




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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**

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.59 pm): I rise to address the cognate debate on the appropriation bills 2024-25. This is the 10th consecutive state budget delivered by the Labor government. This year's Labor budget is one focused on the next four months, not the next four years and beyond. It is abundantly clear that this state budget is only for Labor's re-election, not for Queensland's future. Whilst the cost-of-living relief measures contained in this budget are needed and certainly welcomed by Queenslanders, they have become necessary because of Labor's service delivery failures and Labor's public policy failures. Never before has a Queensland government taxed more, spent more and borrowed more with less to show for it.

When the Labor state government was first elected in 2015, debt was \$72 billion. A decade later and this latest state budget reveals that debt will hit \$172 billion over the forward estimates. That is \$100 billion more debt after 10 state Labor budgets.

The attempts by the Labor state government to erase its abysmal track record and tell Queenslanders to simply ignore the last decade of Labor failures is nothing short of farcical and absurd. Queenslanders will not forget the last decade of this Labor government's 'Labornomics', featuring economic mismanagement, broken promises, project management failures and multibillion dollar blowouts that this Labor Premier and Labor Treasurer have signed off on each and every year, not only in their current roles but in previous ministerial portfolios.

We have previously seen important fiscal principles abandoned when Labor implemented its shameful smoke-and-mirrors budget exercise including when Labor shifted general government debt on to Queensland's government owned corporations, including our electricity and energy companies, not to mention Labor's cheap cash grab by raiding \$4 billion from the long service leave and superannuation entitlements of public servants. In 2021, Labor suddenly accepted a valuation of the titles registry of \$8 billion—more than double what it was just a year earlier.

We have also seen the state Labor government break its core promise to Queenslanders—made 26 times during the 2020 state election campaign—that there would be no new or increased taxes or charges. Since the last state election, this Labor state government has overseen six new taxes in a cost-of-living crisis, including a patient's tax and a renter's tax. The fact is that each state budget that Labor has delivered over the last decade has been one that has been more focused on the political survival of the Labor Party, rather than delivering a sustainable economic plan for the future of Queensland.

As the Liberal National Party's shadow minister for education, I now wish to turn to the \$20.9 billion in funding that has been allocated in the 2024-25 state budget for the education portfolio in Queensland. I note that this year funding has been allocated for various measures, including Labor's

Putting Queensland Kids First package. The fact is that this significant allocation must be delivered because it is what is required to clean up the mess that has been created by the Labor state government over the last decade.

Whilst this Labor state government might want to pretend that it is putting Queensland kids first, the fact is that over the last decade they have been putting students and children last. Despite what the Labor state government says it will do for students and teachers over the next four years, Labor's broken promises and litany of failures mean that Labor simply cannot be trusted.

At the 2020 state election, the Labor government made an unequivocal election promise to Queenslanders that Labor would hire 6,190 new teachers and 1,139 new teacher aides. As the latest public sector workforce profile reveals, there has only been a net increase of 1,054 new teachers and teacher aides since 2020, representing an increase of just 1.81 per cent.

Given such an abysmal track record, Labor's additional promises in this state budget for hundreds more teachers and teacher aides cannot be taken seriously. As the Liberal National Party has uncovered this year, Labor's teacher exodus has seen more than 12,300 teachers and teacher aides leave the profession between 2020 and 2023, with teacher resignations up 55 per cent since 2020.

I also want to address the statement issued by the Labor Minister for Education this week saying that important work has only now begun by this Labor government on 'developing a long-term, sector-wide workforce strategy to look at how Queensland can attract, recruit and retain school staff'. Our teachers are suffering under a Labor state government that has failed to properly resource our schools and manage teacher workloads. Labor has also overseen a broken behavioural management system whilst also failing to deliver a safe working environment for our teachers.

Annual WorkCover payments to teachers and staff for physical and psychological injuries have risen 135 per cent since the start of the state Labor government. We are also seeing in our primary and secondary schools more than 43 students being suspended or excluded each and every school day for drugs and weapons incidents. These are the facts that truly show how Labor has put Queensland kids last for the past decade, allowing at-risk students to fall through the cracks and further exacerbate Queensland's youth crime crisis.

