




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BUDERIM

Record of Proceedings, 13 June 2024

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; STATE FINANCIAL INSTRUCTIONS AND METWAY MERGER AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (8.35 pm): This is a budget for the next four months rather than a budget for the next four years. This is a budget that is all about getting a decade-old Miles-Palaszczuk Labor government re-elected rather than tackling the chronic issues that Queenslanders are facing in health, housing and crime. On the Sunshine Coast and right across Queensland this is a budget that shows Labor will do and say anything they need to just so they can cling to power.

This Labor budget fails the Sunshine Coast because there is no money to start construction on Sunshine Coast heavy passenger rail. This Labor budget fails the Sunshine Coast because there is nothing of substance to get work started on the Mooloolah River interchange. I can hear the minister for transport chirping away. The Minister for Transport cut the Mooloolah River interchange. He will say there is funding in this budget for stage 1 of the Mooloolah River interchange, which he said would cost \$771 million. Is there \$771 million in this budget for stage 1? No, there is not one extra cent. There is \$10 million to do a bit more planning, to talk about it and consider it, but there is no money to start work. That says everything about this Labor government. The budget papers even say that for Sunshine Coast heavy passenger rail and for the Mooloolah River interchange 'the scope and time of those projects are in doubt' and that they are 'under further consideration'. That does not sound like a promise to me.

This budget fails the residents of Sippy Downs and Palmview too because for another year we are going to have to make do with a police station that is only open business hours during the week. More than 1,000 residents recently signed a petition and made their views very clearly known to this government. We require a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week police station in Sippy Downs, but the Miles government has chosen to ignore that petition. They have chosen to ignore their voice because they do not care. They do not care about the voice of the people of Sippy Downs, but I will keep fighting for them so that families in Sippy Downs and Palmview no longer have to live in fear.

This budget fails commuters sitting in traffic because of the mess that is the Sugar Road and Mooloolaba Road intersection. Despite the fact that the government spent \$2 million on planning, Labor has now cut the project completely. At least last year they kept it in there as a line item, but they have now cut it completely from QTRIP and the budget. They cut this project despite acknowledging that the intersection is 'dangerous'—their words, not mine—and 'congested'—their words, not mine. That tells residents in Buderim everything they need to know about this decade-old Labor government. Labor does not care about the Sunshine Coast, but my LNP colleagues and I will not stop fighting for the Sunny Coast.

Make no mistake: Labor will say and do anything to cling to power. The Treasurer is imploring voters to forget about the failings of his decade-old Miles-Palaszczuk Labor government. The Labor slogan for this budget is—

Mr BAILEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member is referring to governments against the Speaker's ruling. I ask that he withdraw and refer to governments by their correct name as per the Speaker's ruling.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Lui): I will get some advice. Member for Buderim, can I please remind you to refer to the government by its appropriate title.

Mr MICKELBERG: I take your guidance, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am sorry: I should have referred to this tired, third-term, insipid, arrogant, ineffective, decade-old Labor government, and I will continue to refer to it in that manner. If I were the member for Miller, I would be ashamed of my government's record as well. I would be hiding from a record of failure and of incompetence—

Mr BAILEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. What is your point of order, member?

Mr BAILEY: Clearly I take personal offence at those ridiculous comments and I ask that they be withdrawn.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Buderim, the member for Miller takes personal offence. Do you withdraw?

Mr MICKELBERG: I withdraw. Labor's slogan for this budget is 'doing what matters'. It is a slogan that is designed to distract from the failures of this tired third-term Labor state government. It is a carefully crafted strategy, but it was delivered in a ham-fisted and amateurish manner by the Treasurer. Asking Queenslanders to ignore Labor's failings of the last 10 years is arrogant and disrespectful, but would we expect anything less from the Treasurer? By adopting this approach, Labor is taking Queenslanders for mugs. The *Courier Mail* nailed it with its headline—'Labor tries to hide Annastacia Palaszczuk: we'll pay you to forget the last decade'.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member, can I ask you to please put that down.

