




Speech By  
**Laura Gerber**

**MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2023

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

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (2.57 pm): The Palaszczuk Labor government's budget fails to deliver long-term solutions to the cost-of-living crisis, fails to fix the Queensland housing crisis, fails to fix the Queensland youth crime crisis and will not fix Queensland's health crisis. In fact, service delivery in Queensland has never been worse. Despite those opposite sounding like a broken record when they proclaim there is a record health budget, the harsh truth is that this budget provides no solutions to the Queensland health crisis.

Like everything with Labor, you have to look at the detail and not the announcement. What this government did not tell us is that 95 per cent of the funding for its promised health and hospitals announcement will be spent after the next election. The Premier has spent only one per cent of the total budget of the health and hospitals announcement this year, and the budget papers show that just five per cent will be spent in the next two years.

The record health budget is yet another announcement with no action. The state of our healthcare system has never been more dire. Ambulance ramping was at 15 per cent when the government came to office. It has skyrocketed to a staggering 43 per cent at the Gold Coast University Hospital, with Robina following close behind at 42 per cent. The growing numbers on the elective surgery waiting list are equally concerning, reaching a combined total of 7,460 for Robina and Gold Coast University hospitals. The waiting list for the waiting list has swollen to a staggering 40,534 for GCU and Robina. Due to a staggering lack of foresight and planning, these numbers are only set to rise higher and higher.

The new hospital proposed for the northern Gold Coast—the Coomera Hospital—will not be open until at least the back end of this decade. The first stage of delivery will deliver fewer beds than are required today. The government's announcement of the Coomera Hospital is just that: an announcement. We need it open now, not at the back end of this decade.

For those of us on the southern end of the Gold Coast the situation is particularly bad. With the impending closure of the ED at the Tweed Heads hospital, one in four people who attend the Tweed ED are southern Gold Coasters and all of these people will be forced into the Robina ED or the Gold Coast University Hospital ED, and why? Because the Tugun satellite hospital is not a real hospital. You cannot go to the ED in the Tugun satellite hospital because it does not have an ED, it does not have any overnight beds and it does not have an operating theatre and is not open 24/7. If your child breaks their leg like my son did over the weekend, you cannot take them to the Tugun satellite hospital for surgery. You cannot rush to the Tugun satellite hospital if you are having an asthma attack. If you need emergency treatment, the Tugun satellite hospital cannot treat you. Let us call this what it is and start delivering those services that the community needs in respect of a hospital.

**Mr Boothman:** It's a clinic.

**Mrs GERBER:** I take that interjection: it is a day clinic and not a hospital. This government should be calling them what they are and focusing on delivering those missing services. Those opposite lost control of Queensland Health a long time ago. No matter how many times you reshuffle the deck—no matter which combination of ministers you try—this Labor government remains in a constant state of chaos, and the budget blowouts are a symptom of this. The budget papers show that the Currumbin Eco-Parkland has blown out by \$24 million, and the project has not even gotten off the ground.

Let us not overlook the deplorable state of public transport on the southern Gold Coast—a true debacle. The light rail has blown out by a whopping \$500 million and all the while the transport minister refuses to meet with our community and hear the community's concerns around increasing densification facilitated by the expansion around the loss of parking and the additional congestion that might be caused by the route, around the ecological and cultural heritage impacts and around alternative modes. But, no. Instead, this Minister for Transport and Main Roads can find time to meet with his Labor mates in Palm Beach—which he thought was in Currumbin, mind you—and take a photo instead of meeting with the community about its concerns for light rail. This government is hell-bent on railroading our community without listening to it. If this government was listening at all, it would know that what the community overwhelmingly wants is heavy rail extended to the Gold Coast Airport, but for decades heavy rail on the Gold Coast has been ignored by this government. Under Labor, our community's aspirations for improved public transport options have been persistently ignored, leaving us to bear the brunt of insufficient connectivity, inadequate infrastructure and the total car park that is the M1.

Then there are the critical road projects that remain unfunded, like fixing Tallebudgera Connection Road. Wildlife and motorists are being injured and killed on this road but the Palaszczuk government has repeatedly dodged the commitment to fund safety improvements, instead announcing that the Safer Roads Sooner program might consider funding that upgrade. More announcements and no action from this Palaszczuk Labor government! I have spoken in this place on multiple occasions about the dangers of Tallebudgera Connection Road, particularly for our koalas. In November last year Hernando was tragically hit and killed, becoming the 98th koala to be killed or injured along Tallebudgera Connection Road since 2010. Our community identified the problems and provided the solutions: fix or replace the flashing wildlife awareness lights, put lighting along the road, and install better signage and fencing in certain areas. We took the campaign to the media and I brought it to the floor of this parliament. We forced the minister to promise to consult with the community on these wildlife safety measures. That was back in December last year, and we are still waiting.

Last week the minister came down for a photo opportunity and reannounced replacing the wildlife flashing lights, but while we wait for the minister to take action more koalas have been hit by cars. Last week I visited Roberta at Currumbin Wildlife Hospital—yet another koala hit on Tallebudgera Connection Road waiting for the minister to take real action to make it safer. How many more need to be hit? Enough is enough! No more announcements. No more photo ops. Get on with the job. We need action to make that road safer for our wildlife and for our motorists.

