




Speech By  
**Andrew Powell**

**MEMBER FOR GLASS HOUSE**

---

Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2023

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

 **Mr POWELL** (Glass House—LNP) (4.17 pm): There is a lot going on across the state of Queensland at present and, sadly, not a lot of it is good. Overwhelmingly, as the Leader of the Opposition shared, when we are out and about talking to constituents in our own electorates as we partake in health crisis town hall meetings and various other events, whether it be part of the shadow cabinet or our travels around the state in our portfolios, we are hearing from Queenslanders that we are going the wrong way. We are going the wrong way. There is chaos, there is crisis, and the crises are many.

**Ms Grace:** Talking points.

**Mr POWELL:** I take that interjection from the Minister for Education, one of a number of ministers who do not take seriously what Queenslanders are telling us as members of parliament, regardless of our political persuasion, who do not listen. When a government does not listen, the people stop trusting them. They do not trust them to fix the youth crime crisis. They do not trust them to fix the Queensland housing crisis. They do not trust them to fix the Queensland health crisis. This budget is not going to change that one iota. Let's unpack that a little bit.

As we have said, Queensland is in the middle of a youth crime crisis. It is fair to say that the electorate of Glass House has avoided that for much of the time; I know many, particularly in the north around Townsville and Cairns and in Brisbane, have been suffering for a lot longer. However, it is now starting to have an impact on towns like Beerwah, as I have previously shared. What do the members of the government do when they go out to communities and say, 'Yes, we're in the middle of a youth crime crisis but, sadly, there are 72 fewer police than there were at the election in 2020'? Queenslanders wonder why, when they pick up the phone and ring the police, no-one comes. It is not because the police are not doing the best they possibly can with the resources they do have—and I do want to acknowledge all of those hardworking frontline police officers around the electorate of Glass House because they are doing everything they possibly can. There is just fewer of them. Tragically, juxtapose that with the fact that in the same time frame there are 98 more marketing and media staff in the Premier's office; 72 fewer police and 98 more media and marketing.

**Mr Janetzki:** Must be an election coming.

**Mr POWELL:** I take that interjection from the member for Toowoomba South; there must be an election coming. That is appalling. Yes, we have heard announcement after announcement from the police minister, but that is just what they are: announcements. For that to result in 72 fewer police shows that this government cannot deliver. They can make announcements; they cannot deliver.

**Mr Minnikin** interjected.

**Mr POWELL:** I will get to that, member for Chatsworth; don't you worry.

Queensland is also in the middle of a housing crisis. Homelessness and housing availability and affordability have never been what they are now, and this crisis has drastically impacted the electorate of Glass House. Longstanding members of our communities have had to vacate rental properties as owners take up the opportunity to sell their properties, partly because of the rental changes that this government continue to push through and partly because of the huge amount of interstate and international migration. Those people who have previously rented in our communities have not been able to find another rental property in those communities and so have had to move away or, in some tragic circumstances, are living in tents in parks or under bridges.

We have had announcement after announcement from this government, including several years ago with the \$2 billion for the Housing Investment Fund, which it is my understanding has not delivered a single house.

**Mr Mander:** Zilch.

**Mr POWELL:** Zero. What the government has been doing with some of the funding it has provided is not building new stock; it is literally going and buying up other properties, which produces exactly the same outcome I just spoke about where interstate and international migration leads to houses being purchased out from underneath renters. It is exactly the same outcome.

I am pleased that in his budget reply the Leader of the Opposition committed a future LNP government to ensuring that the Housing Investment Fund will only be used to deliver new, additional social housing stock. Let's be clear: this fund will have to increase the number of total dwellings available so that we can truly put a dent in that supply issue that is driving up costs for Queenslanders.

We are also going to reinvigorate the community housing sector, a sector that in every other jurisdiction is doing much better at helping governments address their social housing problems, but we have been left languishing. There are also solutions that do not require significant budgetary contributions. I again return to the SEQ regional plan. We are told it is under review, but when are my constituents going to get the opportunity to put forward their planning and rezoning ideas to help relieve the housing stress that is occurring in our region and throughout South-East Queensland? I am contacted on a daily basis by residents who have solutions they want to propose as part of that review and yet it is still a secret. My question on notice was answered that, yes, it will go out for the statutory 30 days of public consultation sometime in the second half of this year. (A) that is not enough time and (b) when? We could be addressing this far sooner and opening up new blocks of land for potential housing to provide new stock to provide roofs over the heads of people who are currently sleeping rough in parks and under bridges throughout the electorate of Glass House.

We are also in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis. We will always support good cost-of-living initiatives. I acknowledge and welcome the contribution around kindergarten. Like others on this side, I do have concerns around staffing in classrooms and I hope that the commitments we have heard this week when we have questioned around that do come true. I do hope that all of the kids in our part of the world can get along to a free kindergarten.

I also acknowledge the swimming lessons. Why? That was our policy back in 2017. It is great to see another LNP policy picked up. I do acknowledge the electricity rebates, but I will be honest: I am concerned these electricity rebates offer no long-term solution to drive down power bills. In fact, the government seems to be doing everything in its power to add to the cost of electricity in this state. Let's look at a couple of examples.

