




Speech By
Bart Mellish

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2023

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

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (8.10 pm): I am very happy to rise in support of the cognate bills supporting the Queensland budget. This budget does the tough things so that we can do the things that are needed. This year, every single Queensland household will receive a \$550 rebate on their electricity, while vulnerable Queenslanders will receive a higher rebate of over \$1,000. This is an unprecedented intervention by the government at a time of globally and nationally high electricity prices—only made possible because of our strong budget position. We are taking action to reduce the cost-of-living pressures. As the Treasurer pointed out, these support measures are deflationary, not inflationary. Of course, we are still dealing with the inflationary aftermath of the untargeted nature of the JobKeeper payments to businesses during COVID.

This budget provides this support whilst also delivering the largest budget surplus ever recorded in Queensland or Australia—an outstanding achievement. I note those opposite never achieved a budget surplus. They promised it, printed the mugs federally, had the 'back in black' things and claimed a surplus a year before it happened; they never got there at a state or federal level in recent years. Whilst the budget positions of other leading states have gone backwards compared to pre-COVID forecasts, our budget position has improved since our pre-COVID forecasts. The Premier's tough stance on keeping COVID at bay ensured our economy did not suffer during COVID and we did not suffer long lockdowns like Sydney and Melbourne in particular.

This surplus is all the more possible due to the sensible and strong decisions of this government, and in particular the Treasurer, on our progressive coal royalties regime. I was listening to the speeches of those opposite. They have not said that they would keep the progressive coal royalties, which are delivering \$7 billion to the budget. I heard a no from the member for Burleigh earlier in terms of whether they would. The Leader of the Opposition needs to come clean on this. He is saying one thing in the boardroom of the coal lobby and another thing in public and in parliament. How can they support projects in their electorates if there is to be a \$7 billion hole in the budget? It means they will cancel the Big Build and cut frontline staff across Queensland, just like the LNP of old.

Locally, I am so pleased about free kindy for all Queensland kids from the start of the next school year. LNP members were interjecting about free kindy, saying it is only 15 hours a week. They clearly do not understand how long day care programs work and how a subsidised kindy program would fit into that. I can see how this will help parents of children who otherwise may not be able to afford kindy or have to make other sacrifices to be able to afford kindy. They will now be able to see 15 hours a week. This will bring equality of educational outcomes to all Queensland children. This is an outstanding commitment.

Speaking of great outcomes, I was so pleased to see in the budget that Zillmere State School has been successful in its bid for a proposed nutrition and wellbeing centre. In their own words, 'The centre will help the P&C deliver healthy options to the children and be a centre where the food produced in the wellbeing garden can be shared for all.' Well done to Zillmere State School and its P&C.

Those opposite are opposed to the coal royalties regime. Without that we would not be able to deliver some fantastic outcomes. Locally, I am very excited about what we have been able to do regarding planning for the future infrastructure needs of the north side, with \$35 million in the budget for a detailed investment proposal into tunnels from Kedron to Carseldine—a Gympie Road bypass. Early work undertaken shows that a tunnel between the Kedron end of Airportlink and Beams Road has the potential to deliver a range of benefits for commuters, the local community and the broader South-East Queensland transport network. A Gympie Road bypass would reduce commuter times by up to 15 minutes in each direction. Friends and family could spend this extra time however they like. Those in Bald Hills, Carseldine and Bridgeman Downs in my area would particularly benefit from this. This ties in when combined with Cross River Rail time savings we will get on the north side. The entire area will be dramatically improved by measures that Labor governments have taken.

This ties in with the planning underway by the transport minister on the Bruce Highway western alternative further north and the Gympie Arterial Road improvements as part of the Gateway merge projects on the cards. The benefits to locals will go far beyond that. There will be better connections to the Bruce Highway to and from the Sunshine Coast, better connections to the west of the city and, very importantly for me and the member for Stafford in particular, improved amenity and livability for locals by removing through traffic from Gympie Road. Currently locals have to battle with traffic coming from the Moreton region and the Sunshine Coast when they are trying to go to the shops or drop their kids to school. Gympie Road is increasingly becoming a barrier, and this will remove that.

The LNP scrapped the extension of the northern busway on a similar route when they were last in government. They wanted to scrap the Northern Transitway. The Northern Transitway will provide an outstanding boost to public transport on the surface, with additional bus lanes on Gympie Road from Kedron to Chermside. I urge the LNP to reconcile their love of congestion and of scrapping projects with what the community actually wants. Their proposal last election was to remove one set of traffic lights on Gympie Road. Ours is to remove 18. I urge the LNP to get behind this project.

This week the Leader of the Opposition said he would not stand in the way of the project but then accused the government of spending \$35 million on another study. On the one hand the Leader of the Opposition says we commit funding without business cases and on the other hand criticises us for doing a business case. The member for Everton was blowing up earlier, presumably because he is upset that we are not bulldozing up the north-west transport corridor as he, his federal colleagues, his council colleagues and the LNP candidate for Aspley last election wanted to do. Which is it? You cannot have your cake and eat it too. If we had listened to the LNP and what its former candidate for Aspley wanted to do, we would have destroyed hectares and hectares of bushland and split suburbs like Carseldine, Bridgeman Downs and McDowall in two by putting a motorway up the north-west transport corridor. I am pleased to see that commitment and others in the budget. I commend this budget to the House—an outstanding Labor budget.