Whether it is about the protection of koalas or of course the light rail, this government simply does not listen. If the minister had bothered to consult with residents, like he promised, before making the announcement, he might have included better lighting as part of the road announcement. Instead, this government broke its promise to consult—no consultation has happened—and without the appropriate lighting I fear that motorists will continue to hit and kill our wildlife along that road.

It is not just Tallebudgera Connection Road that needs action. The community and I have been fighting for improved parking facilities for Tallebudgera State School. In a recent desperate attempt to collect their children safely, some parents took to parking along Tallebudgera Connection Road. Let me be absolutely clear: I am not advocating for parking illegally on shoulders of the road, but what speaks volumes is the response from the transport minister. He decided that a simple stroke of a yellow line would suffice as a solution—'Job done. Nothing to see here. Fixed the problem.' Never mind that parents still cannot park safely to collect their children from school. It is all so disheartening to find that this budget still does not provide any funding for Tallebudgera State School to have more parking options for parents to pick up children safely from school. Our kids and our local families deserve better.

Then there is the Currumbin Creek Active Transport Bridge. The minister was failing to make good on this election commitment, so he rushed the planning. It literally looked like he cut and pasted a bridge from Google and stuck it in the middle of Currumbin Creek. It absolutely did not fit with our beautiful creek and estuary. As a result of community pressure this had to go back to the drawing board, but how much is it going to cost the taxpayer. No doubt it will be delayed now. How can this incompetent government not get critical infrastructure projects right?

In my remaining time I want to shed light on the glaring omissions in this budget. We are in a youth crime crisis and this budget has no extra police for the Gold Coast. The thin blue line has never been thinner. Since September 2020 there are 72 fewer frontline police officers across Queensland, but guess what? The number of the government's media and spin doctors has increased by 98. We have weaker laws and fewer police in the middle of a youth crime crisis and the Premier is hiring more spin doctors to cover it up.

Then there is the grievous oversight in terms of the failure to fund the meningococcal B vaccine in the School Immunisation Program. Earlier this year I shared the story of the Fidler family, who lost their beautiful daughter Bella to this virus at the young age of 23. Meningococcal B is a life-threatening illness that mostly affects our young people. While the state's vaccination program includes vaccinations against meningococcal, the meningococcal B strain is not included and is the most prevalent strain. It has a mortality rate of one in 10, and one in four people are permanently disabled. The cost of privately funding this for parents is too much in a cost-of-living crisis. The state government must prioritise the protection of our children and move much faster on this. Meningococcal B must be included in the immunisation program for our kids. This state government should be acting in the same way that other state governments have acted to protect their young people.

Finally, there is a cut in this budget that threatens our beautiful beaches and our economy, and I am talking about the cuts to biosecurity while our community battles an alarming surge of fire ants. If these introduced pests make it to our beaches, it could be catastrophic. Disturbingly, the state government's own warning sounds a dire prophecy of a future where our cherished beaches may become unusable. This government's 10-year eradication program has proven to be an abject failure, and now astonishingly the government has chosen to cut biosecurity funding by almost half.

Resoundingly, this budget is a huge disappointment. I am so proud to be part of an LNP team that genuinely listens and cares. We are a team that will deliver for Queenslanders. Unlike Labor, we will not promise one thing and do the opposite. We have already committed to reliable, affordable and sustainable power. We will implement maintenance guarantees on power plants so that Queenslanders do not suffer under increasing power bills. We will ensure there is affordable car registration and licence fees. We will ease the housing crisis to help bring down rent costs by ensuring every dollar generated by the Housing Investment Fund is used to build new homes. We will heal the health crisis and make hospital data available in real time, improving our health system and increasing transparency—something the other side knows nothing about.

We will put the rights of victims above the rights of criminals. We will put a victim on the Sentencing Advisory Council and we will ensure a victim's commissioner is appointed. We will put an end to this government's reliance on consultants and handing over millions of taxpayer dollars to the big four consultancy firms. We will give our police the laws and the resources that they need to combat youth crime and the crime crisis that is gripping our state. Our blue line has never been thinner. Police are acting with one hand tied behind their back with weak laws because this state government watered down the laws eight years ago and now we have a generation of youth criminals who know they are above the law and cannot be touched. We on this side of the House will ensure that our police have the laws that they want and deserve and we will ensure that they have the resources to combat the crime crisis. There are 72 less police officers today than when this government was elected in 2020. They have completely failed on their commitment to increase the police force.

In just under 500 days Queenslanders will have a choice to make. They will have a choice between a Labor government that is full of announcements and no action or an LNP government that will deliver real solutions for Queensland. They will have a choice between a Labor government that is all chaos and crisis or an LNP government that will deliver stability and hope. I am so proud to be on this side of the House. I am so proud to be part of an LNP team that is listening to Queenslanders, that is earning their trust and that will deliver for our great state. Queenslanders deserve so much more than this rubbish budget and they deserve so much more than the rubbish Palaszczuk Labor government.