



Speech By  
**Deb Frecklington**


**MEMBER FOR NANANGO**

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Record of Proceedings, 3 December 2020

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL**

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 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (9.49 pm): Queenslanders have been waiting for this budget for so long—in fact, for 539 days. That is way too long. It is no wonder that the Labor government wanted to hide behind this budget. We repeatedly called on the Labor government to release its budget before the election so Queenslanders would know what they were voting on. What were they voting on? We all remember that the Premier of Queensland came out and said, ‘We’re going to borrow \$4 billion because we are going to build.’ Then the Treasurer came out saying we would borrow \$4 billion, but we cannot have a budget before the election, irrespective of the fact that the member for Pine Rivers in her contribution actually said Queenslanders did not need a budget because we had the glossy brochure so they saw everything. Unfortunately, member for Pine Rivers, the glossy brochure—

**Ms BOYD:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Not only are the member’s comments misleading, I find them personally expensive and I ask her to withdraw.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I find them expensive too! I withdraw. It is expensive. I take what the member for Pine Rivers said. The people of Queensland were told \$4 billion and what is expensive for my children, for my future grandchildren, for my future great grandchildren and my future great great grandchildren is \$28 billion. That is a lot more expensive, member for Pine Rivers, than \$4 billion. The debt of Queensland under this Labor government will blow out to \$130 billion.

**Mr Harper** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. Member for Thuringowa, your interjections will cease.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Let me make it really simple for those opposite, because I do not think they quite get this. It would be like your child coming to you and saying, ‘I really need to borrow \$4,000 to buy a car.’ Let us make the numbers a bit smaller for those opposite. Your child somehow ends up at the bank borrowing \$30,000 from you. It does not even make sense to those opposite. That is Laboromics. There are \$130 billion worth of fake promises from this Labor government that the people of Queensland now will have to rely on.

**Ms Boyd** interjected.

**Mr Saunders** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Pine Rivers, your interjections will cease. Member for Maryborough, your interjecting will also cease. The next person will be warned.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** As so many on this side of the chamber have expressed, it is the Labor way. Like the former treasurer of Queensland, Tim Nicholls, just said, debt is always higher under Labor and we know that. This is tragic because there are 214,000 Queenslanders who are currently out of

work. At 15.5 per cent Queensland has the worst youth unemployment rate in the nation, higher than any state or territory. In actual fact, it is areas in and around Wide Bay, Maryborough and Gympie that have the highest youth unemployment rate.

**Mr Saunders** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Maryborough, I just gave you a warning. You are now warned under the standing orders.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Before the election Labor told Queenslanders that they were borrowing to protect jobs. Despite racking up the biggest debt in our state's history, unemployment is still forecast to be the worst in the nation in four years. We know that under the Palaszczuk Labor government Queenslanders have suffered. They have suffered on average the highest unemployment rate in the nation, they have suffered the lowest business confidence and they have suffered from the highest number of bankruptcies in the nation. That is the woeful record of the Palaszczuk government.

Six years of Labor in this great state and they go to an election saying it is just \$4 billion, but then it ends up being \$28 billion. That is just a miraculous bit of Laboromics accounting. No wonder Labor hid those figures. No wonder the Treasurer of Queensland and the Premier refused to put the budget out, even though members over there think that Queenslanders had the budget because they had the little glossy brochure. It is no wonder that this Treasurer hid behind this budget and only after pressure from the LNP ended up delivering a budget, which we have seen this week.

**Ms Boyd** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Pine Rivers, you have been given a warning. You are now warned under the standing orders.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I turn to my shadow portfolio of water, dams, manufacturing and regional Queensland. This side of the House knows that water and water security is one of the most important issues that Queenslanders continue to face. Water is vital to our Queensland economy because it means jobs and it means a future for our children. My goodness, our children will need a future because they will be paying off Labor's debt for generations to come.

**Mr Whiting** interjected.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I am more than happy to talk about the New Bradfield Scheme.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members, do more of you want to be on a warning, because I will warn more of you?

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Goodness me, I cannot wait to see the report from the guy who was going to bring the carbon tax into Queensland. I cannot wait to see the report on the New Bradfield Scheme that apparently, miraculously, the Palaszczuk Labor government is going to do. We will wait to see that. To develop regional Queensland, government and policy makers must take a serious long-term approach to the supply of water, which is why we did take a visionary, bold, ambitious project to the people of Queensland. We also took a serious approach to the regulation of irrigation prices because we refused to pick winners and losers. That is what the Palaszczuk government has done.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Members, there will be no cross-chamber discussion happening or I will warn both sides. This is the last warning.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** It is really simple: more water means more production, more food, more fibre, more trade, more revenue coming into the government. Wouldn't that be a miraculous idea? I thank the member for Lockyer for the work that he has been doing with me and local growers of the Lockyer Valley and the Brisbane Valley to ensure that we can harness that vital water and ensure that that area—

**Mr Saunders** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Maryborough, you are on a warning already. You can leave the chamber for one hour under standing order 253A.

