




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2023

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

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.04 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the appropriation bills for 2023-24. The Palaszczuk state Labor government's ninth budget is confirmation that Queenslanders can no longer trust Labor to fix the chaos and crisis that is impacting their lives each and every day. At a time when state government revenue has never been higher, unfortunately state government services have never been worse.

Government members interjected.

Dr ROWAN: I hear those on the other side interjecting, but government services here in Queensland have never been worse. It is important to look beyond the Labor rhetoric and spin in this state budget to understand and appreciate the impacts that will continue to be endured by everyday Queenslanders due to Labor's abysmal track record of management and significant policy failures. These are the facts. Under the current state Labor government, the growth in total expenses at 71 per cent certainly surpasses revenue growth at 65 per cent. Whilst the state Labor Treasurer may not like to hear it, total state debt will now be \$147 billion over the forward estimates, with annual interest expenses to exceed more than \$5 billion by 2026-27. It must also be highlighted that, based on the state Labor Treasurer's own figures, tax per capita in Queensland has increased by 50 per cent under the state Labor government, with debt per capita set to increase by 35 per cent over the forward estimates.

At the centre of this state Labor budget is an uncomfortable truth for the Palaszczuk state Labor government: Queenslanders are suffering under the weight of a Labor state government that is so focused on itself and its image. Labor has well and truly lost sight of what matters to most Queenslanders. Queenslanders are rightly sceptical of another Labor budget that is big on announcements, particularly from a Labor state government that has a long history of failing to deliver on the promises made. Despite an annual record spend in health every year, the Labor state government's record on health continues to deteriorate, just as it did under the Beattie and Bligh Labor governments. Despite last year's record health budget, Queenslanders are continuing to suffer the worst levels of ambulance ramping in the nation and what this means for patients right across Queensland is extraordinary in terms of the harms and the detrimental outcomes to them. Further, since last year's Labor budget there has also been an additional 30,000 Queenslanders added to the public waitlist to see a specialist doctor. Unbelievably, in the middle of the Queensland health crisis, over \$9 billion—that is, 95 per cent of the 2023-24 Queensland Health budget—has been pushed out to be spent beyond this financial year.

Queenslanders are also suffering from Labor's youth crime crisis that continues to impact communities right across our state and it is nothing short of extraordinary that at a time when Queenslanders are desperate for action and a strong commitment from their state government to

maintain law and order the number of full-time frontline police has in fact fallen. It is little wonder that Queenslanders do not trust the Labor state government to deliver the comprehensive solutions that are needed to fix Labor's crime crisis.

As the Liberal National Party's shadow minister for education, I now wish to address the \$17.8 billion in funding that has been allocated in the 2023-24 state budget for the provision of education in Queensland. The inclusion of \$645 million for the provision of 15 hours of free kindergarten for Queensland children is certainly important for the thousands of Queensland families who have been struggling to cope with Labor's cost-of-living crisis. Queensland families have been desperate for additional relief, particularly as New South Wales and Victoria made significant announcements over a year ago to implement free kindergarten and preschool. Many Queenslanders are asking: why did it take the Labor government here in Queensland so long to act? It was in fact a year ago when I addressed the Labor government's 2022-23 state budget where I specifically highlighted the importance of the current state Labor government considering such a measure. As I said in my budget speech last year—

In relation to early childhood education, we have seen the leadership provided in New South Wales and Victoria with multibillion dollar investments. The government here in Queensland certainly needs to look at that and consider implementing that into the future.

The Labor Minister for Education was well aware and put on notice as to just how important it was to ensure that our young Queenslanders do not fall behind their peers when compared to other states and territories. There are also concerns in relation to sufficient workforce capacity and capability and ensuring service and safety quality standards.

The announcement by the government of free kindy and free swimming lessons for eligible children under four years is positive and will be welcomed. However, on other issues it is disappointing—but not unsurprising—that Queensland taxpayers are continuing to pay the price for Labor's failure to ensure safe work and learning environments in our schools. As I revealed last month, more than \$67 million in WorkCover claims were paid during the last financial year to Queensland teachers and staff. This represents a 94 per cent increase in total WorkCover payments made since the election of the Palaszczuk state Labor government in 2015, with total WorkCover payments made to teachers and staff who had suffered physical and psychological injury now exceeding \$347 million. When it comes to ensuring the safety of staff and students, the Palaszczuk state Labor government's behavioural management framework in Queensland schools is broken. There must be zero tolerance towards violence in our schools. The safety and wellbeing of staff and students has to be paramount.

The Palaszczuk state Labor government is so consumed by its own chaos and crisis that the Labor Minister for Education is seemingly unaware that school principals are being contacted by the Department of Education and questioned on their suspension and expulsion decisions. I table an ABC News article from 2 June 2023 titled 'Principals report pressure from Queensland's education department to overturn suspensions', which specifically references the concerns of the Queensland Teachers' Union on behalf of its members. I respectfully request that the Labor Minister for Education immediately engages and consults with the Queensland Teachers' Union and frontline principals and teachers who have raised the alarm on this practice.

Tabled paper: Article from the ABC News, dated 2 June 2023, titled 'Principals report pressure from Queensland's education department to overturn suspensions' [870](#).

Along with delayed new infrastructure in our schools and school projects and infrastructure budget blowouts, Queenslanders simply cannot trust the state Labor government to deliver the world-class education system that all Queensland students deserve. The state budget papers for 2023-24 have also revealed that yet again not a single reading, writing or numeracy target was achieved across years 3, 5, 7 and 9, with a significant gap in results for Queensland's Indigenous students. The Palaszczuk state Labor government needs to understand that for Indigenous students here in Queensland those targets are not being met. Despite the rhetoric in relation to Closing the Gap, those targets are not being met and, in fact, they are worsening here in Queensland. Queenslanders can no longer trust the state Labor government to lift educational outcomes in Queensland. This is a consequence of the teacher workforce crisis which is burning right across Queensland. Again, they are unable to recruit and retain teachers here in Queensland and this, combined with the housing affordability crisis and the lack of accommodation in regional and rural communities, is leading to a lack of teachers entering these schools and communities to teach our students of the future.

