




Speech By  
**Deb Frecklington**

**MEMBER FOR NANANGO**

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

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (8.14 pm): I rise to contribute to the budget debate. From the outset I, like many of my colleagues on this side, want to echo the words of the shadow Treasurer and many on this side that this Labor budget does not have the right priorities for Queensland's future. It is simply a budget for the next four months, not the next four years. It is obvious that not only the new Premier, who has been the deputy premier for many years, but also this decade-old and tired government has run out of ideas. In fact, those opposite are the same old government that has presided over the crises that we have in this great state, and it is not just us mentioning the crises. When I say 'the crises', there is the health crisis, the housing crisis, the crime crisis and the cost-of-living crisis. When it comes to my portfolio, we could even add the water crisis because, as I will get to in a minute—and it is wonderful that the Minister for Water is in the House—

**Mr Butcher:** I wouldn't miss it for the world!

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** I am sure. As I only have a short period of time in which to contribute to this debate, it is important to note that this is a budget where the government is trying extremely hard to tell Queenslanders about this bright, shiny, brand new government when in fact it has been in power for the past 10 years. The now Premier was a senior minister or deputy premier alongside the former premier, but now he is the Premier, so it is a little bit ironic that he is calling himself 'new', as are all members opposite. They are all part of this new, shiny government. All these 'new' people are part of this 'new' government, but they are the same old members. It has become very clear that this is a government that will say and do anything to stay in power.

While I am on my feet, I will say that it was wonderful to be in the Beaudesert-Scenic Rim area with you, Mr Deputy Speaker Krause, last week talking about those vital water projects that we know this government has completely walked away from. Of course, there is no bigger or greater crisis—and I think even Labor members said this—than the cost-of-living crisis. It is an issue that is front and centre for so many Queenslanders right now. Never before have Queenslanders faced such massive increases and rises. Look at car rego, water and electricity. When we look at last year's CPI data across 2023, there was a 6.7 per cent increase in health costs—highest in the nation; a 4.2 per cent increase in transport costs—highest in the nation; an 8.4 per cent increase in rent costs; an 18.5 per cent increase in insurance costs, and we know that that is because of the crime issues across the state; and a 7.4 per cent increase in sports participation costs.

Let me be very clear: the LNP will support any measures that will give Queenslanders relief from those ballooning bills, but where we differ from this government is a focus on driving real reform to lower the underlying costs of government services such as electricity and water. As the opposition leader mentioned, the LNP has already introduced a raft of policies aimed at lowering underlying costs Queenslanders pay such as the Supercharged Solar for Renters plan, saving renters over \$700 a year

on average on their household electricity bills. We have already announced cheaper learners' licences after the LNP led the campaign to reduce the cost of getting a learner driver's licence and forced the government to reduce that cost.

We announced free numberplate replacement for victims of crime. We have also announced that we will deliver a maintenance guarantee for our power plants which will put downward pressure on household electricity bills. We have also announced that we will invest in traffic congestion-busting infrastructure to get Queenslanders home sooner and safer, and of course using less fuel. This is critical in maximising productivity for businesses such as tradies who are constantly on the road, saving them valuable time and money from sitting in traffic.

We have announced an ambition to deliver resilience infrastructure to minimise the risk in times of natural disaster. Something that I am incredibly passionate about is that we will drive down the cost of water through better water security. This is just the start. There is so much more to come.

When it comes to energy, the LNP has a vision for an energy supply that is affordable, reliable and sustainable. We support a balance in the mix of generation sources to achieve just that. Secure baseload supply, such as coal and natural gas, is critical to the reliability right now on our network and it will underpin the shift to renewables. That is why it is so critical we get the Callide C4 unit fully returned to service. We know that the explosion that occurred under this government's watch has led to the power plant being offline, not totally offline, for more than three years. This is a failure that has driven up—

**Mr de Brenni:** Not totally.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** But it is not 100 per cent back yet, Minister, and we would like to see that. We would also like to see the full release of forensic engineer Sean Brady's report, because we know that this government and this minister are running a protection racket to hide it from the people of Queensland. We will continue to call for the release of that vital report. It is wonderful that the energy minister is here in the chamber, because he might hear that again and he might go, 'You know what, Deb? I'm going to release that report.' Wouldn't that be in the spirit of bipartisanship for the betterment of all Queenslanders! I look forward to that.

**Mr Weir:** He might release the business case for Pioneer-Burdekin.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** We would love to see the business case for Pioneer-Burdekin. I take that interjection from the member for Callide. It is important that we say the LNP supports hydro-electricity to provide—

**A government member:** Callide? Condamine.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Sorry, Condamine. The member for Callide was here. I will withdraw that. Pat, I will withdraw that. That was not fair.

