. Let us face facts: the Sunshine Coast rail duplication will never be built by the Palaszczuk Labor government. If Sunshine Coast commuters want to travel on a new rail line, they have two options: one, they move to South Brisbane, because that is the only place the Palaszczuk Labor government is investing in any rail; or, two, they vote for the LNP, because only the LNP will build this rail line.

We will accept the federal government's funding deal and invest \$390 million in the Sunshine Coast. Only the LNP is on board with this project. The LNP is on board with the Brisbane Metro too. Peter Beattie's busway vision was dumped by the Palaszczuk Labor government years ago, but they did not replace it with anything. This Labor government does not do plans, and it does not like anyone else to have a plan either. That is why it has repeatedly delayed approvals for this Brisbane City Council project. An LNP government will back Brisbane Metro and we will expand it across the suburbs. We will take decisive action to bust Labor's congestion crisis.

The LNP's plan will help commuters and it will help our kids. Last year the LNP pledged to air-condition every single state school classroom in Queensland. If elected in 2020, the LNP will put its air-conditioning plan into action. The contrast with Labor's half-baked announcement could not be clearer. Replacing air-conditioning units in the Cooler Schools Zone is nothing more than an air-con con. Labor's announcement was a slap in the face for our hardworking P&Cs. P&Cs should not be expected to raise money for essential items like air conditioning.

Unlike Labor, the LNP believes that no student should swelter in 40-degree heat. No teacher should teach in those conditions. Kids simply stop learning when it gets too hot. The LNP wants Queensland kids to be the smartest in the nation. We will air-condition every state school in Queensland because we know that cool kids are smart kids. The LNP's plan will lower temperatures in our classrooms and it will raise standards too.

The LNP's plan will also help Queenslanders whose lives are destroyed by ice. Ice addiction has exploded under the Palaszczuk Labor government's watch. Tackling ice is a priority for me and for my LNP colleagues. We have seen firsthand the damage this drug does. A future LNP government will build four new rehabilitation centres across the state, with more detox facilities to help people kick their addiction. We will deliver more treatment, more prevention and more rehabilitation. We will fight the war against ice in every corner of this state.

Many new policies have been added to the LNP's plan since I announced it 12 months ago. Unlike Labor, the party I lead is brimming with ideas. Today I am adding even more policies to the LNP's plan—policies which will create tens of thousands of new jobs, policies which will save taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars.

We all know that Labor and IT do not mix. Ten years on from the Health payroll debacle Labor has not learned a thing. The ICT Dashboard is currently showing a staggering blowout of almost \$450 million. Labor is incapable of controlling IT projects, but the LNP plan will do just that. The LNP will build a firewall that ensures Labor's digital disasters are never repeated. We will insist that the Chief Information Officer works with government departments to produce mandatory project criteria. Departments will be compelled to provide more information about their decisions and conduct regular health checks as projects are rolled out. The Chief Information Officer will investigate project failures and ensure that lessons are learned. We will keep technology budgets on track and in the black.

The impact of our new policies will be felt far beyond Brisbane. They will have the greatest impact in the areas that need the most help—our forgotten regions. The people of Central and North Queensland will never forget the shameful way that Labor played politics with their livelihoods. Today's Labor Party does not care about workers. It does not represent them and it does not share their values. The Labor Party may have been born in west Queensland, but today its roots are firmly in West End. The line between the Greens and Labor is now just a blur. The Premier can pull on her hard hat as often as she likes, but Queenslanders know that Labor is anti resources, anti jobs and anti regions.

Unlike Labor, I value the resources industry. Queensland is a resources state, and it is time we acted like one, so a future LNP government will implement measures to support resources and generate new jobs in the regions. We will begin by giving the sector the certainty it so desperately needs. We will give the industry a 10-year royalty guarantee, ensuring that businesses can safely invest in Queensland. Royalties will be frozen for a decade. We will not hold the mining industry to ransom like the Labor government. There are \$50 billion worth of projects in the pipeline for the Galilee Basin—projects which will create 15,000 new jobs—but they will not get off the ground until the industry regains its confidence in Queensland. Our royalties guarantee will restore confidence. Our plan will allow Queensland to finally access the wealth of the Galilee Basin.

Our plan will also guarantee that everyone benefits from that wealth. The Galilee Basin will deliver tens of thousands of high-paying jobs, as well as billions of dollars in royalties. Our resources are finite and they can only be sold once. We will not squander the state's royalties like the Palaszczuk Labor government has. Every cent from the Galilee Basin will go towards building a better Queensland. Every cent of the Galilee Basin's royalties will go into a new Queensland infrastructure fund. This fund will be used exclusively to pay for schools, hospitals, roads and bridges right across Queensland. We will ensure that the regions do get their rightful share. Regional Queenslanders do not want handouts; they just want their fair share of the wealth they create, and the LNP will give it to them. We will build new infrastructure that benefits Queenslanders today and for generations to come.

Queensland is blessed with natural resources, but our resources industry has been abused and exploited by the Palaszczuk Labor government. In particular, the project approvals process has been completely politicised. Anti-mining activists whose wages are funded from coal royalties have been welcomed into 1 William Street. Labor claims the approvals process is unbiased and independent. No-one believes a word of that. Labor has moved the goalposts on the approvals process. If we are to create more resources jobs, we must restore confidence in the system.

