




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms ASIF** (Sandgate—ALP) (2.54 pm): This LNP government has just delivered a budget that is all slogans and smiles with no real action or vision. A budget would have been the perfect opportunity for the government to show Queenslanders they understand the pressures facing our communities, but that opportunity has been squandered. Instead, we have been presented with broken promises while those struggling the most have been abandoned. It fails to address housing pressures and will only see their declared health crisis continue. It fails to provide the real, targeted cost-of-living relief that Queensland families desperately need. In short, the government has turned its back on the issues that Queenslanders—people in my community—are calling for them to address.

In his speech, the Treasurer said the budget would deliver for every corner of Queensland. Apparently, he has forgotten where Sandgate is because this budget does absolutely nothing for my community—it does nothing for our schools, it delivers nothing for health services and does nothing to improve public transport infrastructure in our community. Imagine my surprise at that after I hand-delivered a Sandgate budget submission to the Treasurer on behalf of the electorate—a submission which was informed by 30 mobile offices and extensive consultation which showed where Sandgate residents would like to see investment. For the 54,499 people from my electorate who live and work on the north side, this would have been an opportunity for the government to invest in local schools and clubs, to expand local health services and to deliver the necessary transport infrastructure upgrades needed. But, as usual, the LNP government has proven how out of touch they are with the needs of Queenslanders.

While members of the government may look at themselves in the mirror and lie about 50-cent fares and the FairPlay vouchers being their initiatives, they cannot trick the people out there. The people out there know that every single positive initiative—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Whiting): One moment, member. You have used an unparliamentary term. I ask you to withdraw.

Ms ASIF: I withdraw. Every single positive initiative in this government's budget is a Labor initiative. They simply presented Queensland with Labor's homework with a blue sticker on it saying, 'Same same, but different.' Rather than investing in cheaper energy, cost-of-living relief and transport infrastructure, they are choosing to invest in changing Queensland's colours. Mind you, we still do not know how much of taxpayers' money was wasted on that.

Housing pressures continue to be a serious concern within my community. Queenslanders are in desperate need of new public and affordable housing to support low-income earners as well as increased housing supply to bring down the cost to both renters and prospective homebuyers. There is not much in the government's budget that achieves this. It is shocking that the government can come in here and pretend as though they have not already axed almost 1,000 affordable homes. Someone should probably tell them that cutting housing supply is not fixing a housing crisis. It is just another broken promise with catastrophic effects on the lives of people in our communities.

In my electorate, Kathy from Bracken Ridge had her rent recently raised by \$150, despite significant damage to the property which prevented her from entering certain rooms. After contesting this increase, she has been handed a notice to leave. With no private rentals available, Kathy is now facing homelessness. When it comes to helping prospective homebuyers, the LNP's Boost to Buy incentive does little to support single mothers. In my community, Kylie, a single mother of three, has escaped domestic violence and receives no financial support from her ex-partner and no longer owns any property. Because she is not a first home buyer, she does not qualify for any government assistance. She is unable to get a loan at the bank due to her financial circumstances and remains locked out of the housing market. Despite promises to both renters and to vulnerable women, people like Kathy and Kylie fall through the cracks of this budget.

I will be the first to admit that support for first home buyers is fantastic, but I cannot praise the government's Boost to Buy incentive. Why? Because it only helps 1,000 people. On average, over 20,000 Queenslanders enter the first home buyer market every year, so how will these 1,000 people be selected? Is there a criteria? When does it open? All we have heard is you can register from July but there is no other information and, again, it only helps 1,000 of the over 20,000 people who are looking to enter the housing market every year. With increased homelessness and hardship comes great strain on our community groups and we need the government to support the services that are supporting the most vulnerable in our community. Again, there is little in the budget for that.

It is disappointing, but not surprising, that the budget fails to present comprehensive cost-of-living relief. When Labor was in government, Queenslanders could count on targeted cost-of-living relief for their everyday needs. Incentives like 20 per cent off car registration and \$1,000 electricity bill rebates had a real impact for families in our communities. This week the LNP have let those families down by abolishing the \$1,000 rebates. They have increased car registration and are failing to provide any alternatives. The LNP government's interpretation of 'targeted cost-of-living relief' is quite laughable. Whilst their \$100 primary school student vouchers are welcome, pointing to them as proof of comprehensive relief is not acceptable. Families have reached out to me and said 'that does not even cover the cost of our child's school uniform'. Not only will this relief only go to families with primary school children; it does not cover much. It is a credit at the school. It is not cash in their hands to put food in the kids' lunch boxes or to put shoes on their feet. They will not be able to go out and look for the most affordable options to buy the stationery. It is a credit that goes to the schools and \$100, quite frankly, does not go far enough for those families.

