



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR NINDERRY

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (6.19 pm): Many in my community were eagerly looking forward to this week's state budget. I know that sounds strange, but thousands of locals were hoping it would deliver some relief from congestion and improve safety on one of our busiest and most dangerous stretch of roads. Sadly, as a community, we are all disappointed when the government broke yet another promise by failing to commit to new funding for a long-awaited duplication of the Sunshine Motorway and the associated upgrades to the interchange at Coolum. This is another broken promise from a government that has continually failed to deliver for the Sunshine Coast.

Last night I tabled a petition on behalf of my community, calling on the government to deliver on a commitment that was made 14 years ago—a commitment to duplicate the motorway and to address congestion and safety concerns that have resulted in the loss of 25 innocent lives over that time. As I said last night, any life lost on our roads is one too many. It is no wonder that community leaders like the president of Coolum Business and Tourism and our local school P&C president stood beside me to call on the government to act on this notorious stretch of road.

This is a road that for years has not been able to cope with the exponential population growth of our area. The Beattie and Bligh governments acknowledged that the motorway was past its use-by date back in 2006 and was no longer able to cope with the population at that time. In 2008 it released plans to replace it. In 2020, at the last election, the government renewed its promise to duplicate it, but here we are again. I am standing up in this chamber talking about essential road upgrades that have been promised for more than a decade—upgrades that will reduce congestion and save lives.

While talking about transport infrastructure, it is disappointing that the Sunshine Coast has been overlooked again for investment in game-changing transport infrastructure in our rapidly growing region—a region that outgrew its current infrastructure a long time ago. Heavy rail to Maroochydore is another long overdue broken promise. I welcome the commitment to fund our fair share of this critical infrastructure project.

Coolum State High School in my electorate continues to go from strength to strength, boasting a number of excellent programs. It has an outstanding record of academic, cultural, sporting and educational achievements. I acknowledge the \$9 million allocated in the budget for additional classrooms to accommodate its recent growth, but the school still lacks a purpose-built performance hall that can meet the needs of the expanding school curriculum and accommodate the entire school community.

Another fantastic school in my electorate which has unfortunately again missed out on long overdue funding is Coolum State School, which currently caters for over 1,000 local students and is predicted to grow to around 1,200 kids in the next few years. Around 50 per cent of these students are

schooled in asbestos ridden demountables with an average size of 50 square metres—some less. This is well below the current recommendation of around 70 square metres. I understand that a number of these demountables are some of the oldest demountables still being used in the state—if not the oldest. Some, known as 'mod A', were commissioned in 1970—even before I was born, and I am no spring chicken. Twelve of them often flood—not just during one-in-100-year rain events but often. It is not uncommon for preppies to be wading through water and mud just to get to or out of their classrooms after a decent summer downpour. This is hardly appropriate in 2022, and I praise our teachers, who do a lot with little to ensure our local kids receive inclusive and contemporary teaching practices in trying, unsafe and archaic conditions. I thank the education minister for recently supporting an application for a new school master plan at Coolum State School, but urgent funding needs to be fast-tracked to bring the school facilities into the 21st century.

On the subject of health, we all hope that we will never need to call triple 0. Often when we do, it is for a loved one or someone close to us. When we do have to make that call, we all expect that the urgent medical attention we require will be available. Unfortunately, that is becoming an all-too-rare occurrence in Queensland at the moment. The most basic and essential role of any state government is to provide urgent medical service when it is needed. Unfortunately, this government is failing in that most important and rudimentary responsibility.

This budget has been lauded by the Premier and the Treasurer as a record budget on health but, as Queenslanders know, it is not about the record spend on health; it is about the government's record on health. Action speaks louder than words, and the desperate cries of Queenslanders who cannot access medical help when they need it are resonating loud and clear, but only if you choose to listen. If we are to believe the words of our Premier and Treasurer, every budget that this state Labor government has delivered past eight years has been a record of some sort, but the only records we have seen in that time are the broken records of a health system in crisis: record ramping, record wait times for surgery and a record failure to deliver essential health services to everyday Queenslanders. Simply throwing money at a problem does not make it go away or absolve you of all responsibility. Even the United Workers Union has branded this record health budget as inadequate and is already seeking meetings with the health minister to discuss the timeline for the delivery of new staff.