We do support pumped hydro-electricity to provide clean energy on demand, like we support renewable energy. What we do not support, though, is this government's multibillion dollar fantasy—and that it is all it is because there is no money in the forwards; there is no money in the budget—that they call the Pioneer-Burdekin Pumped Hydro. The minister over there talks about his billion dollars in an equity account, but there is nothing in the budget that is going to build that project. We were the ones who were very quick to dub it the 'great hydro hoax', which people in the energy industry and, importantly, environmentalists have been claiming for a long while. The massive cost blowouts on this project will unavoidably drive up the price of power in Queensland. Let's remember: this is a project with no direct funding, no approvals and no social licence from the communities. That is why we have already announced that we will be ruling that out.

As shadow energy minister, I believe it is very important that we also ask those vitally important questions around Borumba Pumped Hydro. Where is the business case? What is it going to cost? How long is it going to take? What landholders will be impacted by the major transmission lines going out of Borumba? We have all of these questions and all we need to seek once again from this energy minister is the answers.

It is very important that all projects in Queensland, as the Leader of the Opposition spoke about today, are treated equally. When it comes to renewable energy, the LNP is committed to addressing the concerns relating to social licence and improving the livability of our rural and regional communities. We have consistently said that we must put our communities first. There are levers like better transparency around planning approvals, giving local government input into the decision-making, a code of conduct for proponents and contribution to rural and regional communities they operate in. These are the options that are on the table.

In relation to water, where is the money for Paradise Dam? Where is the dam wall going to be? What is happening? Where is the money? The water minister is in the chamber. We know that there are no other dam projects. We know that Emu Swamp Dam is not in the budget and neither is Barlil or many of the other dam projects. That is hugely disappointing.

When it comes to manufacturing, our state has so much opportunity. Disappointingly, manufacturing in Queensland has been abandoned once again by this manufacturing minister, as it has been for the last 10 years.

When it comes to the Nanango electorate, I can stand here and say that this is the worst budget that has ever been brought down for the Nanango electorate. There is absolutely nothing for the electorate besides two very minor road projects. There is absolutely nothing for the Tanduringie bridge, where a school bus full of children nearly went over the side.

There is absolutely nothing for the brand new Blackbutt Police Station, where there are six police officers working in a one-person station. It is unacceptable. We have Tanduringie Creek Bridge, GS Bond Bridge and Running Creek Bridge. None of those are in the budget. For the GS Bond Bridge on the Chinchilla Wondai Road there was a \$13 million big budget announcement by the then Palaszczuk government in 2019, but it has disappeared from QTRIP and has never come back.

The Running Creek Bridge on the Brooweena Woolooga Road actually burnt down after a car crash and there is still no funding for it in this budget. It seems that the safety of my community and rural and regional communities is obviously not a priority for this supposed 'new' Miles government. It has not been for the last 10 years either and it is extremely disappointing.

There is no funding for the Buaraba Creek intersection or the widening and sealing of the Killivan Tansey Road or the Memerambi Gordonbrook Road. There are no anti-hooning measures for the Somerset communities of Dundas and Coominya. These are two areas that are absolutely desperate for something to be done when it comes to localised hooning. I know that there are other members in this House who talk about this issue. Local residents have had enough of the blatant, frequent and ongoing hooning on their roads, but no money has been assigned for measures to stop this dangerous and antisocial activity.

When it comes to health, we have also missed out. I really wanted to see a commitment in this budget to the opening of the Kingaroy Hospital short-stay unit. This is a unit that the government keep talking about. They keep putting out press releases but, like the nurses and the doctors and the admin staff at Kingaroy Hospital keep telling me—I was only up there in the last couple of weeks with one of my very dear friends Rosie Schmidt, who sadly lost her life to that hideous disease cancer. I thank so many people of the Kingaroy community for their outpouring of love and care and affection to the Schmidt family and to her wider family. I want to see a commitment to the opening of that Kingaroy Hospital short-stay unit. I want to see funding for a paediatrician. I want to see funding for a dedicated palliative care nurse for the Kingaroy region. We just need a palliative care nurse in that area.

Our emergency services have also been completely overlooked. I will again talk about the Blackbutt Police Station. The Kingaroy Fire Station and the Goomeri Fire Station were both slated for upgrades but there is nothing in this budget. Let us remember that the Kingaroy Fire Station is going to transition to 24/7 permanent staffing, yet they do not have room for the current staffing model. I have written to the minister about that.

Our community deserves investment in long-term solutions for water security in the South Burnett—projects such as Barlil Weir and the Blackbutt irrigation scheme. We also know that many projects have been ignored such as the fixing and reopening of Seqwater's Cormorant Bay Cafe, a special education school for Kingaroy and flood gauges on Boonara Creek, which we have been calling for. These projects are my priority because they are the priority of my community.

In the time left there is still so much to talk about. We just do not have enough time. I have not even got to all of the amazing announcements, particularly in and around housing and getting young people in Queensland into homes. With this tired, decade-old government we need to make sure Queenslanders show Labor the door in 2024.