




Speech By
Ali King

MEMBER FOR PUMICESTONE

Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2023

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (3.43 pm): Our Palaszczuk government's budget is focused on doing what matters most for Queenslanders. National cost-of-living pressures mean that Pumicestone locals are hurting, and our budget offers Australia's biggest ever support package. Our \$550 energy rebate for every household and \$1,072 for pensioners and concession card holders will be a real helping hand, and every little Queenslander will get the best possible start to school thanks to our free kindy program.

Jen is a young widow in Pumicestone who works in a low-paid job to support herself and her young son. Jen said to me, 'Thank you for the budget. The free kindy and the energy rebates will really help me and my family.' More good news for Jen is that we are also expanding our FairPlay scheme to include new \$150 SwimStart vouchers to help cover the cost of swimming lessons for littlies.

We are also making sure Queenslanders have the jobs and the infrastructure they need into the future with our \$89 billion Queensland Big Build. Pumicestone's very own Big Build includes funding to complete our Bribie Island and Caboolture satellite hospitals and finish our huge redevelopment of Caboolture Hospital. Our start-to-finish Beachmere Road upgrade begins this year, plus we have funding in the budget to dual-lane two more projects for Bribie Island Road—something that is very important to my community. We are also investing in wellbeing with our brand new Bribie Island Neighbourhood Centre and a new PCYC in Caboolture that will serve our young people.

Turning to the LNP's response to our budget, I quote *InQueensland*. Dennis Atkins said, 'The Leader of the Opposition has established just one thing: he complains about everything but can't be remembered for anything.' The Leader of the Opposition claims to listen to Queenslanders, but he did not talk once about what matters most to Queenslanders—not the economy or the 520,000 new jobs that we have created since 2015. This LNP mob are much more interested in jobs for themselves than jobs for Queenslanders.

The LNP leader talked about transparency, but he was not transparent about the LNP's plans for our progressive coal royalties that have delivered all of this cost-of-living support into the future. The 'timid' LNP leader—and in saying that I quote the *Courier-Mail*—will cave in to the coal lobby and cancel progressive coal royalties. He is sitting on the fence getting ready to do it, and when he does he will blow a massive \$7 billion hole in the budget. What will the LNP do to fill that budget black hole? The member for Broadwater admits he wants to cut \$10 billion from our infrastructure Big Build, and the member for Chatsworth admitted live on radio their secret plans for \$2 billion in further cuts.

What disappointed me most about the LNP's budget reply though was the attacks on our satellite hospitals. The Leader of the Opposition shamefully called our satellite hospitals a waste and said construction cost increases should be spent elsewhere. The LNP's double standards are on show here. Bribie locals do not forget the LNP dangling a hollow Bribie hospital, with nothing but GPs and urgent

care, in front of them at the last election. The LNP just do not want Bribie and Caboolture locals to have renal dialysis, oral health, mental health and geriatric services closer to home. They do not want Bribie locals to get that late night urgent care seven days a week that is needed so badly in our community. We know what they will do if they get the chance.

Imagine, if you want to, a parallel universe where it is November 2025, five months after the Bleijie-Mander LNP government has handed down its first budget. Progressive coal royalties have been repealed to fulfil the LNP's promise to the Resources Council. Multinational mining companies are delighted, but Treasury is horrified at the hole in the budget. The first 23,000 public servants to face the knife are scrambling to pay their mortgages and feed their kids. Caboolture Hospital has been renamed the 'Sir Prince Philip Memorial Hospital'. In a deal brokered by the former member for Mermaid Beach, all seven satellite hospitals have been sold off to Aspen Medical and people now pay to use them.

Key Queensland power assets will be privatised by Christmas. Renewable energy projects have been shuttered and thousands of workers have been sacked from Borumba pumped hydro, causing a sector-wide contraction. Workers' rights have been rolled back, women's reproductive services are facing an ominous legislative review and LGBTIQ+ people are frightened—with good reason given what we have seen this week. Treaty is off the table, but public housing and school ovals are on the market. Political donations are rolling in for the LNP since they scrapped donation disclosure limits and restored property developer donations.

