




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2023

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

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (4.10 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the budget. It does not give me much pleasure to follow the member for Thuringowa who genuinely believes that this is the best budget. Let me tell the member for Thuringowa: the people of Townsville, like every other community across this great state, are struggling with the increased crime because it was the Labor government that changed the laws eight years ago. In this budget, member for Thuringowa, police officer numbers are down by 72. There are 72 fewer police across Queensland. But how many media spinners have we got? How many media spinners in the Premier's department?

An opposition member interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: That is right—I will take that interjection—up 98. If the member for Thuringowa genuinely thinks that having a budget that reduces police numbers but increases the spinners to make the budget look better is the best, I really worry about those poor people he represents. That is why, at the next election, Natalie Marr will be the best member for Thuringowa. She will come in and I am looking forward to working alongside her to reduce the crime rates in the great town of Townsville and all across Queensland.

Those two figures show how the Palaszczuk government have lost their way. They are more interested in fixing media problems than fixing the health crisis, the housing crisis, the crime crisis, the cost-of-living crisis, or fixing the crisis in maternity services in regional Queensland—that is another thing that is happening. This is all whilst they have an extra \$60 billion worth of revenue.

What at the end of the day can Queenslanders say they have with their big debt balloon that we now have and that extra revenue of \$60 billion? I know that the people of my electorate of Nanango have missed out. In my patch, in the electorate of Nanango, there is only a budget of reannouncements. The people of Nanango know that, and they should not be treated like duds from these people over here in government. In fact, I can only find one project that has not already been announced.

A government member: They like their new hospital.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will take that interjection about the hospital because I will be writing to the Speaker about this. The health minister—the fourth health minister—tried to say that—

Mr Head: It looks great.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It does look great. The hospital looks fantastic. Guess what? The health minister announced today—

Mr Power interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Through the chair, please.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON:—20 new beds. What an absolute joke! The nurses were on the phone to my electorate office straightaway. They said, 'Deb, guess what? The joke of a health minister does not even know there are only 32 beds open and the short-stay unit has not even opened yet.' Yes, we love

having a shiny new building, but what the nurses and the doctors tell me each and every day is that they need the beds, and they need the staff and the support. Also, they need the mental health services that I called for, that Lawrence Springborg, when he was the health minister, said he would build. That is exactly what we were planning to do. So, when the health minister comes in here and announces 20 new extra beds—well, minister, I would love to see where it is in the budget. Or, actually, is it like the police numbers: they are budgeted for, but not physically there?

Mrs Gerber: 'Funded'.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Funded—I will take that interjection. It is just like the tick and the fire ant problem we have across this great state, and we wonder why. I saw a Brisbane City Council bus covered with a big sign that said, 'Look out for fire ants' and this is while the Palaszczuk government has cut the biosecurity budget. The minister for fire ants has cut the biosecurity budget from \$230 million to \$151 million, all whilst the graziers in my electorate and further north are trying to fight the tick problem—the tick problem which has been created by the Labor government because they refused to do the extra funding that is required to hold the tick line in Queensland. We have seen they have given up on the tick line; now they are going to give up on the fire ant line. It is not good enough. I do not believe the Palaszczuk government, nor the minister for fire ants, gets—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock! Member—

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Sorry, minister for agriculture.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, you are well aware of using correct titles. If you do it again, you will be warned.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker. I withdraw. The minister for agriculture needs to understand that the issue of fire ants is exceedingly dangerous for the people of Queensland and also the tick line.

I also want to go onto the projects that were not listed in this budget because we know that it is a bad budget for many reasons. In my electorate, it certainly is a bad budget for buildings. I have been calling for the Blackbutt Police Station to get an upgrade. We have a building that is falling down around the hardworking police officers in Blackbutt. I have even had senior police officers from other districts say to me that the Blackbutt Police Station is definitely one of the worst buildings they have ever seen that houses four full-time police officers at once. It does not even get any planning money, so that is gone.

We know the bad bridges in my patch. Seriously, I have spoken about the Tanduringie Creek Bridge so many times in this House. It is a bad bridge. It is the bridge that the school bus nearly went over, nearly killing all those little kids and the bus driver. It needs replacing, Minister for Main Roads. Please! The Running Creek Bridge on the Brooweena-Woolooga Road burned down. That bad bridge burnt down after a car crash. Still there is no funding for that bridge to be replaced.

Who could forget the mystery of the GS Bond Bridge, the disappearing \$13 million? It was listed in QTRIP in 2019 and 2020, and then it has just disappeared and gone away. We are still looking for a solution, minister, for the GS Bond Bridge.

What about Scrub Creek causeway? The community of Scrub Creek, near Toogoolawah, were isolated for many weeks after the floodwaters from the Brisbane River ripped away their only exit out in 2022. A temporary solution is still in place, however, a major investment must be made to improve access for those residents of Scrub Creek.

I have talked about bad bridges. We will continue now onto bad highways and roads. There is no new funding for major highways like the Burnett Highway, the Wide Bay Highway or the Bunya Highway. In the Somerset, there is no new funding for the D'Aguilar Highway or the Brisbane Valley Highway. I have recently asked about overtaking lanes. Minister, you are in the House. I would love some more overtaking lanes, please—any! In fact, the only real announcement in this budget for the entirety of the Nanango electorate that is new is the much needed \$6.7 million commitment to seal the remainder of the Maidenwell Bunya Mountain Road. That is a long-awaited announcement. I have been calling for that for many years. It has been on the priority list. To get up to the beautiful Bunya Mountains, it needs sealing. It is interesting that QTRIP has section B completed before section A, but however it works, let's get it done.