Mr MICKELBERG: I table that.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Courier-Mail*, dated 12 June 2024, titled 'Labor tries to hide Annastacia Palaszczuk: We'll pay you to forget the last decade' [1066](#).

I am confident that Queenslanders will see through Labor's pathetic attempts to distance itself from a decade of failure. To be frank, this new Miles government rhetoric is embarrassing—a new Miles government where the now Premier was most recently the deputy premier who wasted \$220 million on Wellcamp, and before that he was the minister for health and ambulance services whose failure pushed ambulance ramping to double what it was in 2015 and laid the groundwork for Queensland having the worst ambulance ramping in the country at 45.5 per cent. Despite the fact that he has tried to run miles from his record, Steven Miles's fingerprints are everywhere on the failures of this decade-old Labor government.

Let us contrast that with the plan delivered by the Leader of the Opposition today—a real plan to get more Queenslanders into their own home, a real plan to tackle the drivers pushing up—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member, I ask you to refer to members by their correct titles.

Mr MICKELBERG: I take your guidance, Madam Deputy Speaker. We have a real plan to tackle the drivers pushing up the cost of living, many of which are within the control of this state government; a real plan to tackle the youth crime crisis, with a commitment to remove detention as a last resort, restore consequences for action and implement early intervention programs that work and a commitment to put the rights of victims before those of offenders; a real plan to tackle the worst ambulance ramping in the country so that Queenslanders can get the health care they need when they need it; a real plan to put Queensland's small and family businesses first.

As the shadow minister for small and family business, fighting for the more than 480,000 Queensland small and family businesses is close to my heart. It is close to my heart because small and family businesses are the backbone of every single community in Queensland and supporting small and family businesses is at the core of who we are as the LNP. Despite the rhetoric, small and family businesses are always an afterthought for this third-term Labor government. Small business is hurting right now, but if people listened to the Minister for Small Business or the Premier they would think that small business was killing it. Instead, many small businesses are telling me that they are slowly dying.

Inflation and regulation are up but opportunity is down, and people are losing hope. Queensland has one of the highest rates of business liquidations in Australia and it is largely to do with how difficult it is to run a business here. The cost-of-living crisis—a crisis of this government's making—is having a significant impact on every Queenslander. Bills are piling up for small business owners, too. Power bills in particular are shocking. Behind wages, electricity has become the largest cost for small business and it is forcing them to make tough decisions. They are either increasing prices and driving away customers, laying off staff or throwing in the towel and closing up shop for good.

I recently met with a business in Bundaberg whose power bill has doubled to \$8,000 a month. That is more than someone's wage. Rather than tackling the underlying issues pushing up electricity prices, Labor has instead decided to pay lip-service to the issue and use short-term measures to distract from its failures. While any relief is welcome, a \$325 rebate from this government for small businesses is barely a drop in the ocean. Numerous small business owners have said to me that that paltry support is an insult. The root cause of the problem must be solved in order to drive down prices for long-term improvement. It has been more than three years since Callide went offline. It is still not fixed. Queenslanders are sick of excuses. They need a government that is genuinely committed to delivering for all Queenslanders. The youth crime crisis gripping the state is having a huge impact on small business too.

Mr Skelton interjected.

Mr MICKELBERG: The member for Nicklin, who is not in his seat, likes to deny the impact of youth crime on small businesses in Queensland. He likes to get on Facebook at night and abuse small businesses in his electorate, but he wants to pretend that there is no problem with youth crime in Queensland. If there is not a more out-of-touch member of parliament than the member for Nicklin, then I do not know who is. He is a bloke who thinks it is best to abuse his constituents, not fight for them. He fights his constituents rather than fighting for them. He has missed that key bit in the middle, but there is hope in Marty Hunt. Marty Hunt will give the electorate of Nicklin hope.

