




Speech By
Jonty Bush

MEMBER FOR COOPER

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

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (10.40 pm): It is real privilege to be giving my fifth budget response speech in the House. I do not intend it to be my last, but I do want to take the opportunity to put on record what an absolute privilege it is to represent the good people of The Gap, Ashgrove, Paddington, Bardon, Kelvin Grove and Milton in this House and their remarks on the state Labor budget.

Budgets are opportunities for governments to lay out their priorities for Queenslanders, and Premier Miles's first budget prioritises what matters for Queenslanders. The greatest overarching priority that people speak to me about is cost-of-living relief. The reaction from people to our cost-of-living measures was so overwhelmingly supportive.

Fifty-cent public transport fares for all Queenslanders across all Translink services, no matter how far, is unheard of in this country. One of the issues we have in our electorate is the connectivity of some of our routes. As most know, route planning and frequency is a Brisbane City Council responsibility and not so much a state responsibility, but the local councils and I have been working together on that. Getting the patronage rate of people on public transport back up to pre-COVID levels is one of those key steps. I have been in the Premier's ear quite a bit about lowering public transport fares, so naturally I am thrilled for this announcement, as is everyone in my electorate, and I want to thank the Premier for responding to those calls.

Energy bills and car registrations are some of the larger household bills. I have heard from many people about the cycle of getting a little bit of savings behind you and then being slugged with a big electricity or rego bill, so our announcement to apply a \$1,000-plus credit to household power bills and reduce rego fees for all cars, motorbikes and trailers is a great announcement that will bring much relief to Queenslanders. Expanding the FairPlay vouchers to all Queensland children is fantastic.

This year's budget, a record \$21 billion in education, really focuses on bridging those gaps for students who do need additional supports at school. We are extending health checks to children in the early years because we know that undiagnosed or unaddressed health, learning or behavioural issues do impact on a child's ability to learn and can impact on the entire learning environment. Many families have spoken to me about their struggles with getting their children to school. A lot of this can come back to mental health struggles or learning disabilities. We have many families with autistic children or children with ADHD, ODD or GAD who are unable to get to school or to stay at school. This budget allocates \$1 billion over five years to deliver more teachers and teacher aides to help every student realise their potential, with a focus on those priority cohorts such as students with a disability. This is great. I will flag for the House my hope that we can expand some additional flexi schools or autism-specific schools into Brisbane's north-west. It is something I will continue to work on with the minister and my community.

Ensuring that Queensland women and girls are valued, included, prioritised, protected and celebrated is also a priority of mine, and I know it is something that matters to my neighbours also. I really have to commend Minister Fentiman on her relentless advocacy in her portfolio area as Minister for Women. The announcements she has made are genuinely exciting.

In contrast, I was underwhelmed by the budget reply by the Leader of the Opposition outlining his plans for a \$5,000 grant that women can apply for when returning to the workforce after having a baby. Women do not need handouts; we need respect. We need structural reform so that we are recognised as equals, which is why Labor's budget outlines a number of wideranging initiatives for Queensland women: paid parental leave, 10 days reproductive health leave and paid superannuation during that entire 52-week period of parental leave for public servants, funding to improve access and give women more choices in their reproductive health, improving access to termination-of-pregnancy health care, funding to kickstart the introduction of midwife-to-patient ratios across Queensland's public hospitals, and a \$3 million trial to help in health education programming in upper primary schools to increase access to contemporary puberty and menstruation education and access to period products. It is a great contrast to the commitments to women and girls made by the LNP, and it is important to reflect that many of the LNP members have been vocal in their commitment to actually wind back women's access to some of these programs.

The causes of climate change have occurred over generations; however, it falls to us as leaders and as a community to act now. Further delay of climate action will be catastrophic, and it is in that recognition that I entered parliament and have committed to being a strong advocate within the government on climate action. The environmental reform we have seen in this term, in particular the time that Steven has been Premier, is remarkable. We have developed and released our Energy and Jobs Plan and our plan for Queensland's transition to renewables. Queensland will decarbonise our energy sector. We have entrenched Queensland's renewable energy grid into law and enshrined three renewable energy targets of 50 per cent renewable energy by 2030, 70 per cent by 2032 and 80 per cent by 2035, and we have acted to lock in public ownership of energy assets and a world-first Job Security Guarantee and Fund. The fund ensures energy workers and existing publicly owned power stations and associated mines have access to new jobs and training or financial assistance during the transition. As Smart Energy Council Acting Chief Executive Wayne Smith said—

Queensland leads Australia in climate action—that's the truth and that's now the law.

...

It positions Queensland to be a Renewables and Critical Minerals Superpower, laying strong foundations for Queensland's economic future.

Finally, one of the consequences of Queensland being the great state we are is that we continue to attract tens of thousands of people each year, and we are seeing the consequences of that particularly in the housing space. We have to act with urgency on this. I have spoken already this week about Labor's plan to end homelessness by building one million homes by 2046, so I will not repeat that for the House. However, I will say that this budget is a strong Labor budget that reflects the diverse needs of a diverse Queensland, and I commend it to the House.