




Speech By  
**Laura Gerber**

**MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN**

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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**

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (4.17 pm): It could not be clearer: this Labor government will do and say anything to cling on to power. In a desperate bid to buy Queenslanders' votes they are throwing taxpayer money at short-term political sugar hits, hoping it will con Queenslanders into giving them a fourth term in government—when they have been in power for the last decade—but Queenslanders can see through it. Queenslanders know the truth. This is a desperate, decade-old Labor government under whose watch we have the health crisis, we have the youth crime crisis, we have the cost-of-living crisis and we have the housing crisis. They cannot be trusted to fix it. We have record numbers of Queenslanders sleeping in tents, record numbers of victims of crime, record ambulance ramping and record numbers of Queenslanders struggling to make ends meet.

These are not records this government is proud of. In fact, do not take my word for it: the Treasurer himself is telling Queenslanders to forget their record. Do not judge them on their record. Why? Because they know they are responsible for all of the crises that Queenslanders are living through. Over the past decade Premier Miles was the planning minister responsible for the housing crisis, he was the health minister responsible for the health crisis and, as much as they want to forget it, he was Annastacia Palaszczuk's Deputy Premier, her right-hand man, responsible for every bad decision the Palaszczuk government made over the last decade.

For those opposite to now stand in this House and try to say they are 'new' is utterly laughable, but they are actually being serious. Treasurer Dick and this decade-old Labor government are seriously telling Queenslanders, 'No, no, don't judge us on our past. Don't judge us on our record. We're brand spanking new.' They have been in power for almost a decade and their past actions have led to the crises that Queenslanders are facing today. This is not a new government, there is no new leadership and Queenslanders will not be fooled, because guess what? You cannot erase a decade of failures, and the only thing that Queenslanders need to ask themselves to understand is this: are things better or worse for me right now than they were 10 years ago? Are things better or worse when it comes to youth crime? A decade ago we did not have teens walking the streets with machetes. We did not have teens driving cars towards our police. We did not have over 80,000 victims of crime. We did not have over 20,000 cars stolen, and we did not have almost 50,000 homes and businesses broken into.

Since 2015 under this Labor government we have seen a 213 per cent increase in the number of victims of crime. To put that into perspective, a decade ago that number sat at just above 25,000. Now, under this Labor government, it sits at 81,000 victims of crime, and they are only the victims of personal crime because this Labor government does not count property crime. These are not just numbers; these are real people suffering very real consequences because almost a decade ago this Labor government watered down our laws and created a generation of repeat young offenders and a youth crime crisis that is ripping through our state. However, in delivering this budget, the Treasurer told Queenslanders not to express an opinion about the past. 'No, no, don't look at our record. Don't

look at the pain caused by the youth crime crisis.' Telling victims to forget about the pain that has been caused to them as a result of the youth crime perpetrated on them beggars belief. These victims matter, their experiences matter and the reality is real for them.

There are more victims of crime in Queensland right now than ever before, yet this budget revealed few new measures to tackle the youth crime crisis. Victims will be really disappointed to learn that this budget still does not prioritise what they have been calling for. Voice for Victims has called for much better support for victims of crime to navigate through the criminal justice system—in particular, for case workers to connect victims with relevant government agency services, including psychological and pastoral support. A number of victims have come to me and said that the system has let them down, that they did not feel supported through the court process and that they did not know about or get the financial assistance they are entitled to. Victims want a consistent point of contact who can support them and explain how they can exercise their rights, someone who can address their individual needs, including through referrals to services, regardless of whether or not they choose to engage in the criminal justice system. Those who do so choose want a service with a consistent point of reference to help them navigate the criminal justice system.

Russell Field is another victim of crime who has been a really strong advocate in this space. He has consistently called for victims' families to be helped from day one with every aspect related to the impact the crime has had on them, ranging from the smallest to the largest issue, because he did not receive this support. None of the support was explained to him or his family and he was unaware what assistance could be provided to him while he was going through the horror, the trauma and the shock of losing his loved ones. He said that it appeared that more support was available for the perpetrators than for victims. This needs to change, and I could not agree with him more. Victims need care from the beginning, and there are clearly gaps in the system that must be addressed.

What is also absent from this budget is capital funding for the much needed Cairns youth detention centre. Instead, the government has a line item there with no funding, saying that it is subject to commercial negotiations. What this really means is that it is not ready to answer the question of where the Cairns detention centre will go. The Miles Labor government is more worried about the upcoming election than being honest with the people of Cairns about where it is going to put the detention centre. Those opposite are using the cover of commercial-in-confidence to hide the detail of this project and any funding associated with it from the Cairns community. I guess there is another possibility: maybe they are hiding the detail because they have not done the work to get this project up and running on time. Given the appalling watch house crisis where children are being held in watch houses for weeks, this project needs to be a priority. The LNP believes in consequences for actions, but we are also committed to making detention matter. Without facilities that provide the necessary services to young people to rehabilitate them and to get them back on the right track, we will continue to see crime spiral out of control.

