




Speech By  
**Amy MacMahon**

**MEMBER FOR SOUTH BRISBANE**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2023

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

 **Dr MacMAHON** (South Brisbane—Grn) (8.16 pm): A \$12 billion surplus: Queensland is an incredibly wealthy state. We have the resources, hardworking people and caring communities—enough for everyone to have a good life. Our hospitals are falling apart, our state school kids are missing out on a decent education, families are living in tents and property investors are evicting workers to raise the rent. Across our state, corporations are making more and more profits. The wealthy are getting wealthier while everyday Queenslanders are doing it tough. Kids are going to overcrowded schools. Our hospital staff are overworked. Workers cannot afford their rent let alone save for a place to call their own, but the banks are making record profits. Mining corporations are making record profits. Energy companies, supermarkets, multinational pharmaceuticals and property investors are all making record profits. Here is a number you will not see in this budget—\$8 billion. That is how much money Queensland's wealthiest 10 people—those mining billionaires, property moguls and consulting firm CEOs who donate to both Labor and the LNP—made in the last year. That is \$8 billion.

There is a lot of big talk about growth from this Treasurer, but where is this growth going? Not into the pockets of Queenslanders, not into the services we rely on, not into our communities, but straight into the profits of wealthy investors and big corporations. In the last year while real wages of millions of Queenslanders went backwards, the wealthiest 10 Queenslanders made \$8 billion. That is more money than the combined income of every single nurse and public school teacher in Queensland. That is more money than has been spent on building public housing in the past 20 budgets combined.

The enormous wealth of the very few comes at the expense of everyone else. How is it that ordinary people have to work more than ever before and somehow have less? How is there a cost-of-living crisis when our state has a \$12 billion surplus? Inequality is at the heart of the economic and political system that Labor and the LNP have created. At a time when we need a bold plan to transform our economy from one that benefits the wealthy few to one that benefits all Queenslanders, the Labor government is lacking.

**Ms Boyd** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Lui): Member for Pine Rivers, order!

**Dr MacMAHON:** They do not like to hear it, obviously. Because just like the Liberal Party, Labor have been bought off wholesale by corporate donations and cushy boardroom jobs and cash-for-access meetings. They are high on the fumes of a failed economic system—

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members to my right, order!

**Dr MacMAHON:** It is party being held together by sticky tape and cash-for-access meetings whose leaders like Anna Bligh end up CEO of the banking lobby. Talk about being a party for the working people—what a joke! This is another budget for the rich by the rich at the expense of everyday Queenslanders.

This Labor budget gives property developers land tax concessions, gives away our resources for a pittance, gives money to wealthy overseas gas companies and will continue to see working Queenslanders miss out on a good life. This Labor budget will continue to see our hospitals crumble, our classrooms overcrowded with parents picking up the funding slack, and renters evicted into the streets by wealthy property investors. The enormous wealth of this state, the productivity growth and the increasing corporate profits—ordinary Queenslanders are not seeing a cent of that. Labor has shown its true colours—a party that puts band-aids on crisis after crisis.

Last year the Treasurer took a page from the Greens' homework and finally increased coal royalties—something we have been asking for for years. After 10 years of Labor and the LNP freezing coal royalties, the Labor Party finally caved under a wave of Greens' electoral success and years of pressure.

**Ms Pease** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Lytton, cease all cross-chamber interjections.

**Dr MacMAHON:** We welcome the Treasurer picking a fight with his corporate donors, but these changes capture just a fraction of the record profits that these mining companies have made—which tripled to \$83.5 billion last year. After years of the coal industry ripping off Queenslanders, these progressive royalties let coal billionaires off lightly. The Treasurer is only willing to increase royalties on coal sold at super-profit levels and will not touch the industry and his coal lobby mates unless they are making buckets of gold from profiteering off the war in Ukraine and wrecking the climate.

Queensland does not need new investment in coal mines and gas. Every expert and scientist is telling us that, if you want to keep global warming below two degrees, for the sake of our farmers, pensioners, workers, the reef and a livable planet, we cannot open any new coal and gas. Instead of spending taxpayer money to prop up the fossil fuel industry, we need to ensure that the existing fossil fuel workers and their communities who have given Queensland so much get the support they deserve.

