



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR THEODORE

Record of Proceedings, 24 June 2022

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (3.28 pm): I also rise to make a contribution to the Appropriation Bill 2022-23. Before I considered writing a speech on this budget, I decided to look at my previous speeches. Unfortunately it was a bit like groundhog day because a lot of the issues I have been fighting for over the years I have spoken about in this chamber many times, but they seem to be ignored by this government. It is something that certainly frustrates a lot of my residents on the northern Gold Coast in that they feel they are second-class citizens.

I want to give one accolade. My residents welcome the \$20 million in funding towards the Coomera Hospital early works. This equates to about 1.4 per cent of the overall cost of the hospital itself. Therefore, a lot of residents are concerned that the time line for this hospital will be dragged out longer than is promised—similar to what we have experienced with the Coomera Connector. We were promised that the Coomera Connector would have cars on it by the end of this term. That has blown out. We will be lucky to see that in 2026. I would not bet on that either.

On the northern Gold Coast—and the member for Coomera can certainly back these comments up—we have experienced massive population growth in recent years. The member for Coomera's area experiences more population growth as he has more land that can be developed. In my region we have seen a reasonable share of that development. One thing that concerns me is that the land we are developing now is mountainous and very close to forest lines. This certainly exacerbates concerns around the risk of bushfires. I have very good rural fire brigades in my electorate—Coomera Valley is one of them. They are in desperate need of new facilities as they have outgrown what they currently have. We will need their assistance more than ever as we encroach into bushland in the more mountainous parts of the Theodore electorate. I know that the brigade has gone to the department and pushed for this—and I have mentioned it in this chamber previously. We need to start allocating money to that brigade so they can get better facilities and continue to grow.

Housing is an issue on the northern Gold Coast. My office continually gets emails from people and people walking in the front door distraught about the increases in rents and the prices of homes in the area. This is forcing good families out of homes and onto the street. An email from a resident reads—

I am writing to you as a concerned citizen—and also a mother. My concerns are about the current housing crisis—affordability—and lack of rental accommodation. The current rental increases are out of control—and will be creating homelessness. It's bad enough we've just gone through a pandemic—now there will be a whole generation that can't afford to buy a home.

A resident from Upper Coomera who cares for her 29-year-old daughter wrote—

Hi, as you know the rental crisis is bad on the GC. My daughter and I have just 2 weeks to find a rental or we will be homeless. The past week I have been trying to find some emergency housing, disability housing on the GC, anything and I have hit a brick wall.

Unfortunately, this budget does little to help these individuals.

I now want to talk about my local roads. This is certainly something that I have spoken about in this chamber many times before. The government has allocated for a few years time an upgrade of Michigan Drive and Tamborine Oxenford Road. Residents are asking for Georgina Street to be included in this upgrade because it is only a short distance away. It is precarious to turn left or right into Georgina Street from Tamborine Oxenford Road. As I said, it is only a short distance away. It would not be a big ask for the department to widen the road there a little and put line markings on the road.

When it comes to the Coomera Connector, one of my main concerns is Helensvale Road. Helensvale Road will be an important feeder road for the Coomera Connector. East of the Coomera Connector the road is a single lane bidirectional carriageway. We are expecting vast numbers of vehicles on that road, which, even at best of times, is congested. We are expecting the additional vehicles from the Coomera Connector to go onto that road.

At a recent Neighbourhood Watch meeting the local division 2 councillor claimed that the Gold Coast City Council does not have any money. Many times I have asked the minister to undertake a fifty-fifty partnership with the Gold Coast City Council as the Coomera Connector will have a council road as a feeder road. I hope the minister can come to some agreement with the Gold Coast City Council so that we can fix this road and it can take the amount of traffic it will be expected to take. Also, Helensvale State High School—one of the largest schools on the Gold Coast—is on Helensvale Road. During peak hour it is so congested that motorists can hardly move. I say again that we need to make sure that Helensvale Road is fixed. One of my residents said to me, 'Mark, how can the Coomera Connector go from six lanes to four lanes but cost an extra \$600 million?' He would love the minister to detail exactly why the cost has blown out.

