




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR WHITSUNDAY

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL

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 **Ms CAMM** (Whitsunday—LNP) (10.17 pm): COVID-19 has presented challenges for many across our state. For the Labor government, delivering a budget before the election was their challenge—using the excuse that the federal government had not delivered their budget. Unfortunately for local councils—their elections and the ever-changing impacts of COVID-19 on them—they had no choice. They could not use the excuse that the state government had not delivered their budget.

Businesses and families across my electorate were continuously monitoring and managing their budgets. They were not afforded the luxury of excuses that the Labor Party have indulged in. Labor's excuses that revenue is collapsing and that they need to borrow to pay for deficits and protect jobs do not wash and certainly will not wash with the many small businesses doing it tough. This points to why Queensland is the last state in the nation to release a budget in 2020. If Labor is so proud of its budget, why hide the finances until after the election?

The budget presented is uninspiring and lacks vision for the future. Incurring debt to deliver no additional value to our state pays no favours now and certainly even less for the next generation. While I acknowledge the intent that the regional Queensland strategy plays in the budget, the translation into quality commitments is underwhelming. It presents \$28 billion of opportunity lost through the lack of investment in catalytic infrastructure like dams, major road projects and partnerships to deliver infrastructure that will enhance supply chains and productivity with the added bonus risk of a credit rating downgrade.

I acknowledge and welcome that some funding, through the education capital budget, is coming to my electorate for Cannonvale State School and the TAFE aquaculture training centre. This is welcomed by locals. With the private investment of Tassal—Australia's largest prawn farm in my electorate—skills, training and pathways in aquaculture will be in high demand and this investment will support opportunities to enter this exciting and innovative industry.

I campaigned on a plan for growth in the bottom half of my electorate, the northern beaches. With the highest ratio of residents in the Mackay local government area, with currently just over 20,000 residents and expected growth of 53.6 per cent by 2036, it is the fastest growing part of the electorate. I acknowledge and welcome the \$1.2 million allocated to upgrade facilities to industry standards for the digital engineering, early childhood, arts and business sectors.

It is important to note that schools across the northern beaches are bursting, including Northern Beaches State High School, Eimeo Road State School and Bucasia State School. They are all reaching their peak capacity or exceeding it. Forward planning for a new school in the electorate is urgent. I campaigned to deliver community infrastructure to meet this growth and committed to aquatic facilities so that children can access a safe swimming option as many of the schools cannot afford the bus fares to access the closest pool and our youth are missing out. Unfortunately, there was no money allocated for this project.

I also campaigned on an integrated transport plan. I welcomed our shadow transport minister to the electorate during the election campaign to witness the growth of the northern beaches. What he witnessed, along with many in my community, was the waste of more than \$2.7 million to fund bicycle paths around major roundabouts that I, as a cyclist, and my cycling community will never use as they only put our lives at risk. The community called for another access in and out of the northern beaches and a recognition that emergency service vehicles cannot get in and out if there is a single road accident.

In terms of planning for growth to unite and recover, I draw the attention of the House to the QTRIP documents that the Minister for Transport and Main Roads identified this morning. I note that \$750,000 for planning has been pushed out to 2023-24—right in time for the next election. The community has no confidence in this government that this forward planning will be delivered. It will be dangled like a carrot in the lead-up to the next state election. While our region faces the pinch point of growth there is no investment in emergency services—fire or ambulance—that are often held up when road access is closed.

Some \$12 million in federal funding was committed in 2018 for Goorganga Plains. The state only has to contribute \$3 million. When I look at the QTRIP data from last financial year, which was tabled, I see that the allocation was due to be fully expended this financial year. Unfortunately—surprise, surprise—it has been pushed out too. According to the forward estimates, it is now scheduled to be completed by 2023. Add the timing for tenders to this project and we will be lucky to see that project commenced before the next election. Yet the federal government continues to be blamed by the Labor government. Who can blame the federal government for saying, 'If you don't use it you will lose it.'

This government is now in the habit of lay-bying roads across this state. It is regions like mine and communities like mine that get cut off by flooding year in, year out that suffer. COVID cannot be blamed for this. The federal government is allocating infrastructure funding and it will take this government over six years to spend it and deliver. We deserve better.

The Service Delivery Statements for environment and science and tourism, innovation and sport reference the commitment to facilitate sustainable recreational opportunities, nature based tourism and ecotourism and the SDS outlines working across government to develop new adventure and nature based opportunities. The Whitsunday mountain bike trails program aims to deliver nature based experiences—mountain biking is a growing adventure sport—and is shovel ready in our region. It has the support of the Whitsunday Regional Council, Tourism Whitsunday, the Whitsunday Coast Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Whitsunday Alliance—the economic development body. I draw the tourism minister's attention to the fact that it is a \$1.8 million project that will create 10 full-time jobs during construction and 34 ongoing jobs. The project is set to attract an increase in visitors of 13,200 per year. It is ready to go. I urge the minister to listen to the community on his visit there next week.

The announcement made for the Pioneer Valley of \$500,000 for mountain bike trail design and assessment is smoke and mirrors as it was the council that I was part of that funded the detailed design and purchase of land. This commitment is simply laughable. The request for funding was in the millions and it now leaves the council short and having to turn to the federal government or ratepayers to fund this catalytic adventure tourism project.