*Whereupon the honourable member for Maryborough withdrew from the chamber at 9.58 pm.*

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** We need to find a way to ensure this vital area has a future by utilising the available water that we know is there but is just being tied up.

**Mr McDonald:** 640 new jobs!

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I will take that interjection. When it comes to dams we know that the Labor government are stuck in the dark ages. They refuse to build a dam.

The one dam built by a Labor government was the Paradise Dam, built under Peter Beattie's government, and it is now being torn down. Not only is that embarrassing for Queensland and the Beattie government; it is a disaster for the local primary producers. The budget papers reveal what we have always known: under this Labor government it will be a long time before the primary producers in the Bundaberg area know what is actually happening to the Paradise Dam. By the time they are finished, the budget papers say they will have spent \$100 million on tearing down the dam wall. The previous minister for natural resources claimed that the yield would be restored. We really do not know and have had no clarification as to what that actually means, but we do know that full capacity must be restored.

Water security in that region has been completely shattered, which brings me to another false promise from those opposite in the Palaszczuk government. The new member for Bundaberg stood on the booth and repeatedly lied—I withdraw. He repeatedly told untruths. He stood there and said, 'We will restore the Paradise Dam. We will rebuild the wall.' What a load of codswallop. The member for Bundaberg actually said the words, 'We will restore Paradise Dam to full capacity.' That is another broken promise from those opposite.

I will highlight a few other issues that jump out of the budget papers when it comes to water. The member for Burdekin mentioned the raising of the Burdekin Falls Dam, but in the budget all we see is another bit of plan. Rookwood Weir continues to be behind schedule. We do know that the Palaszczuk Labor government has blamed the cost of concrete for reducing the size of the dam. They have not reduced the size of Cross River Rail because of the price of concrete, but—by goodness—they have decided to reduce the amount of water that our farmers can get by reducing the size of Rookwood Weir, apparently because of the cost of concrete. Many dam projects that have been on the cards tend to slip away, a bit like Nullinga dam.

I note comments made by Mayor Paul Antonio from Toowoomba. I understand and agree totally with his concerns about the funding for water. He said—

When it comes to our real goals here, we realise that health and education is good, but there hasn't been anything specific on water.

There could be a need to build another dam or possibly a pipeline to Clifton in the future, and there is no clarity around what's happening on the pipeline to Warwick.

Water is very important to this vital region, which has formed a water alliance with the Western Downs, the Southern Downs, Goondiwindi, the Lockyer Valley and even a New South Wales council, the Tenterfield Shire Council. Their focus is solely on water security for southern inland Queensland. I look forward to working with that group to help them progress key water projects. Those are progressive councils and they could teach the Palaszczuk Labor government a thing or two when it comes to regional growth, economic activity and private sector investment.

I am a bit like Tim Nicholls because I have so much to talk about but I do not have time. I will move on to the electorate of Nanango. I have been working my way through the budget documents, trying to find some good news for my electorate, which suffers from among the highest youth unemployment and suicide rates in this state. Unfortunately, this budget has not delivered on many of the important projects that we have been waiting for, including long-awaited safety improvements for major connecting roads, as well as water infrastructure, which have been overlooked. Key projects that my community needs funding for include the Mundubbera-Durong Road, Kilkivan Tansey Road, Maidenwell Bunya Mountain Road and the Cooyar single-lane bridge, but once again we have been completely overlooked.

Water infrastructure such as the Barlil weir is not mentioned in the budget. We are looking for only \$25 million. They are spending \$100 million to rip down a dam wall, but the Barlil weir has not been considered. In fact, many of the projects for my electorate listed in the budget have already been announced. The fire station in Yarraman has been opened, but it is in there because they needed a picture for their brochure, which they got wrong anyway. Those are not new projects. Can members guess what the entire Somerset region got? I know the member for Ipswich West will be vitally interested in this. The entire Somerset region will receive \$6,000 for solar panels for the Esk Civic Centre. Thank you for that! That is all we got.

**Mr Perrett** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Pause the clock. Member for Gympie, you will cease your interjections.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I represent around 58 schools in my electorate. One of my favourite little schools is Tanduringie State School. When the bus carrying the entire school hit a truck on the Tanduringie bridge, I called for the government to do something. It is a single-lane bridge. A whole busload of kids was nearly killed. Please, let us do something about that bridge. Whilst there is a tiny bit of money for planning, it is out into the never-never. We must look at projects in those little areas.

The bridge is on a main road just off the New England Highway. Trucks use that road and still we have a single-lane wooden bridge. That is not good enough when a school bus full of kids has hit a truck on a bridge that we know has seen terrible, sometimes fatal, accidents. Many locals have had the life scared out of them on that road. We have been advocating for a change to that bridge but, again, there is nothing in this budget. There is some scheduled planning for the Running Creek Bridge, but only because the old timber bridge burnt down following a serious road accident.

There is so much opportunity in the Nanango electorate, but it needs backing with better roads, better health, better water security, and less red and green tape for local small businesses. I will continue to push for those things because, just as with regional maternity services, once again the bush has been forgotten.

*(Time expired)*