The approvals process must not be stacked against the resources sector. Each delay destroys jobs. The process should be fair and transparent, with a clear line of sight for the first dollar invested to the first dollar earned. The last LNP government halved the time taken for environmental approvals by

introducing targets and time lines for actions. This work was undone by the Palaszczuk Labor government, but a future LNP government will restore key performance indicators for environmental approvals. These will be published, tracked and reported.

There will be a clear line of sight from the first dollar invested in a project to the first dollar it returns. KPIs will also be applied to the granting of exploration, tenure and production leases. The framework will respect our environment, but it will also respect the needs of industry. Not every company has Adani's staying power. Resource projects need certainty to get off the ground, and the LNP will provide certainty. We will send out the message that Queensland is open for business once again; however, that message will not be an easy sell after the Palaszczuk Labor government has spent years trashing our reputation on the world stage. We will need to spread the message ourselves. That is why the LNP will reinstate the position of the Queensland resources investment commissioner.

This role was designed to attract resources investment to Queensland, but it had one major flaw: investors will not waste their time working with a Labor government that is anti resources, anti regions and anti jobs. The last commissioner was put in an impossible position. The commissioner's days were numbered as soon as she admitted that the approvals process for Adani was an absolute mess. Not for the first time a Palaszczuk Labor government employee found their job terminated because they told the truth. Under an LNP government our resources investment commissioner will be encouraged to tell the truth. They will be encouraged to tell the world that the LNP backs the resources industry 100 per cent. Our commissioner will be told to bring jobs to Queensland because jobs will be our priority.

More than 9,000 people are out of work in the Townsville region. At the port of Townsville throughput has halved in the last seven years. Times are tough in Townsville even though the city is the gateway to some of the richest mineral deposits on earth. A future LNP government will take the shackles off the north-west minerals province. Labor's budget announcement on Tuesday failed to address all of the challenges faced by the north-west minerals province. Electricity costs and exploration funding are holding the province back. Transport is a challenge, but the province also needs cheaper electricity and more exploration. Labor has failed to listen, but the LNP will act.

Our plan will commit \$8 million to minerals exploration in the north-west. We will help Queensland capitalise on the growing demand for batteries and solar farms. The LNP will also cut the crippling electricity costs faced by the minerals sector. An energy audit will examine how we can bring down bills for that industry. The options include lowering the regional reference price as well as increasing generation in the north-west. By boosting supply with solar, gas, coal and hydro we will reduce transmission losses, meaning cheaper electricity and more jobs. We will supercharge the north-west economy and drive minerals wealth and jobs all the way from Mount Isa to Townsville.

Manufacturing must be front and centre of our economic future. The federal government is pumping billions into defence manufacturing in Ipswich, but other centres need support too. Under Labor thousands of manufacturing jobs have been destroyed in Brisbane, Townsville, Toowoomba, Mackay and Cairns. A future LNP government will stand up for manufacturing. We will create a \$20 million fund to back heavy engineering and manufacturing in this state. Unlike Labor, we will not write cheques for Scottish breweries. We will use Queensland money to help Queensland firms develop new markets in Australia and overseas. We will give manufacturers the support they need to succeed.

Business leaders and their employees all want to get on and get ahead, but they can only succeed if their state government has the same priorities. Unfortunately, the Palaszczuk Labor government's priorities are all wrong. Just look at the collapse of training under Labor. Youth unemployment is shamefully high at 12.6 per cent, yet there are now 11,000 fewer Queenslanders in training compared to 2015. The number of Queenslanders completing apprenticeships and traineeships has plummeted by almost 40 per cent. So much for the Smart State. This do-nothing Palaszczuk Labor government is throwing away the potential of our young Queenslanders. It is crushing their careers before they have even begun, and this collapse in training is holding back our key industries.

Unlike Labor, a future LNP government will deliver the skills that our employers need. We will give employers a seat at the training table by creating a Queensland industry skills council. The council will also include training and employee representatives who will report straight to the training minister. It will draw on data provided by bodies such as Construction Skills Queensland and Energy Skills Queensland, but it will also work with regional skills boards that report on local training needs. We will guarantee that young people get the training they need for the roles that are needed. The LNP will not fail young people. We will help them get a job and get ahead, unlike the Palaszczuk Labor government.

The Palaszczuk Labor government had no plan when it came to power. Four and a half years later there is still no plan. I could say that this government has run out of energy and out of ideas, but it never had any of either. It is a small-target strategy that may have worked for some time, but it is clear that big changes are now needed. Queenslanders have had enough of the drift, delay and deceit. All

that Labor gave them in this budget was higher tax, more debt, fewer jobs and less infrastructure. Unlike Labor, the LNP does have a plan. We have a plan to help every corner of Queensland, a plan to build the infrastructure this state needs and a plan to deliver the jobs our regions are crying out for. I have listened to Queenslanders across this state. They know that this government is going nowhere and it is taking them with it. They want a new direction for Queensland—a new direction that only the LNP can provide. Only the LNP will get this state back on its feet. Only the LNP will unite this state. Only the LNP will help every Queenslander get a job and get ahead.