It is not just running costs that are killing small businesses; red tape and regulation are strangling them too. As we have seen once again, improving the system is not a priority for this Labor government. The Queensland Business Chamber's *Efficient regulation report* last year stated that 80 per cent of businesses indicated that the time associated with meeting their regulatory compliance has increased. Some 85 per cent of businesses said that the costs associated with red tape had increased and the median cost of that compliance was \$50,000. That is one of the reasons that we have committed to restoring the Productivity Commission, and its first task will be tackling red tape and inefficiency in the building industry.

The LNP knows how important it is to release the shackles on Queensland's small and family businesses. We will make reducing red tape a priority. We will strip back redundant legislation and streamline processes. It should be easy to do business with the government, but right now it is far from easy for small businesses in Queensland. The Putting Queensland Small and Family Businesses First policy, announced by the Leader of the Opposition today, makes it clear that a Crisafulli LNP state government will put small and family businesses at the forefront of government tenders and procurement. We will streamline tender processes, we will implement smaller tender amounts and we will improve the resources available to small and family businesses so that they can compete and get their fair share of Queensland government procurement opportunities. Alongside this, we will implement a Buy Local Small and Family Business Procurement policy which will put local businesses first when government departments go to market in local areas. Too often local businesses lose out to Brisbane-based big businesses because of this government's Buy Queensland policy. A case in point was the Cairns Convention Centre upgrade where a big Brisbane-based company poached workers from local electrical firms when the work could have, and should have, been performed by Cairns small and family businesses. Even when big business subcontracts to small business, it is the small business that loses out, with the big businesses using their market power to squeeze margins on small businesses, leaving no margin in the deal for small businesses. We will make fixing that a priority.

A Crisafulli LNP government will implement a Small and Family Business Innovation Pathway that will allow government to directly engage a Queensland small and family business on short-term contracts of up to \$1 million for the purpose of proof-of-concept or outcome-based trials. It is an initiative that aims to try new ideas and access new providers that might be able to develop innovative programs and solutions to tackle some of the challenges currently facing Queensland.

When small and family businesses are engaged by a future LNP state government, we will make sure they are paid on time, every time. Despite the fact that this state government says that it will pay small businesses in 20 days, it frequently fails to. Government should lead the way when it comes to paying small and family business suppliers on time. Every single quarter Queensland Health misses its

own small business payment requirement for about \$15 million worth of invoices. I mentioned Queensland Health, but I could mention every department, including the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, which also misses its own small business payment target. In contrast, an LNP Crisafulli government will make sure that small and family businesses are paid within five business days and for payments of less than \$10,000 we will implement a system where they can be paid immediately.

On vocational training, this is another one-track budget that does little to tackle the chronic shortage of skilled workers that is currently choking Queensland's productivity. By their own measure, Labor have delivered 17,600 fewer tradies and skilled workers than they should have. That is 17,600 fewer workers like chippies, plumbers and electricians who right now would have been so valuable in tackling the skilled worker shortage Queensland is facing. On nearly every single vocational training measure detailed in the SDS, Labor have failed. In the interests of time I will not go through them, but I would encourage members to have a look.

We have seen Labor failure after Labor failure after Labor failure, yet the Labor government come in here and try to make a virtue of spending more while delivering less. It is Queenslanders who pay the price. Strengthening vocational training means finding a path that supports both TAFE and independent providers to give Queenslanders the best opportunities. Queenslanders deserve choice and the best opportunities to get the skills they want for the jobs Queenslanders need. Labor want to weaponise TAFE and vocational training for their own selfish political interests, but the truth is that all Queenslanders want to see a strong, sustainable and effective TAFE for the long term. TAFE, business, trainees and the LNP all want to make sure that more Queenslanders are enrolling in training and finishing their training. Right now, on that measure things are getting worse. Talk about commencements from the government is irrelevant if there is not a conversation about the number of people who complete their training, and right now Queenslanders are not completing that training.

Time is against me, but it is very clear that this is a budget that is designed to win an election, not to fight for Queenslanders. It is time for Queenslanders to show Labor the door in '24.