




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL

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 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (3.10 pm): The Gold Coast is one of Queensland's second largest cities. You would think it would stand to reason that we would get a reasonable portion of the infrastructure spend out of the state government budget. Yet here we are looking at yet another state Labor government budget that fails to deliver for the Gold Coast. A city that has 15 per cent of the state's population only gets four per cent of the total capital works in this state. I cannot express how disappointed I am at the fact that we are seeing the state debt rise to \$130 billion with the Gold Coast getting next to nothing to show for it. Whilst overall this is terrible for the Gold Coast, it is actually not all doom and gloom for Currumbin.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members on my left and members on my right, I cannot hear the speaker. Please keep the conversations and interjections across the chamber to a minimum.

Mrs GERBER: I want to be the kind of representative for my community that acknowledges when the government commits to something that my community has called for—because this is what government should do. Let me first acknowledge some of the promised projects that are desperately needed in my community which I am quite pleased about. Some of these involve capital investment in our local schools like a shaded play area and manual arts block extension at Elanora State High School. Other much needed projects that both schools and P&Cs have extensively talked to me about include: a school entrance upgrade at Currumbin Valley State School; a tuckshop upgrade and the renovation of the amenities block at Elanora State School; an upgrade to the after-school care facilities at Currumbin State School; and a refurbishment of the administration facilities at Tallebudgera State School.

I am also very, very pleased to see that the Labor government matched the LNP's commitment of \$2 million earmarked for the Currumbin Beach Vikings Surf Life Saving Club which will include disability access. Labor also came to the table with funding for an upgrade to Currumbin Creek Road, as well as an upgrade to the intersection of the Gold Coast Highway and Toolona Street in Tugun. The community should be very proud that together we were able to achieve this. It just proves what can be achieved with strong representation and when the government actually listens to the opposition and the community. I must also take a cautious approach here. I must not get too excited because all of these projects are not fully funded for this year, so I will have to keep pushing to ensure the government delivers these projects for my community.

It is also incumbent on me to point out those commitments which this government is wholly failing to deliver on. First is the \$40 million satellite hospital for the southern Gold Coast, announced by Labor during the election campaign as going to be in Tugun—something I notice the government appears to be shying away from now in the recent budget it has handed down. In fact, if you look at the Gold Coast

Regional Action Plan—and I can table a copy for the benefit of the House—you can see that item 22, and I have circled it, the satellite hospital, which was stated during the campaign as going to be in Tugun, is located in southern Robina on that map. That is a far cry from the Tugun location my community was promised. Either we in Currumbin are going to get duded on this or the government does not know where Tugun is. Either way, I will not let them get away it.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'Creating jobs on the Gold Coast' [366](#).

It gets worse. When you delve into the detail—and the devil is always in the detail when it comes to Labor—it appears that the promise of a satellite hospital will not even be delivered before the next election in four years time. The \$40 million in funding for this satellite hospital is part of a \$265 million program for seven hospitals across Queensland. Do not get me wrong: more hospitals for more communities is a great thing, but in this case you have to look at the detail.

In this financial year the Palaszczuk Labor government has committed only \$1.6 million to the whole program. If you divvy \$1.6 million between seven hospitals, that is a measly \$230,000 to set up a whole satellite hospital in Tugun. That is to acquire the land, the planning and the architectural design. It is not a lot of money to do all of that. One has to ask: when will Tugun actually get its satellite hospital, if it all? Maybe Labor is going to reheat this one as an election commitment in 2024 and try to spin it off as something new. It really is very disappointing because this could be a great thing for our community.

Next up, there is the 148-hectare eco-parkland in Currumbin Valley. It has come to light that at the time Labor made this announcement during the election campaign the Palaszczuk Labor government had not even consulted with the landowners that they are proposing to acquire the land from in order to build this ecotourism site. Nor did they have the capacity to commit more than \$500,000 out of the \$15 million this project is going to cost. There is not even a clear indication in the budget papers of which government project this commitment will be funded from. If it is not clearly funded then the community should be very, very worried that it may not happen.

I have been a fierce advocate for ecotourism in the electorate of Currumbin. I called for it. I called for more projects during the election campaign at the Greater Southern Gold Coast Chamber of Commerce debate and at other forums. Ecotourism is something that I want to see happen in Currumbin. It not only protects our natural assets but helps drive business and jobs in Currumbin. I want to see it happen, but taxpayers and the Currumbin electorate deserve to know how and from where this project is going to be funded so they can be assured it is not just mere puff.

What we are seeing here is the Palaszczuk Labor government hiding funding for projects on the southern Gold Coast behind smoke and mirrors. For over five years the Currumbin electorate has been neglected. Now, when we finally have some commitments, none are actually fully funded for this year. Some of them are not even funded for the years to come. It is the icing on an already stale cake.