From cost blowouts on major infrastructure projects to multi-million dollar quarantine facilities sitting empty, the extent of this Labor government's inability to manage the economy and govern in the best interests of Queenslanders has been highlighted once again in this budget.

As I alluded to earlier, this is a budget of records but not the type of records that Queenslanders were hoping for. It is these records that will become the hallmark of this third-term, tired, lazy and compromised Labor government—record debt, record taxation, record ambulance ramping rates, record hospital waiting times, record levels of crime, record cost-of-living increases, record numbers of bankruptcies, record waste, record broken promises, a record number of integrity crises and, most concerning, a record failure in delivering for hardworking Queenslanders and their families.

This budget is further evidence of a third-term government that has clocked off. Every time this government is forced to announce a new inquiry we learn more about the backroom deals, the dodgy accounting practices, the cover-ups and the waste that has become synonymous with Labor. There are no fewer than 10 integrity reviews happening right now into the workings of this Labor government. This week, the trust of Queenslanders was eroded even further when the Treasurer handed down this budget containing more broken promises, more deception and more tricky accounting.

The pain does not end there. Car registration fees will increase from 1 July, adding to the already crippling cost-of-living pressures that Queenslanders are facing. With the new federal Treasurer only recently confirming we are in the grips of a full-blown cost-of-living crisis, Queenslanders rightly expected that this budget would deliver some relief. Unfortunately, despite reaping dividends of \$825 million from our state owned energy corporations, the Treasurer has reluctantly handed out less than half of that in the form of a one-off electricity rebate. Meanwhile, inflation in Queensland is currently sitting at six per cent—the highest in the country. For a government that likes to remind Queenslanders that they own their power assets, why are more of these dividends not being returned to the taxpayers, who are already struggling with the increasing cost of food, fuel and electricity?

Over 50,000 Queenslanders are on the social housing waiting list, yet there is not one single dollar in this budget to address this crisis. This government's track record on housing is dismal. In the past five years the number of social housing bedrooms has increased by less than one per cent but the waiting list has grown by 70 per cent. In five years they have built just over 1,000 beds for 50,000 Queenslanders. It is not good enough.

As the state remains gripped by a youth crime crisis, it comes as absolutely no relief to learn that in the past 12 months the number of police in Queensland has increased by only five. On the Sunshine Coast, stations like Nambour are operating at 50 per cent strength. Every day they are struggling to

man shifts and put police cars on the road. At Caloundra, the police minister recently made a big fanfare about the six extra officers but failed to mention that this is less than half the number required to just backfill the officers at Caloundra who are currently off on long-term sick or stress leave.

To add further pain, our police are being hamstrung by this soft-on-crime Labor government with laws that do not work—laws which put the rights of criminals ahead of the rights of victims, while police chase their tails night after night. By chasing the same recidivist juvenile offenders, they are chewing up valuable resources that should be protecting victims of domestic and family violence. It is not surprising to see that crime rates are at an all-time high. Assaults are up 62 per cent, unlawful entry is up 18 per cent, unlawful use is up 16 per cent and theft is up nine per cent.

In conclusion, most Queenslanders have learned by now that this third-term Labor government has its priorities wrong. The one thing we can believe from the Treasurer's budget speech is that this is a traditional Labor budget. This budget is not just an emblem of the current government; it is covered in ALP DNA. We have had more than a century of Labor Party administrations addicted to debt and taxes. No matter what you say about this government, they are following lock step in that tradition.

Queenslanders do not care about red carpets and movie deals. They care about accessing health care when they need it. They care about how they are going to pay for the increasing cost of electricity and food. They care about the quality of their children's education and their future. They care about their homes and their safety. They expect governments to act in their best interests and to be open, accountable and honest. Unfortunately, the things that mean the most to everyday Queenslanders are the same things this Queensland Labor government has given up on—just like this record budget, which shows no vision and no ambition, only a dire record of debt, waste, arrogance and deceit.