




Speech By  
**Tim Nicholls**

**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2023

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

 **Mr NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (7.39 pm): Member for Keppel, I listened to your speech, but let me tell you who else I listened to: I listened to the then treasurer of Queensland before the last election say on 26 separate occasions that there would be no new or increased taxes. What did he do? In typical Labor form, like his predecessors before him, he immediately broke his commitment to the people of Queensland, the small businesses of Queensland, the doctors of Queensland and the ratepayers of Queensland. He broke those promises. What did he try to do? He tried to put a tax on GP practices, making it more expensive to go to the doctor. What did he try to do? He tried to put a nationwide tax on property that was owned in Queensland, making it harder for renters to be able to rent a home, taxing mum-and-dad investors who provide 90 per cent of rental accommodation in Queensland.

Do not come into this House, member for Keppel, and say you listened to what was said because we pay attention to the things that matter, and, member for Keppel, I paid attention to what you said back in 2015. How is Great Keppel Island going? Still no resort, still no casino, still no services—another fail by a failed member, the member for Keppel.

**Mr SMITH:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member's comments need to be addressed through the chair, not directly to a member opposite. I ask that you rule on that.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Lui): Member, please direct all comments through the chair.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I listened to the member for Keppel and as I said to the—

**Ms LAUGA:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find the comments that the member made personally offensive and I ask him to withdraw.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I withdraw. Both yesterday and this morning we were subject to the usual barrage of self-congratulatory, self-serving, face-saving, post-budget ministerial statements. As I listened to the barrage of self-serving and self-praise, I reflected on the Palaszczuk Labor government's budgets over the years—unfortunately far too many of those years. As I did so, the level of chicanery and the level of deceit and dishonesty we have seen each year—

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members to my right, please come to order.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** As I did so, the level of chicanery, deceit and dishonesty we have seen each year the Palaszczuk government has delivered a budget has become more stark, like the abandoned debt management trust of the 2015 election—a trust that bit the dust which was going to quarantine 66 per cent of GOC dividends; a bit like the Bruce Highway Trust, a trust that disappeared; a bit like the plan to fix the Bruce Highway itself; a bit like the member for Miller's emails that also disappeared. From stopping payments into public servants' superannuation funds for five years—never told anyone it was

going to do that; raiding the Public Service long service leave entitlements in 2015—never told anyone it was going to do that; ripping \$10 billion out of government owned corporations and forcing them to borrow up to 100 per cent in order to do that, something that under corporations law would actually be a crime; a \$4 billion raid on public servants' superannuation in 2016; the massive hoax of the sale of the titles office—

**Mr BAILEY:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. As fascinating as this trip down memory lane is, this is actually about the 2023 budget, not budgets 10 years ago. I certainly encourage the member to come back to the budget that is before the House.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will seek some advice. There is no point of order.

**Mr NICHOLLS:**—the barely mentioned Debt Retirement Fund in the Queensland Future Fund; the subsequent \$2.1 billion worth of borrowings in the Debt Retirement Fund to improve liquidity—another joke, just more debt; to the billions more in borrowing under the Trad Treasury years; the breaking of promises not to increase taxes, as well as raking in hundreds of millions more from state owned power companies: this government has always lacked the intestinal fortitude to address the major problems facing Queensland finances. It relies on financial trickery and chicanery each and every year.

This year's budget is no different—\$60 billion more over three years from the 2019 budget, rivers of gold, five minutes of economic sunshine, a surplus that will expire on 30 June this year and then back into deficit. There are rivers of gold from no efforts of its own—no reform, no change, simply clicking the ticket on the way through—and total state debt heading towards \$147 billion, and that is how much the taxpayers of Queensland are on the hook for. Forget net debt; when the bill comes due and the interest payment is due, it is \$147 billion—nothing else, unless it is proposing that it is going to sell off the assets that make up the balance of the state's superannuation fund more than it already has done; otherwise it has to find \$147 billion to pay it off.

Since 2015 it has been one accounting dodge or a broken promise after another—not one consistent plan—and the goalposts continually change as a government bereft of ideas continually tries to scrounge up more money to pay for its blowouts, waste and incompetence. Just last year the doozy was the imposition of three higher tiers of royalties for the coalmining industry. All this week the government has obviously been defensive about its position. I wonder why. Why would that be? We are continually told by this Treasurer that all in this place must unconditionally support the Labor government's royalty regime and if we do not then we are jeopardising the future of Queensland and Queenslanders. He says that this is the test of an opposition.