Sadly, across the whole of the Gold Coast, it is the same for so many vital pieces of infrastructure. The second M1—perhaps the most important congestion-busting project for our city—has all but stalled under Labor. The Palaszczuk Labor government made such a fuss about this commitment, but this financial year they are spending a pitiful \$12.9 million on this road. That is a far cry south of the \$1.5 billion price tag and even less than the \$17.6 million they spent on the project to 30 June 2020.

The budget papers show that hardly any funding is allocated until 2022-23, with about half the project cost not being spent until 2024-25 and beyond. Ultimately, this means that on Labor's watch the second M1 will take eight years to build and meaningful construction will not start for another 18 months. In the time it will take Labor to have meaningful construction on the second M1, the LNP had built the entire first M1.

We see the same thing with capacity building on our heavy rail network. Despite promising additional rail stations, the bulk of the funding is not being allocated until 2022 or 2023 or later. I will continue to fight for a heavy rail station at Elanora. Time and time again Labor play fast and loose with the truth of their commitments—commitments that will not happen for many, many years.

Mr Deputy Speaker, as you may know, this is my first state budget process in this House, and as such you can hear that I am very passionate about my community. I have pored over these budget documents. I started with the Gold Coast Regional Action Plan, a glossy four-page brochure. I thought, 'Yes, this looks exciting. This could be good.' Then I downloaded last year's Gold Coast Regional Action Plan and I compared them. Guess what? I was shocked to see that nine of the initiatives are rehashed and recycled from last year's plan. There is no new money and no new announcements. For example, the \$286,000 announced for the Tweed Coolangatta Junior AFL Club is not a new announcement. It has been recycled from last year. It is not new spending for our city. It is creative accounting and tricky marketing that is trying to mask the fact that they have absolutely no economic plan for the Gold Coast.

During the state election campaign the LNP campaigned for more police. We campaigned for 10 additional police officers for the Palm Beach Police Station to protect the northern part of the Currumbin community as well as a \$1 million investment to combat hooning. On this side of the chamber the LNP gets it when it comes to providing extra funding to tackle crime, and that is why I am calling on the Palaszczuk Labor government to come to the table and match the LNP's commitment for additional police and anti-hooning technology on the southern Gold Coast. Work with us to make our community safer.

I know my community wants their fair share. They do not want promises that are never fulfilled or punted off into the distant future. People are sick of this kind of politics. I would like to stand up in this House today and rave about all the great things Currumbin is going to get and leave it at that. The brutal truth is that it is all smoke and mirrors. There are no commitments that are fully funded for this year or even years to come. The Palaszczuk Labor government needs to stomp up and put their money where their mouth is. If they are going to get Queenslanders into \$130 billion worth of debt—debt owed by each and every family in Queensland—they need to deliver on their commitments and build the infrastructure they have committed to. They cannot just leave it sitting off in the forward estimates and then pull the wool over the public's eyes by reannouncing it as an election commitment when the next election rolls around.

Shamefully, what this budget represents more broadly is a complete breach of the trust of the people of Queensland. Going into the election campaign, it had been over 500 days since the Labor government delivered a budget. When selling its policy commitments to Queenslanders, Labor said they would only increase debt by \$4 billion. Now, after the good people of Queensland re-elected them, we find out that they are actually going to borrow \$28 billion. It takes a special kind of 'magic pudding' economics to add two and two together and get 28. Queenslanders have every right to feel ripped off, because this additional debt is not being used to build roads. It is not being used for wealth-building infrastructure. The Leader of the Opposition was correct when he said it was being used to put fuel in cars and pens on desks. They are borrowing billions and billions to pay for expenditure that is completely unsustainable.

This month on the eve of Christmas over 214,000 of our friends, neighbours and colleagues are without jobs, which is a challenge this Labor government has not even come close to tackling. In October this year unemployment was 7.7 per cent—the highest in mainland Australia. That is 214,000 people who will struggle to pay their bills and keep a roof over their families' heads. This Labor government would have you believe this is all due to COVID-19. It is simply not true. Even before this pandemic began Queensland had the highest unemployment rate in the nation. We need a government that is focused on getting Queenslanders into work. Despite all the plans and initiatives spruiked in these budget papers, Queensland's unemployment rate is still only forecast to get down to 6.5 per cent. That is worse than New South Wales and Victoria. The government needs to do better than this.

I will continue to fight to keep this Palaszczuk Labor government accountable. I will hold them to account on their local spending commitments to ensure they are delivered this term in the way my community wants. I will fight for our fair share in the Currumbin electorate.