The Labor state government is certainly one of chaos, crisis and confusion. As the Liberal National Party shadow minister for the arts, I note the state government's investment to support Queensland's richly diverse and important artistic and cultural sectors. Continuing to grow and showcase all that Queensland has to offer when it comes to our artists and creative talents is incredibly important, particularly as the world turns its attention to Queensland ahead of the 2032 Olympics.

As the state member for Moggill one of the most important responsibilities I have is working consistently and collaboratively with various community groups, schools and local residents to fight for and deliver enhanced infrastructure, additional services and increased funding for our local area. Through my ongoing and strong advocacy, particularly through parliamentary work here in the Queensland parliament, extensive ministerial correspondence, sponsored petitions and meetings with various departments and governmental representatives, there can be no doubt that the Palaszczuk state Labor government has been comprehensively informed as to what specifically must be funded and delivered for local residents of the electorate of Moggill.

As a result of this continued strong advocacy as the state member for Moggill, I am pleased that I have secured over \$18.8 million over the forward estimates for a new school hall at Kenmore State High School. This is a very positive development for that school. It is a terrific outcome. I wish to thank the Kenmore State High School community, including principal Paul Robertson and P&C president Kerry Schreiber, who have supported my ongoing advocacy for this vital school infrastructure.

I am also pleased to have secured and see that there is \$6.5 million for additional specialist classrooms at Kenmore State High School; \$285,000 for an additional learning area at Kenmore State School; \$2.2 million for additional specialist classrooms at Moggill State School; as well as \$141,000 for an upgraded and extended outdoor learning area at this school.

I am also pleased to have secured \$900,000 to be spent this year at Pullenvale State School for the repurposing of its administration space; and after securing more than \$25.5 million last year for additional classrooms and infrastructure at Kenmore South State School, I note that over \$14.8 million will be spent in the 2023-24 financial year.

I am also pleased to highlight that over \$24 million will be spent this year on the Mount Crosby flood resilience program, including over \$11.1 million to construct the new vehicle bridge. This is particularly important for that community given the severe weather and flooding event that occurred last year.

That being said, the Palaszczuk state Labor government continues to ignore other critical infrastructure and other vital services that residents of the electorate of Moggill deserve. Despite the Labor state government telling local residents that they were repurposing \$12.5 million from the \$25 million Kenmore roundabout project to cyclist safety, they have only allocated \$1.9 million in this year's budget. Further, and of most concern, is the fact that the matching \$12.5 million from the federal government allocation appears to have been cut by the federal Labor government. We have to remember that the Albanese federal Labor government was elected with the support of Greens preferences.

Local residents deserve absolute clarity, openness and transparency on government funding, including the state Labor government's specific plans to reduce congestion and improve cyclist and pedestrian safety on Moggill Road. This certainly must include funding to fix the OLR intersection of Almay Street, Kenmore Road and Moggill Road through to Kilkivan Avenue. There are certainly safety concerns that still exist at this intersection. I do acknowledge and thank officers from the Department of Transport and Main Roads who have been out to have a look at the intersection and engage with stakeholders and the school. Local residents also want definitive progress on the vital safety upgrade to the Mount Crosby-Warrego Highway interchange after further unacceptable delays last year.

An integrated road and public transport plan for the western suburbs of Brisbane with comprehensively funded solutions to ease traffic congestion and improve public and active transport services with cyclist and pedestrian safety prioritised has once again not been delivered by the state Labor government. On the subject of public transport services, I again share the disappointment of local residents who have joined my specific calls for the extension of public transport routes to communities that are either insufficiently or not even serviced by public transport. This includes the extension of the 444 bus service to the Moggill District Sports Park and the Moggill Ferry and for the state Labor government to increase public transport service timetables, including additional 443 services.

I have repeatedly raised a number of safety concerns on specific sections of Moggill and Mount Crosby roads, including along Moggill Road from Vyner Street to Grandview Road. Additional and improved footpath and pedestrian infrastructure along Moggill Road and Mount Crosby Road, including critical pedestrian travel sections through Pullenvale, Pinjarra Hills, Mount Crosby and a dedicated footpath to the Moggill District Sports Park, must be delivered. It is simply not good enough that local residents, including veterans and seniors, as well as school students and families, must continue to risk their safety when travelling by foot along the state-controlled Moggill and Mount Crosby roads.

Families in the electorate of Moggill are already struggling with population growth and the impact this is having on school enrolments, particularly for the electorate of Moggill's only secondary school, Kenmore State High School. This state budget is a significant missed opportunity by the Palaszczuk state Labor government to fully fund a new high school to service families in the electorate of Moggill. I also take this opportunity to call on the Palaszczuk state Labor government to continue to fund local environment and creek catchment groups. This is important for not only environmental protection but also vital conservation work. I also believe that there should have been an additional investment in police, ambulance, fire and emergency service resourcing in the electorate of Moggill, particularly given recent natural disaster events.

When one looks at this budget, it is certainly not delivering comprehensively for the electorate of Moggill. It is certainly not delivering comprehensively for all of Queensland. There is much more work that needs to be done by this government to improve service delivery, not only in the electorate of Moggill but also right across Queensland. That is what Queenslanders are calling for. In my remaining time I would like to acknowledge the Leader of the Opposition for his thoughtful contribution today. I certainly welcome the announcements that he made.