




Speech By
Bryson Head

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2023

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

 **Mr HEAD** (Callide—LNP) (3.49 pm): I wish I could tell the people of Callide that this is a good budget, but we have been miserably failed by this Labor government. This budget lacks vision. It shows Queensland no hope to help navigate through the tough times to come. It also once again highlights a government in the grips of chaos and crisis.

The government has finally acknowledged how poorly they have managed our electricity market and tried to make us forget about it through a one-off cash splash that does absolutely nothing to address long-term electricity prices. The Callide Power Station has been completely neglected by Labor. Callide C4 has been offline for two years. The government was warned this would jack up electricity prices. These warnings, like many the government has received, fell on deaf ears. Engineering reports which outlined that the cooling towers were in serious need of maintenance also fell on deaf ears and last year they collapsed, sending the C3 unit offline. The offline units at the Callide Power Station—a government owned and managed asset—are one of the key reasons electricity prices have never been higher.

Labor tries to say they are the party for workers, but there is a good reason the CFMEU split from the Labor Party several years ago. Labor no longer represents the working class and fails to maintain assets that employ CFMEU workers. Labor, the party in power, has the full resources of the Treasury at their disposal to ensure they can add a few figures up correctly. They said they would receive \$5.48 billion in coal royalties. The LNP and industry very quickly pointed out this was inaccurate. They were 280 per cent off—nearly three times what they forecast. If the Treasurer is that bad at budget forecasting, no wonder we see excessive blowouts in nearly every other department under Labor, which is in the grips of chaos and crisis.

I will set the scene for how much the people of Callide are being taken for a ride by the Labor government, and I dare members of the government, future Labor candidates or supporters to tell me this is justifiable. When the government has Callide's power stations running we generate more than 16 per cent of Queensland's gross electricity production, making us the literal powerhouse of the state. That is from our gas and coal-fired power stations. I also have many coalmines that export a lot of coal and pay a lot of royalties. When I add up the Baralaba coalmine on the boundary of the electorate along with the Callide, Cameby Downs, Dawson and Boundary Hill mines, there are approximately 21 million tonnes of coal exported. From this, and also based on figures provided by Treasury, I estimate that Callide will pay more than a whopping \$2 billion in royalties to the end of June in a couple of weeks time.

This government keeps talking about how important it is that the communities who own these coal assets get their fair share. Of the more than \$2 billion in royalties alone, how much do we think Callide gets? For the record, this is not including all of the GST we pay, stamp duty, payroll tax and billions of other dollars in revenue that the state receives. This is just from the sugar hit the government

is receiving. This year they spent a mere \$183 million in capital works. That is from what we could find in the budget. That is less than 10 per cent of Callide's coal royalties. Next year we will be getting—now that they know how much Callide coughed up this financial year—only \$344 million. That is all we could find. That is not communities in Queensland getting their fair share of the royalties; that is Labor taking communities in Callide for a ride. These are communities with significant CFMEU and ETU membership, unions that the Labor Party so-called represents. The Labor Party are taking billions of dollars in royalties from our regions and they are not appropriately reinvesting it. Maybe with these billions in royalties we should be expanding critical resource provinces to shore up government royalty revenue for decades to come.

Moura and Theodore are two great towns in the Callide electorate. They sit at each end of the Dawson mine. I estimate that the Dawson mine paid the state government \$380 million in coal royalties this financial year. What are they getting in capital works? They are getting less than \$1.5 million. That is less than half a per cent of the royalties going back to these communities. Meanwhile, Moura is still waiting for their multipurpose healthcare service, which includes eight new beds for residential aged care, a new kitchen and refurbishments to the existing hospital. Half of this was meant to be built by the middle of last year. They have kicked the can down the road yet again and they have budgeted less than 10 per cent of it in the next financial year, being \$500,000 of the \$7.2 million project.

In April this year the CQHHS updated their website and said that this facility would be open by early 2024. This government cannot even tell their health service they have cut their funding. No wonder Callide does not have a single birthing service. The government cannot even inform public servants in time to update the website. I table evidence outlining when the Moura Multipurpose Health Service was meant to open.

Tabled paper: Web page, undated, titled 'Moura Multipurpose Health Service aged care extension' [889](#).

Moura needs its aged-care beds now and not in the never-never. One of the crumbs of funding we did get is the Moura school oval upgrade which I, alongside the Moura community, have been fighting hard for for a long time. I am glad that Moura school students will have a new oval soon thanks to the \$537,000 that is there. Meanwhile, I will keep fighting hard to see these aged-care beds delivered.

It is clear that Callide is being well and truly short-changed in this budget. There is no money to fix the disaster that is the Calliope State School drop-off and pick-up area. This school is on a busy highway and the current design is completely inadequate, dangerous and desperately needs fixing.

Biloela has no CT scanner—a service that is desperately needed. We are sick of the excuses the government keeps making. I will keep fighting until a CT scanner is delivered to Biloela.

The PCYC has just been given a huge lump sum by the government. Unfortunately the PCYC only recently walked away from the people of Biloela, taking a huge insurance payout and leaving the shed in a state of disrepair for the community. I am calling on the PCYC to now do the right thing by the people of Biloela and give the community back the funds they have taken elsewhere, especially now that they have significant government funding. We have many youth crime problems, and your actions have left us in the dark and our youth without adequate facilities.

The free kindy announcement is very much welcome, but I have been informed that one of my own kindys in Biloela is planning on closing thanks to other government changes. I will be meeting with them next week to find out more, and from there I will be writing to the minister.