The LNP have shown us time and time again their priorities for Queensland. When they show us and when they tell us, we should believe them. Our Labor budget priorities are about doing what matters for Queenslanders, not what matters for property developers, big business and the Queensland Resources Council. The Acting Speaker has reviewed and approved my speech on the budget for incorporation. As such, I ask that the remainder of my speech be incorporated into the *Record of Proceedings*.

The speech read as follows—

As always, the LNPs Budget Reply lacked policies, it lacked ideas, it lacked leadership and it lacked vision.

To quote from the Courier Mail: "Missed opportunity—timid Budget reply shows we need real leadership"

"At a time when cost-of-living pressures and housing expenses are dominating people's lives, it is a surprise to see Opposition leader David Crisafulli use his budget reply to target ... consultants".

There wasn't any vision in this Budget reply from the LNP, but there were plenty of magic tricks.

Nobody issued me a magic wand when I was elected to parliament—so I'm jealous that the Leader of the Opposition seems to have been issued a special LNP magic wand.

Using his LNP magic wand, the Leader of the Opposition can miraculously guarantee that projects won't increase in cost under an LNP government.

Apparently, the Member for Broadwater's magic wand is so powerful it can even turn back Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine and reverse global supply chain pressures after COVID.

Though if project costs do increase, the LNP can just reach for their good old LNP magic scissors and cut.

But the Leader of the Opposition's magic wand must be a bit patchy—it lets him magic away inflation so he can guarantee project costs never go up, but it doesn't have enough grunt to keep his own backbench under control.

With just one wave of the Leader of the Opposition's magic wand, the LNP is reborn as the champion of the public service, but no magic wand on earth is powerful enough to wipe Queenslanders' memories about the 14,000 public servants and 4,400 health workers they sacked last time they got into government.

Just in our Metro North Hospital and Health Service, the LNP marched 732 nurses out the door of Caboolture Hospital and all the other hospitals we rely on.

One thing I can guarantee the Leader of the Opposition is that his magic wand will never make even one of those nurses forget how the LNP sacked them in their very first Budget.

Further investments

What a contrast with our strong Labor Budget, delivered by our Palaszczuk Labor government that is always focused on doing what matters to support Queenslanders and always working to make sure that our best days are ahead of us.

I can't finish without noting some further very welcome investments in this Budget.

Small Business

As a former small business owner, I'm proud to back our small businesses and delighted that the Budget gives small business owners \$650 automatically taken off their energy bills.

Plus our budget is investing in Bribie Island tourism infrastructure with \$234,000 for new flat bottomed vessels for Bribie Beach Shack Eco Tours, helping create sustainable tourism jobs for the future.

Light on the Hill

In Labor, we believe in our light on the hill, the light that offers hope, help and solidarity when times are tough.

So because too many kids still go to school on an empty stomach, we're growing our school breakfast program to make sure every kid can get a good start to the day.

In this period of increased housing stress, our Big Housing Build will mean 320 extra houses built through the QuickStarts program as we work toward our target of 13,000 homes by 2027, plus \$64 million extra in the Budget for emergency accommodation.

But none of this would be possible without our progressive coal royalties.

Decarbonisation

Our progressive royalty tiers allow us to make huge investments in cleaner, cheaper power across Queensland, some of them not that far from Pumicestone.

Decarbonisation is a huge opportunity for Queensland, not only for urgent environmental action but for strong economic outcomes.

Our Big Build Budget invests \$183 million in Borumba Pumped Hydro, a massive nation building project that will store enough electricity to power 2 million homes, and generate over 2,300 construction jobs as we transition to a decarbonised economy. Borumba is an historic project that Pumicestone people will be able to boast they worked on to their grandchildren in decades to come.

Those 2,300 jobs have the potential to benefit the next generation of energy construction workers in our own community, bringing a pipeline of well-paid jobs to Pumicestone.

Conclusion

Queenslanders tell us that cost of living, health, housing and our infrastructure Big Build matter to them, so that's what our Budget delivers.

I congratulate the Treasurer on another strong Labor Budget from our strong Palaszczuk Labor government.

Speaker, I am delighted to commend the Budget to the House.