The reef restoration project in the Whitsundays will enhance and build upon existing underwater art and will scale up collaboration. This investment of \$2.8 million is shovel ready. The coral gardening project will provide 24 ongoing jobs and offer 50,000 participants the opportunity to help rehabilitate the reef. These were commitments that I made during the election, which, sadly, the Labor government did not commit to.

The reannouncement of Cyclone Debbie funding recovery projects like the Proserpine Entertainment Centre and the Shute Harbour redevelopment are the legacy of a region recovering from Cyclone Debbie 3½ years ago. In terms of the announcement of the Bluewater Trail at Queens Park, I can say that this project was finished before the end of the financial year and officially opened on 17 July and yet it still remains in the glossy brochure.

New investment is what we seek in our region and a mixture of small infrastructure projects that will deliver a big bang for their buck for our local communities. I speak of projects like those of the Whitsunday Volunteer Marine Rescue and the Habana & Districts Progress Association's resilience project. They do amazing things and promote resilience in our community.

Long before coronavirus, other states were powering ahead and experiencing a tourism boom while Queensland failed to keep pace and lost valuable jobs. It is across ecotourism that Tasmania now leads and fishing tourism that the Northern Territory now leads. My boaties would welcome funding for new boat ramps in the budget, yet we see that the same boat ramp committed to by the Labor government at the 2017 election at Midge Point is still to be constructed.

Mr O'Connor: Planning?

Ms CAMM: Still planning. Labor have failed to increase overnight stays in national parks after repeated broken promises over delivering new ecotourism trails. Now would have been the time to invest in catalytic tourism infrastructure, fast-track coordinated approvals and conduct a review of island leases and development approvals for islands such as Brampton Island and Keswick Island—iconic assets that are now being used as land banking. That is not in the interests of this state or Queenslanders.

I note the Whitsundays did not receive an invite into the Tourism Icons Program 2020. I also note that the regional action plan for Mackay and the Whitsundays outlines the Whitsundays Skyway project with a tick. I certainly hope the minister for tourism can do better than his predecessor who was unable to get this across the line with the department. The Whitsunday Sailing Club has secured \$6 million in federal funding for a maritime education facility. Now is the time the state should be partnering and investing so that we develop future skills for our region.

I will briefly touch on my shadow portfolio areas. Firstly, today is part of the 16 days of activism. On behalf of Queenslanders, I welcome and recognise the additional funding of \$6 million over four years that will be provided to support the prevention of domestic and family violence in vulnerable populations. Every individual deserves to live safely and free from violence. The murder of Hannah Clarke and her three children showed that Queensland's laws are clearly failing to protect victims. Along with Hannah, the lives of the following women are a tragic reminder that there is much more work to be done: in February both Alexis Parkes from Chermside and an unnamed woman from Pimlico were taken; in April, Jacqueline Sturgess from Narangba; in May, Loris Puglia; in June, an unnamed 76-year-old woman in Cairns and Karen Gillard in Rockhampton; in August, Alysha Baty from Nambour; and, in October, Lisa Hund. Nine Queensland women have lost their lives from hideous violent acts. So far this year we have lost 49 women nationally. This issue is above politics. We in the LNP are ready to work with Labor and the minister to prevent further deaths and domestic violence. We want to see engagement and action.

There is more to be done to tackle Queensland's DV crisis. It is deeply alarming that Queenslanders reached out to DVConnect more than 16,000 times during the peak of lockdown. It is even more alarming that 2,895 calls to the Queensland's domestic violence hotline went unanswered during the height of the coronavirus lockdown—an average of 36 each day. Labor should have increased the capacity of DVConnect to answer all calls during the height of the pandemic and they need to continue to work with stakeholders to look at innovative ways in which we can support women and victims and recognise the unique challenges.

The LNP's record is sound and we have demonstrated this through the Domestic and Family Violence Protection Act and establishing the *Not now, not ever* inquiry into domestic and family violence. We have fully supported the implementation of the report's recommendations. We are ready to do more. We released a comprehensive domestic violence plan during the campaign and look forward to working with the government—in particular, to protect women and children and also to invest further in perpetrator programs.

Upon reviewing Labor's record in child safety, at least 16 children have died since Labor was elected in 2015, including Mason Jett Lee. The coronial inquiry into Mason Jett Lee's death found that the department of child safety had failed him in every possible way. The Carmody inquiry recommended the use of adoption, but that still has not happened. I look forward to the bill that was tabled in the parliament today. In the last five years there have been only six children adopted from the child protection system.

The LNP has a strong record when it comes to addressing child safety issues. The last LNP government accepted and implemented the recommendations of the Carmody inquiry, leading to child safety notifications and substantiated cases of harm going down under the LNP.

Labor has failed to protect vulnerable children in care over the last five years. The coronial report into the death of toddler Mason Jett Lee showed the department failed in its duty to protect Mason from the risk of serious harm. The budget showed the rate of children subject to protective orders has increased to 9.8 per 1,000 children—up from 8.8 the previous year. The rate of children subject to protective orders has increased to 52.4 per 1,000 children for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children—up from 47.7 the previous year. It is not good enough.

Children are not line items and they are not a disposable commodity. These rates do not instil confidence—not for me—and they should not instil confidence for the sector or the community. The Labor government has one role, and that is to protect children. Queenslanders are tired of reviews. They are tired of inquiries and they demand that children's safety is paramount. We expect an improved standard of service across all areas—in particular, where the government's role is to support and protect the most vulnerable.