



Speech By  
**Trevor Watts**


**MEMBER FOR TOOWOOMBA NORTH**

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Record of Proceedings, 4 April 2019

**MOTION**

**Federal Budget**

 **Mr WATTS** (Toowoomba North—LNP) (12.44 pm): I rise to speak against this motion. Before I go into the details, I want to talk about why we are debating this motion. This week there were two bills that I was guillotined from speaking to—bills that affect my community. One was around QCAT—and many people in my electorate would like to have had me speak about the failings of QCAT—and the second was the Economic Development and Other Legislation Amendment Bill.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Stewart): Order! Pause the clock. Member for Toowoomba North, I remind you to come back to the motion being debated, not what has previously occurred in the House.

**Mr WATTS:** The economic development zone in Toowoomba is critical and forms part of the budget that comes through from the federal government. Inland rail is a project that had money in the forwards. Those on the government side are saying money is in the never-never. Let us go back to 2013-14 when \$25 billion was put in the forwards. What is that money doing now? Well, \$10 million is going into Bruce Highway upgrades. It was not in the never-never; it was planned. They were looking for shovel-ready projects that they can get into and develop. In my region there is a critically fundamental game-changing piece of infrastructure—the inland rail—and we cannot get intergovernmental support to sign the deal on the land.

**Mr Brown:** You don't even have a corridor! Where is it going?

**Mr WATTS:** We cannot get the corridor sorted out because the government will not negotiate with the people. The simple fact is that \$9.3 billion was put in the so-called never-never, which is now being spent in Victoria and in New South Wales. It cannot be spent in Queensland because those opposite will not finalise and enter into an intergovernmental agreement. That is fundamentally affecting economic development in Toowoomba. It is fundamentally affecting the lives of people in my electorate.

Let us have a look at what is in this budget for the people of my electorate to move their produce and their goods effectively around the region. There is \$50 million for the Gore Highway; \$320 million for the Warrego Highway between Ipswich and Toowoomba—that will certainly help me get down here quicker and help me get home earlier as well, unfortunately, because parliament evenings are cut short; a new weather radar which is critically important for the farmers and producers in my area; and \$20 million for an export hub—and that will be a big boost. Unfortunately for those businesses in that export hub, as they are trying to develop their business and work out how to export, do members think they will be able to put their produce on an inland rail system, an efficient, 21st century land transport arrangement? No, because this government will not sign the deal. We will not be seeing double stacked containers heading down to Brisbane because those opposite will not sign the deal. The inefficiency of land transport is costing every exporter on the Darling Downs money. The money for the roads is most welcome. I call on this government to get on with the inland rail project.

The state Labor government talks about spending and says it has to give more. Where does that money come from? It comes straight out of the pockets of Queenslanders. The proteges of Bligh sitting opposite raided money out of the superannuation of public servants. They said it was guaranteed. Yes, it is guaranteed—by my children's tax! The money will come out of my children's pockets when they start earning money.

What other hollow logs did those opposite roll around and kick to get their budget into surplus? They sold off assets and tried to tell everybody that it was the LNP who sold the assets. That is fundamentally not true. Those opposite sold the assets and still we have a budget deficit approaching \$83 billion. Some \$10 million to \$12 million a day is paid in interest. When there is a large debt it is intergenerational theft. It is our children and grandchildren who will be paying back that \$83 billion.

If you cannot live within your means then you have to borrow from the future, and that is what the Labor government in Queensland has done. It is bankrupting our children. It has the hide to come in here and have a go at the federal government that will finally get the budget back into some semblance of surplus. It is a disgrace! You are all proteges of Bligh, who was the one who led us down this path.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Toowoomba North, please put your comments through the chair.

**Mr WATTS:** The AAA rating was lost by the proteges of Bligh who sit on that side of the room.

*(Time expired)*