Sean, a Sandgate resident, reached out to me. He said that as a middle-aged middle-income earner he finds this budget particularly disappointing. He is frustrated by the lack of support for people like him. Despite the rising cost of living affecting everyone, there is little in the budget for Sean. Right now, Queenslanders are feeling left behind. Under Labor everyone saw the \$1,000 electricity bill rebate but, unfortunately, the LNP are not continuing that. What they do not understand is that the loss of this rebate has a direct impact on people in my community like Lenice. Lenice, who lives in public housing in Sandgate, said her daughter requires significant medical equipment which includes an electric wheelchair. As a result, her electricity costs are quite high. Last year, Labor's rebate meant that she could pay the bill. Lenice told me she is terrified of getting her next bill because she does not know if she will be able to afford it. The Premier promised Queenslanders that energy bills would be down, they would be cheaper, but that is not the reality of this budget. This government is built on broken promises which are impacting real people in our communities.

The demand for additional health services is rising on the north side. Across the Sandgate electorate demographics have changed to see older residents living alongside younger families. With this change, we have seen an increase in the need for additional health services which both are affordable and target the needs of our growing community. Health care is a right. It is essential, and everyone in our community deserves access to suitable and affordable care. The Sandgate electorate needs a new nurse-led clinic—an investment I advocated for in my budget submission to the Treasurer. Again, this was ignored. This clinic would have provided bulk-billed and accessible health services and adequate care where it is not possible to see a GP. Disappointingly, again, it was not provided. This clinic would help to ease pressure at the Redcliffe and Prince Charles emergency departments and allow Sandgate residents like Marilyn who have mobility issues to access free health care closer to home. The clinic would have helped many in Brighton, where two GP clinics have recently closed. They currently travel to Rothwell or Scarborough for medical care—an impossible public transport commute, particularly for elderly residents.

This may seem like a simple fact, but I would like to remind the government that without nurses our healthcare system cannot function. At the core of the healthcare system is hardworking health workers—another group of Queenslanders this government has offended and let down. Health workers

deserve job security and fair pay but this government simply refuses to come to the table. Nurses like Anju, Cameron and Usha in my electorate, who work incredibly hard to provide care for our local community, deserve to be paid fairly, but, instead, nurses are being treated appallingly by this government. They have the nerve to boast about incentives and investments in health while at the same time telling hardworking nurses that they will not agree to reasonable demands for better pay and conditions.

The only hint of new investment in north side health care is a mention to continue Labor's Redcliffe Hospital and Prince Charles Hospital expansions. However, when it comes to the Redcliffe Hospital the budget fails to outline any timeframes for delivery or any details about this much needed expansion. All of the other northside health care wins that they are claiming seem to just be Labor coopted projects with extended delays.

It is a huge relief to see Labor's 50-cent fares will remain. This has helped many in my electorate of Sandgate. Without making public transport easier to access in the community, it becomes difficult for people to use this incentive. We need to have appropriate bus and train services with connections that actually work. Without investment in more bus services in outer suburbs—something I specifically requested again in the Sandgate budget submission—commuters will continue to struggle with inadequate connections and long travel times.

Currently, for locals to travel between suburbs like Fitzgibbon and Deagon or Brighton, a five-kilometre journey, it takes about 40 minutes or more. This is a challenge for many like Mick in Brighton, who is vision impaired, and 75-year-old Savita from Fitzgibbon, who recently shared with me that she visits her husband at the Regis in Sandgate every day. Without a car she has two options: a 42-minute journey or a 50-minute journey with a 1.6-kilometre trek. What should be a nine-minute drive is an over 50-minute ordeal for Savita. I promised her I would raise this with the Treasurer—which I have—but, unfortunately, I will be returning to Fitzgibbon with little to share with her.

Investment in education is key. Like many migrants, I moved to Australia as a child and spoke no English. I was taught by incredible teachers. Without them, I would not be here to speak in this parliament today. Whilst this government was praising itself on its mediocre budget on Tuesday night, teachers were rallying outside this place calling for the fair pay and conditions that they desperately need and deserve. If we want well-educated children to make up the Queensland of tomorrow, we must encourage people to be teachers and give them a reason to be teachers. This government shows how it really feels about our public servants by refusing to treat them with the respect that they deserve. When hundreds of teachers rally outside because they cannot afford to live, when nurses plan industrial action because the government refuses to negotiate fairly, and when the state faces an \$8 billion deficit with nothing to show for it there is no-one to blame but this chaotic government. Whilst the LNP pat themselves on the back for a truly unremarkable budget, Queenslanders in my electorate and beyond continue to struggle. They have tried to prevent public criticism by keeping Labor's 50-cent fare initiative, the FairPlay sports vouchers and the \$30,000 first home buyer initiative, but these are a smokescreen attempting to disguise the cuts and deficits that truly underpin this budget.

A better future is not something that just happens; it is something we have to work towards. It is something we build by being ambitious and by being bold. This budget lacks any vision, any ambition and any boldness to make this a greater state. Queenslanders deserve a government that allows them to build on their aspirations. Queenslanders should be able to afford to live and afford to dream. That is something I will keep fighting for.