Monto Mount Perry Road has desperately needed upgrading for a long time. A good start has been made, and I welcome the \$3.58 million that has been allocated next financial year. I fear, given the record of blowouts, this will not finish the road. I again call on the government to finish this road as a priority. I also welcome the opening of the John Peterson Bridge on Mundubbera-Durong Road. The LNP, the member for Nanango and the member for Flynn have all fought hard for this, and the LNP and the coalition delivered. Now we continue the fight to see the 11-kilometre single-lane section upgraded.

Gayndah Mount Perry Road is often in a state of disrepair. It is a key access road to the great destination of Mingo Crossing. The North Burnett council and I have both been advocating to see this road upgraded. Yet again Labor is failing to deliver the infrastructure we need. The Burnett Highway, like many state controlled roads, is well overdue for significant upgrades. I call on the Minister for Transport to give the North Burnett the infrastructure it deserves.

There is not a single dollar for the Coalstoun Lakes water project, Cooranga weir or any new water project in the North Burnett. When it comes to Paradise Dam, they have not even allocated 10 per cent of the total funding required for this project. It is a fact that Labor does not like building dams, especially for food security, and it does not want to rebuild Paradise Dam. The member for Burnett, the member for Nanango and I will keep fighting to make sure they fix their own stuff-up and rebuild Paradise Dam to its full height.

The Darling Downs is a great part of Queensland, and I am proud to represent my home community. The Chinchilla, Miles and Jandowae police stations are in desperate need of an upgrade. I again note my welcome for the increase in staffing allocations for police across the Western Downs following the tragedy last year, but there is a long way to go before we have adequate police on the ground and decent facilities for our hardworking police officers. Across Queensland, there are 72 fewer police officers physically on the ground. Meanwhile, the spin doctors for the government have increased by 98.

We still have no birthing services in the whole electorate of Callide. Chinchilla and Biloela are still on bypass. Labor said they had stumped up \$42 million for maternity services, but they have failed again to deliver actual services to our community. It is clear that you cannot trust Labor to deliver services in Queensland. Our health system keeps going backwards.

There is completely inadequate funding to the Warrego and Leichhardt highways, and the Chinchilla Wondai Road is in a state of disrepair and does not receive a cent. Many intersections and turning lanes need upgrading, such as the Dawson Gates Road and Fairymeadow Road off the Warrego Highway. Again, I call on the Minister for Transport to deliver these critical road safety upgrades.

Callide is receiving a fraction of our royalties. Meanwhile, key Labor seats that provide not one cent in coal royalties are getting billions in what is clear pork-barrelling. Callide has 51 schools and is only getting \$6.6 million. A neighbouring Labor seat with six public schools is getting more than \$30 million. What an absolute slap in the face to the hardworking people of Callide.

It is clear that Labor are also go-slow on the Gladstone Port access upgrades which are needed under their own plans to deliver other projects. They cannot appropriately fund it in this year's budget, yet the money from the federal government has been sitting there since April 2019.

With the time remaining, I want to talk about a critical issue to Queensland—biosecurity. I found a document on the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries website called 'Red imported fire ant in Australia: what if we lose the war?' I table a copy of this well-written research article from a few years ago.

Tabled paper: Journal article, dated October 2016, titled 'Red Imported Fire Ant in Australia: What if we lose the War?', by F. Ross Wylie and Sharon Janssen-May, *Ecological Management and Restoration*, vol 18, no. 1 [890](#).

I want to mention a couple of key points. It states that since fire ants were detected in Australia—
... four separate incursions of this ant have been successfully eradicated from this country, but the main Brisbane population remains. Cost-benefit analyses already conducted put the likely impact of Red Imported Fire Ant in Australia, if not eradicated, at between A\$8.5 and A\$45 billion.

This is not a small problem that we face. I personally met with people involved in the fire ant program a number of years ago, and I also had a rally out the front of the office of the member for Ferny Grove, the minister for agriculture. He was directly warned that the fire ant program was going to fail under his watch unless he drastically improved it. Just the other day we saw that fire ants have made it to the Darling Downs. He was warned four years ago that he was failing in this program and we have seen evidence of that again this week. What about the impacts? The article states—

More than 50 commercial food crops are reported to be impacted by Red Imported Fire Ant in the USA, including vegetable, melon, fruit, nut, vine and grain crops. All of these crops are grown in Australia. Impacts in the USA include loss of crop yield, plant mortality, damage to equipment and infrastructure, medical expenses, increased labour costs and market access.

Here is an example of an impact—

In a crop of eggplants, there was a 50 per cent reduction in yield in Florida.

The article further states—

Red Imported Fire Ant invades honeybee colonies and robs them of stored honey, pollen, larvae and pupae thus having a devastating impact on the colony. They also compete with bees for nectar from flowers and extra floral nectaries

I am running out of time but I want to say that when I have been talking about the fire ants this week there has been a lot of laughter from across the chamber from Labor backbenchers—especially when I said let us see how seriously they take it when a child gets seriously hurt or even worse. They were laughing at those comments. Well, this article states—

In 2013, Red Imported Fire Ant stings led to the death of a 13-year-old student during a football game.

Yes, this was in the States but this is the consequence of poor biosecurity. We need to fix this problem. The government has cut \$80 million from the biosecurity program, while pigs are running rampant. The minister for agriculture is clearly the fire ants' friend. I would love to say more but this is my first budget speech and I have now run out of time.