




Speech By  
**Michael Hart**

**MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH**

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

 **Mr HART** (Burleigh—LNP) (8.40 pm): I rise to add to the debate on the budget. This is my 12th budget reply since I have been in this House. I have spoken numerous times on Labor budgets. They are all smoke and mirrors, and I have said that over and over again. This budget is more smoke and less mirror, I have to say. This budget fails to deliver long-term solutions for the cost of living, it fails to do anything about the youth crime crisis, it fails to fix the health crisis, and it does not do anything to fix the housing crisis. As I have said, the budget does not assist with the cost of living. I do not really understand how members opposite do not get that increased electricity costs are pushing up the cost of living.

**Mr Power:** They are.

**Mr HART:** I take the interjection from the member for Logan. Electricity prices are pushing up the cost of living and there is a rebate for one year. The question then revolves around what do we do next year, the year after and the year after that? Rather than—

**Mr Power:** This is a good thing.

**Mr HART:** This is a good thing for the people—

**Ms Fentiman** interjected.

**Mr HART:** I cannot hear over that screaming from the other side. The reality is that it is false logic to say that this is deflationary; it is actually inflationary when the price of something goes up. When you add a rebate to it, you are providing a temporary fix, a one-off sugar hit, but what happens next year and the year after and the year after? Therein lies the problem. A subsidy is not reducing the ongoing cost of living for people. It reduces it that one time that you provide the subsidy, and it only reduces it by the subsidy.

**Mr Power:** Do you think we should do it again?

**Mr HART:** No, I do not think it should be done again and again; I think real action should be taken to reduce the cost of living. That is what we should be using this one-off sugar hit that has been provided by coal royalties for. We should be using that to actually reduce the cost of living, permanently, not just on a one-off basis.

We see over and over again that every policy this government puts in place adds to inflation. If you look back 10 or 15 years at the price of electricity, it was stable for years and years at \$35 a megawatt. It was not until the Labor government started to bring in a carbon tax that things jumped and then there was renewable energy. Do members remember the carbon tax that 'will not be under any government that I lead'? The then prime minister of Australia, Julia Gillard, stood there on the hill and said, 'There won't be a carbon tax under a government I lead,' and then she brought in a carbon tax the moment she got elected. That is what Labor governments do. They tell you one thing and then they do another thing.

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr HART:** Let us talk about the 43 per cent that this government keeps trying to reinvent history about.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** You just said when the carbon tax was introduced. That's a reinvented history.

**Mr HART:** The member for Sandgate might want to listen for a second. I think he might have been in the government that put in place gold-plated transmission systems in 2010 that led to the AER, the Australian Energy Regulator, locking in 15 per cent increases in electricity year on year for five years. We were elected in 2012 and those 15 per cent rises were locked in. They were caused by a Labor government spending money over and over again on the gold plating of the network system, and that is exactly what they are going to try to do again. They are going to try to do the same thing again.

We have already heard about their \$62 billion energy plan. Do they think for a second under a cost recovery system that, if you go and spend \$62 billion on something, somebody is not going to try to recover that money?

**Mr McCallum** interjected.

**Mr HART:** Does the member for Bundamba agree that they try to recover money? That is what happens in the real world, not this fairy world that the government appears to live in. In the real world when private enterprise invest in something, they expect a return on it. That is what has happened with the government's so-called renewable energy plan. They have got private enterprise to invest in renewable energy, all requiring a return and, heaven forbid, the price of electricity has gone up. Well, who saw that coming? I did, but apparently no-one over there did. No-one saw it coming. There will be more of it, mark my words. This is not the end of this story.

The government complains over and over again about the cost of electricity when we were in, but they actually locked it in place. We have seen a 25 per cent and a 35 per cent increase in electricity in the last six months alone. That is much higher than the 45 per cent that they claim electricity went up under the LNP when we were in government that Labor had locked in in 2010. I just do not get why this government does not understand how the energy system works. It is a cost recovery system, a regulated asset base. You spend more money and more money is recovered from people through their electricity bill.