Exit 57 is a major interchange on the M1 motorway at Oxenford. A couple of years ago the government spent about \$25 million on that exit. Many of my residents say that this was an experiment in line marking. Some \$25 million was spent to adjust the line markings on the road and all it has done is confuse drivers, especially drivers who are not familiar with the area. We are seeing cars go across the four lanes as they go across the interchange. There have been many near misses and we have seen accidents there regularly.

The right turn lane from the Old Pacific Highway has been removed so we have vehicles driving into the Oxenford Tavern and doing a U-turn in the car park and coming out the other side. The department put a U-turn facility on Tamborine Oxenford Road near the interchange. It is a short distance from a very large roundabout. The problem with that U-turn facility is that there are motorists who get a little impatient, decide to use the U-turn facility and turn in front of other vehicles. Not too long ago I saw a Nucrush Quarry truck driver swerve and slam his brakes on because an individual decided to pull out in front of him. This is not the brightest thing that Main Roads has done. The interchange still has congestion. On the Hope Island Road side motorists can be stuck in congestion for about 15 or 20 minutes. In the afternoons especially, there is congestion getting off the M1 motorway. The \$25 million spent on that interchange has failed to achieve anything.

Another issue that has certainly been bubbling along in my area is the new Hope Island station. The department has stated that it is going to build 179 car parks there. Where they are going to put the car parks is, at the moment, used by local businesses as a parking facility. The problem is that of the 179 car parks there will be very few for commuters. Local businesses and the Department of Education, which has a building in that area, use that current area. We are pleading with the minister to have a look at this and commit to at least 500 car spaces. This would encourage people to use the train from Hope Island and put a stop to the fear that residents have about commuters and people from local businesses parking in the streets in the local estates. These local estates have narrow roads and they simply do not have the ability to cater for additional cars.

A resident floated an idea with me a while back. This is about having visionary ideas for infrastructure for our region. There is a southern transport corridor, which is on the Gold Coast City planning maps, and it is also on the Main Roads planning maps. This corridor would link the northern Gold Coast to Yarrabilba and beyond. We talk about housing affordability on the Gold Coast. The problem is that the council wants to keep 50 per cent green space on the Gold Coast. Therefore, we are running out of land. Therefore, we need to look for alternatives to house extra people. If we built a road which would connect the northern Gold Coast and shorten travel times to the areas west of the northern Darlington Range and to Yarrabilba, that would create a massive area for housing and industrial estates, creating jobs. That is a visionary idea. I support the resident who came up with that idea.

We also need to look at what other states do. When we look at those corridors, we need to implement heavy rail to ensure that the life span of those roads is greatly increased. I ask the minister to seriously consider that we need interconnectors from the northern Gold Coast to those areas to the

west. That will ensure that people have affordable land and they can easily travel a short distance to work on the Gold Coast or people on the Gold Coast can easily travel a short distance to potentially work in those areas. I say to the minister and the parliament that this is something we need to look at.

I want to talk a little about education. I thank the Minister for Education. She sent out some information about funding for my local schools. Gaven State School is going to get a security fence. It says that it is shovel-ready. They have actually started, and they started quite some time ago.

Mr Brown interjected.

Mr BOOTHMAN: The shovels are well and truly ready. They are stuck in the ground! I think there is concrete in there too! There is funding for a security fence. However, I would like to see Coomera State School complete its security fence. At the moment it is half done. Unfortunately, at the moment students are jumping the back fence into the housing estates, so it would be good to get that sorted out. The department has also allocated \$100,000 to demolish three buildings at Helensvale State High School and \$555,000 to refurbish amenities in Foundation Square at Helensvale State High School.

I always welcome all the additional funds when it comes to school maintenance in my area because I do have some schools which are quite old. One school is reaching its 150th year next year, and that is Coomera State School. It will be a fantastic celebration. I am working with the school to put some money forward and help them out financially. This school has a very proud history when it comes to the Anzacs in the area. We are making up some plaques of former students who served in the First World War and the Second World War. The idea of this is to make sure that the kids see the plaques in the library to recognise the sacrifice of former students and residents of the great Coomera area.

Unfortunately, this budget has been groundhog day for the Theodore electorate. There are so many issues that we would love to see properly fixed. Again, we are missing out. There is Henry Roberts Drive and having a turn left lane at the new intersection of Maudsland Road and Beaudesert Nerang Road. They are simple things. A lot of things are not overly expensive to do. My residents feel short-changed.