I have talked about the lack of health funding for the short-stay unit. I say to those local nurses, doctors and admin who constantly come into my electorate office, thank you, thank you, thank you for the work that you do on behalf of my community. We know. We hear you. We know you need more resources and we know you need more staffing.

To all of those beautiful young grad nurses that are out there in regional Queensland, that may be right out there, when you are applying for those jobs into New South Wales Health, please keep the faith because after October next year you will get a better government that will look after you, that will respect you and that will keep you in regional Queensland.

I note there is no telestroke funding, a service for which I have been advocating for some time. There is no funding for a paediatrician or a persistent pain clinic.

While the Minister for Main Roads is here I wish to quickly talk about the funding I wanted in this budget for anti-hoarding measures at Dundas in the Somerset. I have talked many times about this blatant and dangerous activity. I have actually heard the member for Pine Rivers talk about this issue as well. It is a massive issue and something needs to happen. If this is the best budget ever, why are all those things not being funded? Cormorant Bay Cafe is still closed. Who knows what is happening there? Special education schools is something we have been calling for in the South Burnett for many years, but there is nothing happening there. There is nothing in the budget for Kingaroy Fire Station, and I have talked about biosecurity.

In the small amount of time I have remaining, let me turn to water, manufacturing and regional development. It is obvious from the Palaszczuk government's ninth budget that Labor cannot fix the chaos and crisis impacting water security not only in our regional communities but also in the south-east and impacting our important manufacturing industries. This budget is a complete con job for regional Queensland. It fails to give any glimmer of hope when it comes to future water security or manufacturing. In fact, most of the money that is supposedly sitting in the glossy brochures is actually past the next election. It does not even make sense. It is like the big hoax of the Pioneer Valley hydro. Is it any surprise we have landed here when the current water minister of Queensland is actually campaigning against federal investment in nation-building projects like Urannah and Hell's Gates? Let me turn to Burdekin Falls.

I was shocked to find out Labor were seriously asking Queenslanders—and North Queenslanders at that, the people of Townsville and Burdekin—to believe their reannouncement of an announcement they made in 2017 to raise the wall of Burdekin Falls Dam after abandoning their commitment to raise the wall and build hydro there six years ago. Six years ago, at the 2017 election, they announced hydro for Burdekin; they were going to raise the wall and have hydro-electricity. Six years later they have not even put a shovel in the ground, but they want us to believe they are going to do it again, like the Haughton pipeline and all those announcements. Minister Butcher is desperately trying to claim credit for a project that is half what the Premier promised in the lead-up to the last election.

When we look at the budget papers they reveal a damning 54 per cent increase—a blow-out—for Rookwood Weir. We have spoken about many other infrastructure projects that are not on time and not on budget, but a 54 per cent blowout?

An opposition member: Didn't want to do a deal with the feds.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I will take that interjection. They did not want to do a deal with the feds and now look at it—54 per cent blown out.

It is obvious. We know that the cost of the projects keep blowing out. I wonder whether it is because the Premier is just too embarrassed to negotiate with the federal government over these obscene cost blowouts. She does not even want to ask the feds to help bail her out. Maybe it is suddenly not so politically convenient for the Premier to be talking to the federal Labor government. Either way, it is a complete disgrace.

The state's contribution has now gone from \$183 million to \$385 million—obviously more than double—and there are many other examples. In my electorate alone that budget blowout could have built the Barlil Weir five times over; we could have built the Blackbutt irrigation scheme, a much needed scheme; the Barambah west weir; and for my neighbour in the north the member for Callide, the Coalstoun Lakes irrigation scheme.

Let me talk about the Toowoomba to Warwick pipeline, the project the Premier said would be built by October 2020. It was going to be completed almost three years ago, yet in this budget they have allocated \$13.4 million, which leaves \$245 million completely unfunded for the project that was going to be completed three years ago. It is unbelievable. How could any Queenslanders trust anything the Palaszczuk government are saying in relation to this budget?

In relation to regional development, we know the Minister for Regional Development does not do anything in that patch. Any money there looks to be a line item in the Premier's again, and the Premier is talking about doing regional development in two places: Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast. The people of regional Queensland will see right through that. We know in the manufacturing space we in

Queensland should be the envy of the world, but again there is no assistance. We see that the manufacturing hubs have just disappeared into the abyss, probably because all the managers are resigning in droves.

If there is one thing that this budget proves it is that Queenslanders cannot trust the Palaszczuk government. They have rivers of gold coming into this great state—\$60 billion—and at the end of the day in October 2024 when we see a Crisafulli government elected where will Queenslanders look to see these big shiny projects from the Palaszczuk government? This government have wasted it; they have forgotten to build. That is the problem. The majority of the money that is in this budget for any project is not even being spent before the next election. I understand why the roads minister is sitting there cackling, because if it were not so serious you would laugh. You would actually cry because there is \$60 billion and debt is through the roof, but the minister will not deliver any of the roads that I have again pleaded for.

This budget is a hoax, this government is a hoax and we look forward to coming to government in 2024.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Member for Nanango, earlier in your contribution you made some comments that were unparliamentary. I ask that you withdraw.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I withdraw. Can I have clarification what it was?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes.