



Speech By
Bryson Head

MEMBER FOR CALLIDE

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 HEAD (Callide—LNP) (9.37 pm): How far does this budget go? It does go far beyond the next 120 days and certainly not much beyond 120 days from where we stand today—a budget for Brisbane, not for the bush. Ten Labor budgets in and one would think Premier Miles would be talking about his and Labor's record. Instead, he is running away from it at a million miles an hour. Maybe he is flying away from it, as 'Premi-Air Miles' loves to do—on two separate jets, of course.

Mr Saunders interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. Member for Maryborough, you are warned under the standing orders. I have already given you a warning. I have a blank sheet here. I can fill it up.

Mr HEAD: From listening to the contributions from the Greens what did we learn? The most surprising thing is that the member for Maiwar supports the coal industry. Who would have thought the people of Maiwar would elect such a coal lover? Other than that, of course, Labor has taken the Greens' policy book—Labor and the Greens forever in bed. Never has a Queensland government taxed more, borrowed more or spent more. What have we got to show for it? We have roads that are falling apart, health services that are crippling, teachers frustrated about a broken system, hardworking coppers walking out the door and the worst cost-of-living crisis in generations. In contrast, I am proud to be part of the LNP as we and our leader, David Crisafulli, have a bold, considered and comprehensive plan to get Queensland back on track. I will say more on that shortly.

Labor wants Queenslanders to forget about the victims of their failures: the mothers who have had roadside births because of the closure of maternity services, such as Yvette and Chloe; or Clayton Skewis, a stroke victim from Chinchilla who sat in the Chinchilla Hospital overnight causing permanent damage so that he now needs 24-hour care because there were not adequate facilities and procedures in place under Labor's health crisis. There are countless other victims under this Labor government. Instead of apologising to them all, Labor wants you to forget. Well, I will not forget. We deserve a government that is focused on the right priorities for Queensland's future, not one that is single-mindedly focused on re-election.

Last financial year the Callide electorate contributed a whopping \$2 billion in royalties, roughly. I wanted to get the precise figure on that but, of course, the Treasurer does not want the people of Callide to know. When asked on two different occasions, the Treasurer could have given the answer but instead he made up excuses. He clearly does not want to be honest and transparent with Queenslanders. Callide has received a pittance in this year's budget under Premier Miles. Across the electorate, new projects that the community supports add up to a fraction of over one per cent of total capital spend. We contribute a huge chunk of state revenue and get crumbs in return for road upgrades and new facilities. More than half of that relates to the gas-fired power station being constructed at Kogan Creek,

which I absolutely support. The construction of that plant is a damning revelation of how we very much need coal- and gas-fired power stations going forward. The Brigalow gas plant is one of many power stations needed to drive down electricity prices because it is clear that under Labor renewables are only sending power prices skyrocketing.

I have been talking to a lot of constituents about solar and wind projects and it is clear that rural Queensland does not support the government in its reckless rollout of those projects. It is throwing billions of taxpayer dollars at projects in communities that do not support them. It must stop. Property rights must be protected. Solar and wind generators should only be installed with stringent rules and regulations that are fair. The companies building them must work with all of the impacted owners and the community that has to put up with them for years to come.

Labor's reckless plan does not respect the views of Queenslanders, which is why earlier this year the LNP voted against the renewable energy bill. It is also why the LNP is committed to scrapping the Pioneer-Burdekin Pumped Hydro project, which is what the local community wants and what our great candidate for Mirani, Glen Kelly, has been calling for for a long time. Instead, we should support a proper energy mix and we will work with private enterprise on delivering projects that have community support. Mount Rawdon pumped hydro is a fantastic proposal to transition a goldmine with a depleted gold resource into an energy storage system. Let us use the expertise of industry to get the right projects going in Queensland and not uncostered ones that simply do not stack up.

I have spoken in depth about the Callide cover-up and the lengths that the government is going to to hide the truth from Queensland in relation to the explosion at the Callide Power Station. I say to the Premier: release the Brady investigation's findings. Clearly he does not want Queenslanders to know what really happened on that fateful day. Under this Labor government's policy and failures in the electricity market, we know that once energy rebates run out Queenslanders are in for the most expensive power prices they have ever had.

I turn to health. In recent times there have been a number of announcements for new hospitals and upgrades, including at Biloela and Chinchilla. The Minister for Health has been spruiking the biggest health spend on record in Central Queensland, but in actual fact the increase from last year's budget will not even cover inflation. That means we will see a cut to the health spend in real terms in the region. It is another Labor cut to rural and regional health at a time when we are in need of more services. The budget does not outline how much money has been allocated for the upgrade to the Biloela Hospital and only \$3½ million has been allocated to the Chinchilla Hospital. That would hardly cover a lick of paint, so what exactly are they planning to build? At Biloela, construction was meant to start in a few weeks, yet it is not in the budget. Is this another broken promise?

I have been told by a source that Premier Miles is so proud to be downgrading our hospitals to bandaid-and-transfer stations. Some Premier this disgraceful member is! Only the LNP will heal the health crisis. The Moura Multipurpose Health Service aged-care extension should have been completed by early this year, but instead we have seen delay upon delay. Not a shovel has been moved on that critical project, which will deliver eight aged-care beds for Moura.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of Callide constituents and many others across rural Queensland need the support of the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. You would think that a government that claims it is doing what matters for Queensland would ensure that the program is fit for purpose and keeps up with inflation. It is a disgrace that this year's budget does not include an increase in funding for that critical program, likely because the Premier was too busy throwing around cash to buy votes. The processing times for the PTSS are disgraceful. Queenslanders are waiting months to get reimbursed for the travel they have undertaken to access basic health services. In many instances, they have to travel because Labor cut health care in the first place.

For all the money we spend on roads they should be gold plated, but drive across Callide and tell me how far that money has really gone. Road safety is incredibly important and, unfortunately, rural roads take the lives of Queenslanders at a far higher rate than in the south-east. We need to be doing more. My electorate has far too many roads that have been neglected for decades by Labor governments. Funding for the Warrego Highway has not kept up with the volume of traffic that now uses it. The Chinchilla Wondai Road is incredibly dangerous and urgently needs widening. It is only a matter of time before there is a death along that road if something is not done. The Leichhardt Highway, the Burnett Highway, the Dawson Highway, Auburn Road and the Fitzroy Developmental Road are just some of the many roads across Callide that are not getting the funding they need and deserve.

I welcome the commencement of sealing on the final stage of the Monto Mount Perry Road. This has been a multi-decade campaign. I thank everyone who has put in a significant effort over the years advocating for that road. Frankly, it should not have taken this long, but that is what happens when Queensland has a government that treats the bush second to Brisbane. The budget contains no

mention of widening 11 kilometres of the Mundubbera Durong Road to allow road train access to the North Burnett, creating freight hub opportunities. That would decrease freight costs for fresh produce, which would flow on to consumers. Twenty-five per cent of Australia's fresh produce is grown in the Wide Bay-Burnett region.

Callide has the most schools of any electorate in this state, so an honest government would ensure that Callide gets a decent portion of the funding, but no. Less than one per cent of the total education spend has been allocated to Callide. It is no wonder that we have schools with paint flaking off buildings and noncompliant facilities. What a disgrace!

There is not one new dollar in the budget for fire ant eradication despite their continued spread across Queensland. That is a key change of language, too. I used to be able to say 'South-East Queensland' but, alas, Labor has failed again and fire ants are now at Callide's back door. At the Jandowae Timbertown Festival I heard a telling comment about this program. Henry Palaszczuk was present at the first event in 2001. He said, 'Don't you worry about those fire ants. I have them under control.' The current minister, Minister Furner, has made similar comments dozens of times over the past decade. What has gone wrong?

The other day I had an epiphany: Labor makes a mess of everything that it touches, so the best way to kill a project, a government system or anything for that matter is to get the Labor Party to try to help. I have worked out the secret to success: Labor needs to try to protect and spread fire ants and they will be extinct in a matter of months. We know that Minister Furner is the fire ants' friend. He just needs to try to be friends with them and they will run for the hills. Biosecurity is incredibly important but Labor has put the issue on the back foot once again. Agriculture is a vital resource for Queensland and Australia so we need to preserve it for our prosperity and for future generations.

The LNP has a bold vision for Queensland. We have a well-considered and comprehensive plan in major policy areas to get Queensland back on track. The first of these key reforms was announced in the House by the Leader of the Opposition today. As the youngest member of the House, I am proud to be part of a team that has a vision to take Queensland's home ownership rate from the worst in the nation to the highest in the space of a decade.

We will create a new \$2 billion infrastructure fund, which will be welcomed by many people in my electorate who have historical overlays. These people are currently unable to build their dream home because councils cannot afford the development required thanks to Labor's failure to support local government. We will re-establish the Productivity Commission. Its first point of business will be productivity in the construction industry. We know that far too much time is wasted and that Queenslanders are not getting value for money.

I am fortunate to be a home owner in my 20s, but I must say that if I had to live and work in Brisbane or other major regional centres this would not be the case in the current environment. I got into the market because I was a FIFO worker and could live in a rural town and still earn a good wage. I am proud to say that, as a young person, I am part of a team that will help other young people into their first home. We will abolish stamp duty for first home buyers who are buying and building a new home. If you want to build your first home, you will not pay stamp duty under an LNP government. We are abolishing that tax. We will raise the threshold for existing homes to \$700,000, gradually pushing up to \$800,000. This will save a first home buyer \$17,350. First home owners who continue to live in their home will no longer have any restrictions when it comes to earning a little income from rent to help them make their home ownership dream a reality. I know many people who have had to pay stamp duty or who have pulled out of a purchase because of this exact clause.

We will implement a buy local small and family business procurement policy to ensure that local small and family businesses are prioritised for local tenders. This is great for small business and the people of Callide. Of course, the Cabinet Housing Taskforce will call out bad government processes and red tape that hold up developments and progress.

Paradise Dam is the biggest infrastructure failure in Australia's history, all thanks to dodgy deals by a Labor government. In this budget Labor has not funded even one-fifth of the current expected cost to rebuild Paradise Dam. Frankly, the costs, we have been told, will not come close to what the final deal will be. I have been told that it will likely cost more than \$2 billion to rebuild, so not even 10 per cent of the total cost of this project has been allocated by Labor. It is their mess and now they are walking away from their promise to clean it up.

I would love to have contributed to the Suncorp-Metway merger bill but, unfortunately, we have a lazy Labor government which, rather than giving enough sitting days to get through the legislation on the agenda, crams bills together and removes the opportunity for elected members of this House to properly contribute. Banks need to look after rural Queensland and keep local services.

The Miles government has no shame when it comes to stripping away funding, core services and prosperity from rural and regional Queensland with another budget for Brisbane. I am not going to stand here and let it happen without a fight. Queensland is going down the gurgler under the watch of the Palaszczuk-Miles Labor government. I will not stand here and let it happen. If we want to see prosperity return to our state, there is only one thing to do: back in a party that has the right priorities for Queensland's future and show Labor the door in 2024.