Government members interjected.

Dr ROWAN: I know they do not like hearing the facts, but they need to hear the facts. Under this state Labor government, from 2015 to 2023 total student disciplinary absences have risen by over 17 per cent; short suspensions are up by 18.5 per cent; long suspensions are up by over 16 per cent; and, shockingly, exclusions have skyrocketed by 20 per cent. Labor has failed our kids and hardworking teachers for far too long. In contrast, it is only the Liberal National Party that has the right priorities for Queensland's future. The Liberal National Party will fix Labor's broken student behavioural management framework, provide better teacher resources, restore standards and accountability, and implement a zero tolerance approach to violence in our schools.

As the Liberal National Party's shadow minister for the arts, I must note that, despite repeated commitments made by this Labor state government that the new performing arts venue at QPAC would be delivered on time and on budget, this year's state budget has revealed an extraordinary blowout of \$9 million, with reports that the new Queensland Theatre now will not be open until the end of 2025.

Despite record health budgets announced each and every year under this decade-old Labor government, what Queenslanders are experiencing each and every day is record ambulance ramping at over 45 per cent, a record surgical waiting list of over 60,000 Queenslanders who are waiting for life-saving and life-changing procedures, and a record waitlist of over 290,000 Queenslanders just to see a medical specialist.

The Labor government still has no credible plan for improving patient flow and implementing clinical re-design and no capacity to build the health workforce that is needed for Queensland's future. If Labor were serious about doing what matters, Labor would make a proper and informed diagnosis before offering a substandard second opinion.

We have seen all of this before during the Beattie, Bligh and Palaszczuk Labor governments and now under the Miles Labor government—poorer clinical outcomes and, in many instances, resultant patient harm which is occurring in a number of Queensland hospitals. That is the legacy of Labor here in Queensland.

As the state member for Moggill, I fight each and every day on behalf of local residents for the services and infrastructure that they deserve. The electorate of Moggill is where I grew up. It is where I am raising my family. It is where my children attended primary school and where they continue to play sport. It is a place that I am proud to call home.

I know what the priorities of local residents are for the electorate of Moggill because each and every day I am working collaboratively with our local community organisations, schools, sporting clubs, small businesses and local residents on the infrastructure and services that they want implemented as a part of a future David Crisafulli led Liberal National Party state government—an LNP state government which has a vision and a comprehensive plan to deliver for the western suburbs of Brisbane.

Through this work and my consistent and strong advocacy, particularly through parliamentary work here in the Queensland parliament, extensive ministerial correspondence, sponsored petitions and meetings with various departments and governmental representatives, I have ensured that the state Labor government has been kept comprehensively and extensively informed as to what specifically must be funded and delivered for local residents of the electorate of Moggill.

I am pleased that, as result of my continued strong advocacy as the local state member for Moggill, I have secured in this budget \$7.7 million to be spent in the coming 2024-25 financial year for additional specialist classrooms at Kenmore South State School, as well as \$960,000 for amenities upgrades at our local Upper Brookfield State School.

I note that \$10 million has been allocated for upgrades for the Moggill Ferry Road—the river road to the Brisbane River—benefiting local Moggill Ferry users, by improving drainage, pavement stabilisation and strengthening. There is also \$26.1 million to be spent in this financial year for projects under Seqwater’s Mount Crosby flood resilience program. Despite the inclusion of the \$277 million for the Mount Crosby-Warrego Highway interchange project in this state budget, just \$2.7 million will be spent this coming financial year, meaning local residents will have to wait even longer before a comprehensive and safe solution can be delivered.

Similarly, whilst the Moggill Road cycleway project is included in the budget, there remains no practical action taken by this Labor state government to progress important cyclist safety initiatives for local residents. It must also be noted that the funding that has been allocated for this project in the state budget is less than the \$12.5 million in state funding that was redirected by the Labor government from the Kenmore roundabout upgrade project when Labor cut this entire upgrade.