Hydro—we in the LNP are very supportive of hydro. It makes sense. On one hand after contributing \$14 billion to Borumba hydro to the north of the electorate of Glass House, the corporation that builds that hydro will need to seek a return on that investment. It is the way the energy market works. The regulator allows the company, whether it is government owned or otherwise, to seek a return on the investment they make. Potentially, Queenslanders will end up paying twice—not only as a taxpayer stumping up the \$14 billion for that hydro plant but also as that initial outlay is recouped through their power bills in the decades ahead.

While staying on the subject hydro, let's look at what was the fundamental component of the government's energy and jobs announcement—another announcement—the Pioneer-Burdekin Dam. There is no funding—zero funding—in this budget for that—what was the other word for it?

**Mr Head:** Hoax.

**Mr POWELL:**—hoax; we will use that word. There was no funding whatsoever. The other aspect—and I am pleased the member for Callide is sitting alongside me—is that in maintaining ownership of our government owned energy producers like Callide, this government has failed to maintain them. They have tried to say that that was never going to contribute to increases in energy

prices. However, the Auditor-General has called them out and identified the Callide power plant failure as a major contributor to the increase in energy prices. Again, I welcome the announcement by the LNP opposition leader that, if elected at the next election, we will commit to the implementation of a maintenance guarantee on power plants to ensure maintenance is not forgone to prop up the government's balance sheet. We need to invest money in these power plants to ensure they are operational and not costing Queenslanders more.

We have also had rivers of revenue—\$60 billion more than the Treasurer expected to receive when he first announced a budget back in 2019.

**Mr Janetzki:** Where has it gone?

**Mr POWELL:** I take that interjection from the member for Toowoomba South. Where has it gone? What do we have to show for it? We keep getting announcements and no solutions, particularly around hospitals and health. In some cases, we literally get nothing at all. Sunshine Coast heavy rail, that important link that is needed for the 2032 Olympics between Beerwah, Caloundra, Kawana and on to Maroochydore, is not in the budget. It will not be built under this government in time for the Olympics. Thank goodness the LNP has committed our 50 per cent to ensure that project gets all the way to Maroochydore.

Then there is our local roads. I invite the Premier to come out and tell the people of Ocean View why, despite \$60 billion additional revenue, there is no money in the budget for Mount Mee Road at Ocean View or the residents of Wamuran; or D'Aguilar about their intersections of the D'Aguilar Highway with Campbells Pocket Road or with Mount Mee Road; or the residents of Witta around Maleny Kenilworth Road.

I do want to address Kilcoy Beerwah Road at Cedarton. The issue with that road was caused by a natural disaster. It is still my hope that the natural disaster funding is there somewhere in the budget and that will occur in the next 12 months, but that is the only road that will see any action in the electorate of Glass House for the next four years.

I acknowledge that the Minister for Education has put forward \$1.5 million for some new amenities at Woodford P-10 State School, but again I implore the Minister for Education to use that asset that is there and extend it to P-12. That is something that would assist in alleviating pressure on the Caboolture and Kilcoy high schools. It is a conversation we have had—and I will keep having—as that community looks to expand and grow.

We also heard from the Leader of the Opposition about how this government has been wedded to consultants—in fact, obsessed with consultants. The Leader of the Opposition said as the government ages, the obsession grows. I can tell honourable members it is actually historical.

Labor governments historically rely on consultants. It is one of the reasons I am a member for parliament. As I have previously explained to this House, as a long-term public servant at both the Commonwealth and state level—including serving under former premiers Beattie and Bligh—one of my biggest frustrations was that I would often be asked to prepare a brief urgently. That brief would be sent up within the time frame specified and I would hear nothing for three months. What I would see is a consultant come along in that time, ask me the same questions the minister had asked me, take the same briefing note that I had prepared, use that to write their submission to the minister and get it ticked off at an exorbitant cost—far more than the salary that I was being paid to be a public servant. Not only is it a waste of money, but it is also demoralising for the public servant in question.

I am pleased to hear that the Leader of the Opposition will redirect the money away from the top of town and away from those cashed-up big four consultancy firms and will reinvest it in empowering our Public Service. By taking it away from those consultants in the first place we are already empowering public servants. Investing in world-class professional development and training packages to improve the skills, training, opportunity and leadership of the Public Service will ensure we will end up with the best Public Service in the nation. We will stand by the Public Service. We know that they have so much to offer. They are itching to offer it. They are not getting it from this government. This government is not listening to them in the same way they are not listening to the people who are suffering from the youth crime crisis; in the same way they are not listening to the people suffering from the youth crime crisis; in the same way they are not listening to the people suffering from the cost-of-living crisis or those who cannot put a roof over their heads.

I want to finish by using the words of the Leader of the Opposition as he concluded his budget reply speech. I think it is important that the constituents of the Glass House hear again what the Leader of the Opposition said. He stated—

We must restore the hope of Queenslanders—hope this government has trashed. I say to Queenslanders: we will continue to earn your trust back in opposition and, if elected, we will restore your trust back in government. By restoring that trust, we will end the chaos and crisis the Palaszczuk government has inflicted in Queensland. In just under 500 days Queenslanders will have a choice to make: real delivery over announcements, stability over chaos, hope over fear.

That is what the LNP opposition offer coming into an election year. We will continue to listen to people between now and then. We will continue to offer solutions to the crises and the chaos that people are experiencing as a result of decisions of this government and as a result of the budgetary decisions of this government. I will continue to listen to the people of Glass House and ensure all of those projects I mentioned are continued to be advocated for and ultimately delivered—something that this government does not know how to do, because all they are good at is announcing.