The government comes out and says, 'We'll give everybody a rebate. We'll give some back.' They are the words that the Premier used—'We'll give some back.' Well, do not take it away from them to start with. Lower electricity prices right at the start, rather than taking it off people so everyone has higher electricity bills—including businesses—causing inflation. They are going to give subsidies back to some people. Only some people are going to get free electricity and it is only for one year. What happens every other year? I just do not get it.

We had the Coaldrake report, *Let the sunshine in*, about the integrity system in Queensland, but this government seems to be rushing to turn the lights out in Queensland rather than letting the sunshine in. Mark my words, that will start to happen soon too. The ministers over there have not bothered to watch what is happening in New South Wales right now. They are having actual lack of reserve, every day, because of what they have done down there, and it is only going to get worse. Electricity prices are only going up under this government, and that does not help the cost of living.

The government keeps talking about the \$89 billion Big Build. It is a big con. It is a complete and utter con. I do not think they will actually build half of this stuff that they talk about. We have a minister for transport—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Member for Burleigh, I remind you to direct your comments through the chair, please.

**Mr HART:** Yes, Mr Deputy Speaker. We have a Minister for Transport who declares that anybody who says that projects are currently coming in on time and on budget is some sort of manure delivery system. I cannot use the words they say, but it basically means a manure delivery system. He is exactly the minister who goes out there and says, 'This project is on time and on budget.' The Cross River Rail—look at what it happening there—blown out. Light Rail Stage 3 on the Gold Coast—on time and on budget? No, that has blown out. Everything these ministers touch blows out. They are blown out.

Let us look at what will happen to the state debt. We have a one-off sugar hit that is being used by the government to try to minimise what will happen as far as cost of living goes this year, but it is not ongoing. The government's budget papers show that coal royalties will fall over the coming years. This one-off sugar hit is not going to continue. The government will not have the money to keep this up. It is quite clear, when you look at the budget papers, where this money is going to come from. Net debt,

something they like to talk about all the time, is going to go from \$5.8 billion this year to \$47 billion in 2027. That does not include the super liabilities of another \$21.2 billion. That is why we keep talking about the debt of the state being \$147 billion.

It is no good trying to con the people of Queensland by inflating the assets of Queensland and saying, 'You net those off against what the actual debt is,' because that does not work. The government has been caught out overinflating items in the budget before. You only have to look at what they did to the titles office a couple of years ago where they shifted the titles office into a fund at an overpriced rate, two to three times what the actual valuation was.

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr HART:** I take the interjection from the member for Logan. When I was a businessman, and I still am, it is pretty straightforward to value something. You value it on the return that it is getting. If you look at the titles office and multiply the return it gets by a normal figure that an accountant would use or a figure you would use to sell a business, you come up with a pretty straightforward number. It was not \$4.7 billion. It was nowhere near that. That is what the government does; it overinflates all of these things. This is a government that is fiscally incompetent, there is no doubt about that.

**Mr Power:** There is a \$12 billion surplus!

**Mr HART:** They have not been able to fix the youth crime crisis. I will run out of time here, Mr Deputy Speaker. There is so much material to use. There really is so much to use. They have not fixed the youth crime crisis. In fact, we have fewer police officers than we had two years ago, and those figures have been proven lately. I have been trying to find out exactly how many officers are available for each shift in the Palm Beach police division. I have asked three or four different versions of questions in the House to try to elicit that, and they keep telling me that it is fully manned, yet when I speak to our local police officers they tell me there is only half of the normal staff available for any rosters down there. That is the reality of it. It is not the make-believe that the government wants to talk about; it is the reality of what is going on. The reality for the people in Palm Beach is that their houses are being broken into, their cars are being stolen, and the government just does not care about that.

We have heard every member over there say this one-off sugar hit is paying for everything that this government is doing. It cannot be paying for everything. When you add up the numbers that the government is spending versus the amount that they are getting in, they do not balance. It is all going to be debt, and that is not helping the cost of living.