The LNP, if given the chance, will introduce the Making Queensland Safer laws. We will rewrite the Youth Justice Act. We will remove detention as a last resort. We will put the rights of victims before the rights of offenders, and we will ensure that consequences for actions are embedded in the Youth Justice Act. However, it is not fair to keep the people of Cairns in the dark on this important project. The government must come clean on where the detention centre will go and must give the people of Cairns the information in relation to this project.

**Mr Sullivan** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Krause): Member for Stafford, you have had a pretty good go all afternoon. Your interjections are not being taken. Please desist.

**Mrs GERBER:** I want to address a really important announcement for Queensland but particularly for my community on the Gold Coast—that is, our plan to get Queenslanders into home ownership. The LNP's Securing our Housing Foundations plan will put Queensland at the top of the nation when it comes to home ownership. The threshold for first home buyers to be exempt from stamp duty has not moved in over nine years. Under this Labor government that threshold has sat at \$500,000, so a first home buyer who wants to be exempted from stamp duty has to buy a home for less than \$500,000. With an election on the doorstep, the LNP welcomes the Labor Party's change of heart in this regard. The LNP will also raise the threshold for existing homes to \$700,000, gradually phasing out at \$800,000, which will save a first home buyer \$17,350 on the purchase of an existing home.

Let us face it: people cannot realistically buy a property on the Gold Coast for under \$700,000. The median house price on the Gold Coast is over \$1 million. The LNP recognises this. That is why we will abolish the cap on new builds and new homes. Therefore, a first home buyer who builds or buys a new home will not pay any stamp duty—not a cent. That is not all: we will boost the rental market so that first home buyers can rent a room out in that house straightaway. Right now, under this Labor

government, a first home buyer cannot do that. We will open that door by not only making it easier for first home buyers to get into the market but also reducing the rental stress. I know that this will help the people in my electorate realise their dream of owning their own home and will help ease the rental crisis.

We will also close the gap for young Queenslanders who do not have access to the bank of mum and dad with Queensland's very own shared equity scheme for 1,000 homes. We will also unlock the homes needed by delivering one million homes by 2044. It is all part of the LNP's Securing our Housing Foundations plan. For years Queensland has lagged at the bottom of the home ownership ladder but, under the LNP, Queensland will go to the top.

I also want to address what this budget means for us on the southern Gold Coast, and it is not good news. While many of the Labor seats have had money thrown at them, the Gold Coast has been forgotten. The Tallebudgera State School community did not get the parking it needed out of the budget. Our sporting clubs missed out too. While many Labor electorates were pork-barrelled with sporting commitments and announcements, every single one of the sporting clubs in Currumbin missed out. The Currumbin Eagles need a new change room for their girls and our wonderful Tugun Seahawks need a new deck. Neither of them received funding for those things.

Then there is the promised upgrade for the Currumbin Creek Road and Bienvenue Drive intersection. For the last four years, this state government has promised to deliver that. Guess what: it is not in this budget, either. It looks like we will not be getting that. There is another broken promise.

We do know that Labor have committed to continuing to railroad our community when it comes to light rail. They are going to bulldoze our police station and our courthouse in Coolangatta, but guess what is not in this budget. There is no money to find or build a new courthouse or a new police station. The Currumbin Wildlife Hospital missed out as well. There is no money in this budget for their world-leading research and training precinct. As for the Currumbin Eco-Parkland, there is only \$9.4 million in the budget for this—for a project that is meant to cost around \$29 million. It looks like that is not happening under this state Labor government either.

Then there is the M1 upgrade. In 2020 the state Labor government promised it would be completed in 2023. Well, it is 2024 and we are still stuck in traffic on the M1. Not only that, but the cost has blown out to \$1.5 billion. That is a \$500 million increase. It could not be clearer. The Labor government has completely given up on delivering for our community.

Lastly, I want to address the Labor announcement in relation to a cross-border commissioner. It is great to see Labor's change of heart in relation to a cross-border commissioner for Queensland. This is something for which my community has been calling out for years. In fact, it was an LNP commitment in 2020 that we would get a cross-border commissioner.

**Mr Nicholls:** It was 2017.

**Mrs GERBER:** 2017! I campaigned on it in 2020, but I take the interjection from the shadow Attorney-General. Throughout the COVID restrictions I pleaded with the Premier to give us a cross-border commissioner, but what did the then premier say when I asked whether they would give us a Queensland cross-border commissioner? The then premier stated that Queensland was 'without the need for a specific additional officer'. Oh, how their tune has changed on the eve of an election! On the eve of an election, after failing to listen to our community for years and years, they have finally said that they are going to deliver a cross-border commissioner. It is too late for the members of my community who were stuck across the border and who needed the help of a cross-border commissioner during COVID. It is too late for the small businesses who went to the wall during COVID because they did not have a cross-border commissioner. It is too late for all of those people, but on the eve of an election they say, 'Yeah, sure, we'll announce that.'

This is a desperate, decade-old Labor government trying to hold onto power—desperately clinging, saying and doing anything to buy votes so that Queenslanders will give them another four years in power. They have had 10 years—a decade—to do these things and they have not done them. Queenslanders will not be fooled. We need to show Labor the door in 2024.