We can do this by increasing not just the super-profits royalty rates but the base royalty rate to 35 per cent. The Treasurer should not stop at coal. Our gas industry is 96 per cent foreign owned. Last year they doubled their revenue to \$20 billion. In the final years of coal and gas, these big companies should pay their fair share and ensure all fossil fuel workers are supported with a fair transition plan and not just left to the whim of the free market. We have a private member's bill that gives some instructions on how you can increase gas royalties which I table.

**Ms RICHARDS:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Are you going to table that?

**Dr MacMAHON:** Yes, I am tabling this.

*Tabled paper:* Petroleum and Gas (Production and Safety) (Royalties and Cost of Living Relief) Amendment Bill 2022 [877](#).

I know Labor like to copy the Greens' homework. Here is another bill you can copy.

It has also been a big year for the banks. Their profits are up 19 per cent from last year on the back of interest rate rises. Thousands of people are in mortgage stress while the banks make huge profits. Who is heading up the banking lobby? It is the previous Labor premier Anna Bligh. This is money straight out of the pockets of owner-occupiers and renters and into the hands of big business.

**Mr POWER:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The profits of the banks, while interesting and discursive, is not relevant to the Appropriation Bill.

**Ms Boyd:** In any way.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Pine Rivers, order! I will seek some advice.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members! There is no point of order.

**Dr MacMAHON:** We also have a bill that would raise a levy on the big banks which would raise a \$1 billion—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for South Brisbane, are you tabling that?

**Dr MacMAHON:** I am tabling this.

*Tabled paper:* Big Bank Levy (COVID-19 Health Response) Bill 2021 [879](#).

You could also copy that one—a billion dollars that could go straight into our healthcare system. We could also raise billions of dollars by introducing the Greens' empty homes levy and taxing investors who leave perfectly good homes empty and turn what could be homes into Airbnbs.

*Tabled paper:* Land Tax and Other Legislation (Empty Homes Levy) Amendment Bill 2022 [878](#).

All of these are available for the government to copy when they would like to. This money could be spent rescuing our public services, like health and education, from decades of chronic underfunding by both Labor and the LNP. Yet Labor continue to refuse to touch the real estate industry. They refuse to touch Airbnbs. They refuse to increase our public housing stock in line with growing need. They refuse to stop renters from getting evicted in the middle of a housing crisis.

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Lytton, member for Pine Rivers, member for Aspley, member for Maryborough, order!

**Ms McMILLAN:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I seek your advice. The documents that the member is tabling have been previously ruled out of order by the Speaker. I ask whether you would consider that she is disrespecting the Speaker or, in fact, reflecting on the chair.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member is not looking to introduce the bills. She is merely putting them on the record. Member for South Brisbane, you have the call.

**Dr MacMAHON:** These bills are on the record for when the Labor Party want to pick them up and implement them. This budget will see the housing crisis only get worse. The Treasurer and the housing minister are patting themselves on the back because they found \$320 million for 500 extra homes—500 extra homes—when there are over 47,000 people waiting on the social housing waiting list, when there are 300,000 Queenslanders struggling to pay their rent or their mortgage, when tents and shanty towns are popping up all across our suburbs. There is no freeze on rent increases. There is no vacancy levy to stop wealthy property investors from leaving good homes empty. There is nothing to crack down on landlords flipping long-term homes into short-term hotels.

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members to my right, order!

**Dr MacMAHON:** The Treasurer is happy to peacock around with a \$12 billion surplus, but that surplus means nothing for the renters who are facing yet another rent rise, for the families who face eviction, for those workers who are being pushed out of their neighbourhoods by wealthy property investors. The way things are going, with Labor's current social housing commencement rate, it will take nearly five decades to house everyone on the social housing waitlist.

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Logan, cease cross-chamber interjections.

**Dr MacMAHON:** I know you do not want to hear this, but this is the system that you have created. It will take five decades to house everyone on that register. How is that okay?

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for South Brisbane, please direct all comments through the chair.

**Dr MacMAHON:** We have an immensely wealthy state, but this government is happy to let renters continue to struggle, with no limit on the amount by which rent can go up, willing to let owner-occupiers continue to struggle, for families to get evicted, for mums and kids to sleep in tents in parks, for pensioners to live out of their cars. I will also table our Rent Freeze Bill for when you are ready to actually take on the real estate lobby and do something for renters.