The Treasurer refers to cost-of-living relief as if he is the only Treasurer to consider the problem, but his answer is simply to add to the inflationary pressures already running rampant in this economy, supported and sponsored by his mates down in Canberra. Economists today and as recently as this morning have highlighted that what the Queensland government has done is simply adding to inflation. It is somewhat ironic that we are continually harangued by a Treasurer and members of a government led by a Premier who in—

**Ms Farmer** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** I will come to the member for Bulimba shortly. It is somewhat ironic that we are continually harangued by a Treasurer and members of a government led by a Premier who in a 2012 train wreck of an interview on the *7.30 Report* on five occasions, when asked what she would do to fix the state's financial problems, could not answer; an opposition where the then shadow treasurer outlined his alternative plans and told the ABC's Chris O'Brien—I hope you are listening, Cobby—'We don't have to tell you our alternative. That's not our position.' That is what he said. That is what the shadow treasurer said in 2012: 'We don't have to tell you our alternative.' Speaking of 2012, I thought it might be interesting to reflect on that year, because members opposite have delighted in referring to those years, because that was the year of cost-of-living relief delivered by the LNP government.

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** The member for Logan could not even make it into the place that year; I do remember that!

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Whoopsadaisy; he could not make it. 2012 was the year that cost-of-living relief was delivered by the LNP government that was necessary because of the taxes, fees and charges imposed by the Bligh government on an unsuspecting public—a Bligh government that included this Treasurer, this Premier, this education minister, this tourism minister and the Speaker, and they all voted to increase Gateway Motorway tolls by 30 per cent and abolish the principal place of residence concession on family homes, increasing the cost by \$7,000. How does that go for housing affordability?

Labor increased land tax. They increased car registration to the highest in the country. They implemented the failed water grid, a program that cost billions of dollars and added billions of dollars of debt. They increased power prices each and every year at 10 per cent. They increased public transport—and the Premier was the transport minister who did it—30 per cent a year each year for the subsequent years and they increased gaming taxes, as well as locking in a 43 per cent increase in electricity charges. They also supported Julia Gillard's carbon tax on everything—a great big carbon tax that in their heart of hearts they all wanted—that added to the cost of living for every single Queenslander. Let us not forget it was a Labor government that abolished Queensland's Fuel Subsidy Scheme immediately after telling people at the election they were never going to do it.

The LNP introduced the principal place of residence concession making homes more affordable; we introduced a \$15,000 new home owner grant; we halved public transport fare increases; we introduced the 10th trip free on public transport; we froze car registration for three years; we froze tariff 11 electricity prices; we gave every residential property an \$80 water bill rebate; and we increased the payroll tax threshold for small and family business. On top of that, in our first year we put an extra 300 police on the front line—in one year only. We did not go back by 72 over eight years; we went 300 ahead in the first year and 242 in the second year. We also introduced a three-tier coal royalty scheme with reasonable rates that ensured Queenslanders received their fair share of the extraction and sale of the coal they owned while ensuring mining companies did not shut up shop, sell off and go overseas like they are doing under this mob. We actually supported coalmining activities. We proposed all these things in our first bill after election in 2012 and in the 2012 budget and we implemented many of them through the Fiscal Repair Amendment Bill.

The Labor Party were the only people who said nothing about the tiered royalty regime in 2012. In a 55-minute budget reply speech the member for Inala not once mentioned a tiered royalty regime program—timid, silent, afraid or just simply cowards. Let me tell members that the only people ever to vote against a tiered royalty regime were the member for Inala, the member for Mulgrave and the other members of the parliamentary Labor Party in 2012: Trad, Scott, Mulherin, Byrne and Miller—the same sorry and sad bunch who, with the exception of the member for Inala and then member for Rockhampton, Bill Byrne, did not even turn up to speak on the 2013 budget and then voted against the appropriation bills in 2013. They voted against the 2013 budget which had \$860 million of funding for NDIS in it and \$2.5 billion of recovery funds following ex-cyclone Oswald. It was all voted against by the Labor Party.

I say to the Treasurer: we are not beholden to you, matey, and we will never need to take your advice about the right thing to do. The Treasurer is in no position to demand anything because the record shows that Labor and the Premier have already failed this Treasurer's test: they voted against tiered royalties.

**Mr Mellish:** Ten years ago!

**Mr NICHOLLS:** 'Ten years ago', says the member for Aspley—an admission of guilt. Guilt is never going to go away from this party. The legacy of debt and deficit continues under this government. We have seen areas of budget mismanagement. We see programs to deal with the problems of youth justice spread through six different departments, highlighting this government's incompetence when it comes to dealing with one of the most seminal issues affecting the community of Queensland. Cars are being stolen, homes are being broken into and this government has no plan. The Premier says they are throwing a lot of money at it, but the problem is not getting better. The youth detention centres have no funding to build them. Time does not permit me to list the litany of failures of this government. Let me simply say, yet again, with the exception of the Kedron State High School hall, this government provides no funding for Clayfield. This budget is a 'fudge it', not a budget.