It is clear that this Labor state government has again failed to listen to local residents of the electorate of Moggill and western suburbs of Brisbane and ignored the critical infrastructure and additional services that must be delivered. An integrated road and public transport plan for the western suburbs of Brisbane, with comprehensively funded solutions to ease traffic congestion and improve public and active transport services, with cyclist and pedestrian safety prioritised, has still not been delivered by this state Labor government, and it clearly never will be delivered by the Labor-Greens coalition of chaos.

Labor has absolutely failed to provide local residents with the openness and transparency that they deserve on government funding, including the state Labor government’s specific plans to reduce congestion and improve cyclist and pedestrian safety on Moggill Road. This Labor government stands condemned for its continued failure to prioritise and address genuine safety concerns at the Our Lady of the Rosary intersection of Almay Street, Kenmore Road and Moggill Road through to Kilkivan Avenue. I have also repeatedly called for the extension of the 444 bus service to the Moggill District Sports Park and the Moggill Ferry and for the state Labor government to increase public transport service timetables, including additional 443 services, and extending other public transport routes, including to Karana Downs. Further, enhanced footpath and pedestrian infrastructure along Moggill Road and Mount Crosby Road, including key pedestrian travel points through Pullenvale, Pinjarra Hills and Mount Crosby and a dedicated footpath to the Moggill District Sports Park still must be delivered.

I have also repeatedly called on this state Labor government to fully fund a new high school to service families in the electorate of Moggill. The refusal of Labor to provide this vital additional school infrastructure for desperate families shows that neither Labor nor the Greens political party can be taken seriously in terms of supporting families and the educational needs of students in the electorate of Moggill and the western suburbs of Brisbane. The state Labor government should also fully fund school infrastructure for every local state school in accordance with various school strategic infrastructure plans.

An allocation of funding to support the important work being undertaken by the Brisbane City Council in designing, developing and delivering a new community and neighbourhood facility at 98 Brookfield Road to better support the vital work of local community and not-for-profit organisations has again not been prioritised by the state Labor government. I also again take this opportunity to call on the Queensland state government to allocate specific additional and dedicated funding for local environment and creek catchment groups in the electorate of Moggill to support ongoing and vitally important efforts to preserve, maintain and rehabilitate our local environment and creek catchments. I

wish to again reiterate my calls for enhanced police, ambulance, fire and emergency service resourcing for all residents in the electorate of Moggill, including the delivery of a dedicated ambulance station in Karana Downs.

It is an abject failure that the Greens political party intends to re-elect the Labor state government. The Greens political party is jeopardising community safety, threatening our economic prosperity and ultimately posing a serious threat to our national security and sovereignty. The last thing that Queensland needs is a Labor-Greens coalition of chaos that jeopardises the future prosperity and security of Queensland.

Budgets are all about priorities and, whilst cost-of-living relief is needed and welcomed, it cannot be ignored that for the last 10 consecutive state budgets this decade-old Labor government has failed to prioritise the vital and comprehensive infrastructure and services that residents of the electorate of Moggill deserve. The Liberal National Party has the right priorities for the electorate of Moggill and Queensland. We have already announced that we will introduce the Making Queensland Safer laws if elected to government in October of 2024 in order to deal with Labor's youth crime crisis. These laws will put the rights of victims of crime first, remove detention as a last resort, ensure consequences for actions by rewriting the Youth Justice Act, and deliver gold standard early intervention to turn young lives around.

The LNP has already announced a number of policies, including cheaper learner licences and the solar power policy for renters. Today the LNP has announced a comprehensive housing strategy to grow home ownership that includes: abolishing stamp duty for home buyers building their first home; a \$165 million shared equity scheme to help people with savings of at least two per cent to close the deposit gap and buy a home; and keeping the updated stamp duty concession threshold of \$700,000 for first home buyers purchasing existing properties.

The Liberal National Party has a range of other policies and funded announcements to be further released over the next four months prior to the 2024 state election. There is a better way with hope and opportunity for the future. Only the Liberal National Party has the right plan for Queensland's future.