*Tabled paper:* Residential Tenancies and Rooming Accommodation (Rent Freeze) Amendment Bill 2022 [880](#).

This government continues to fail working families who send kids to public schools. This budget continues to underfund Queensland's public schools by more than a billion dollars every year, with the budget increases barely covering inflation.

**Ms Pease** interjected.

**Dr MacMAHON:** Queensland does not reach its minimum 80 per cent of the Schooling Resource Standard—wilfully underfunding public schools!

**Ms Pease:** They're state schools.

**Dr MacMAHON:** It is an absolute shame and disgrace that Queensland has some of the most underfunded state schools in the country. Yet, budget after budget, from both Labor and the LNP, they continue to refuse to stand up for working families and fully fund our state schools.

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members to my right, order!

**Dr MacMAHON:** The states are expected to put in 80 per cent of Queensland funding. Do you know how much Queensland puts in? Sixty-nine per cent. Our schools are underfunded. I am not making this up! This is in the bilateral agreement that this government signed with the federal government—wilfully underfunding our state schools, leaving state schools having to ask parents to fork out for out-of-pocket expenses, leaving P&Cs having to raise money for essentials for our education system. Every Queensland kid deserves to attend a good school and get a good education, but Labor and the education minister refuse to fund our state schools.

My office recently heard from a first-year teacher who took up a position in a public school in Brisbane's northern suburbs. He told my office how he had spent \$7,000 of his own money on classroom furniture and resources because he did not want to see his kids going without or having to share exercise books. Another first-year teacher told my office how excited she was to finally begin teaching after three years of study; however, within six months she left the profession and returned to child care because the workload and limited resources available to her made teaching unmanageable. This government and this budget is setting teachers and our children up to fail, but it does not have to be like this.

Along with chronically underfunding our schools and underpaying teachers, Labor is destroying a local state school: East Brisbane State School. The education minister, the Premier and the Deputy Premier all stand ready, shoulder to shoulder with the bulldozers, shovels and sledgehammers at the gates of East Brisbane State School, and the only thing the government can provide the kids and parents of East Brisbane is a vague \$100 million set aside for the future of the school—a future that the education minister has decided without listening to the school community or the P&C; a future that the government continues to keep our community in the dark over to continue to swindle and weasel their way out of questions; a future that, if this Labor government gets their way, will see one of the fastest growing neighbourhoods in the inner city left without a school. All for what? A \$2.7 billion plan to knock down and rebuild the Gabba. This plan will destroy a school, a local park and family homes and cause traffic chaos. A \$2.7 billion plan to use taxpayer money to knock down and rebuild a single stadium is absurd. Everyone I speak to says this is an absurd waste of money. I go and talk to local residents in my community. You should try it sometime; you will find out a bit about what is going on on the ground.

That \$2.7 billion of taxpayers' money should be going to building public housing and maternity units. You could make public transport free for seven years with that money or build 80 new schools across our state. While Labor is planning to spend at least \$2.7 billion knocking down the Gabba, they are letting our health system crumble. The Premier herself said yesterday that our GP system is crumbling. People cannot afford to see a GP. There are long wait times to see doctors. The state government could set up GP clinics with state employed GPs across the state and make sure our public health system is fit for purpose. We need investment in free training pathways for nurses and doctors, especially in the regions. Of the more than 5,000 nurses and midwives surveyed in a recent Queensland Nurses and Midwives' Union survey, 78 per cent of respondents said dangerous workloads were a barrier to them staying in the workforce. Almost two-thirds cited insufficient pay. Instead of genuinely backing our nurses and midwives, last year a pay agreement effectively gave nurses a pay cut with pay increases that were nearly instantly outstripped by inflation.

Let me tell you that a \$12 billion surplus is cold comfort to the emergency room nurse run off her feet, or the 18-year-old living in a tent in the park, or the mum putting a school excursion on her credit card. The CEOs, boardroom members and lobbyists responsible for trashing the planet are laughing all the way to the bank. For the rest of us, this budget entrenches inequality and ensures things will get even worse in the coming years. This budget and this Labor government will make the housing crisis worse. We will continue to see our schools and hospitals crumble. We will continue to see the cost of living rise. The lines for food banks and housing are growing every day. The Greens are the only party here building a movement that is standing up for everyday people.