




Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

Record of Proceedings, 26 June 2025

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

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (3.28 pm): I rise to speak to the budget. I want to make an initial point following the last speaker. For a government that had no plan there sure are a lot of our plans copied and reproduced in this budget. It must have been some 'no plan' because I see the same plan repeated here, but I digress.

This budget reduces the cost-of-living support for millions of Queenslanders. It is a budget that cuts billions from congestion-busting programs. It is a budget that will make people wait longer for medical treatment. It is a budget that does nothing to solve the shortage of social and affordable housing. It is a budget that will make it harder for Queenslanders to get around. It is a budget that will make it harder for Queenslanders to get ahead.

I do agree with the Leader of the Opposition: all that is good in this budget has come from Labor. We welcome that. It is the same with the capital program—as the Leader of the Opposition said, it was ours but now there is less of it. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the biggest things missing from this budget are the comprehensive cost-of-living relief measures. There is no doubt that costs are continuing to rise for ordinary working Queenslanders. As the Deputy Leader of the Opposition said, car rego is set to jump 24 per cent soon. Energy bill relief was critical—it is still critical. I remember that people lit up when we introduced the \$300 electricity bill relief. They were so happy about it. Then we brought in that extra \$700 a year. There was genuine relief. People sighed with relief when they heard that. Some people were overjoyed. Ordinary working Queenslanders were really happy to have this structural support. When ordinary working Queenslanders need someone to back them, to open up the opportunity they need, to make sure there are good hospitals, to make sure there are good schools for their kids, it is Labor who will stand with them, not the rich donors who want to control the movement of government that we see with the other side.

This is a government built on broken promises. The Premier said that his word would mean something. He said, 'When I say something, it means something.' He also said that energy bills would be cheaper. He said that debt would be lower. He said that there would be 2,200 new hospital beds by 2028. He promised that heavy rail would be delivered all the way to Maroochydore by 2032—no ifs, no buts, no shortcuts. The Premier also promised to treat First Nations people with respect. He promised there would be no new stadiums. As I said, this is a government and a budget built on broken promises.

This budget confirms what Queenslanders have known for a while: the LNP is not truly committed to building the health infrastructure—the hospitals—that Queenslanders need now. This budget provides more questions than answers. There are no timeframes for the delivery of major hospital builds and expansions—no timeframes. All over the state the question is being asked: when will the new and expanded hospitals be built? There are no answers in this budget.

I also want to talk about what this budget means for my community. The word that I have here is 'disappointment'. It is clear that we will not see the widening of Deception Bay Road anytime soon. The Deception Bay Road widening project will be pushed back years under the LNP, following their decision

not to include it in any future roads programs. This is the second time that an LNP government has either cut or ignored this project. The Campbell Newman government removed it from QTRIP entirely. About \$400 million worth of projects were cut, and that was after planning work had already commenced. When I was a councillor, they showed me concept plans of what it would look like. When I became an MP, I asked, 'Where are we with the Deception Bay Road widening program?' and they said it had been cut; it was gone. Can you imagine how much it would have cost to build back then? Certainly it would have cost a fraction of what it will cost now.

A government member: What about the last 10 years?

Mr WHITING: I am getting there. Goodness me, do I have a story for you! It meant that this project needed to go back to the end of the queue. As the local member, I have fought for years for this project and last year I secured a \$20 million commitment for the detailed design and early works if Labor were re-elected, and that was on top of a commitment for funding four years earlier for the preliminary planning and design. After years of work and getting it closer to being on the roads program, I have to do it all again because this project has been ignored by the LNP. Once again, this project is back to the end of the queue.

It is not just my constituents who have been disappointed about the transport projects that they will not see; Sunshine Coast residents who voted for the LNP are still processing why they are getting a bus route instead of a rail line. The Premier promised that heavy rail would be delivered all the way to Maroochydore by 2032—no ifs, no buts, no shortcuts—but all they have is a bus route. The member for Kawana may dress it up any way he likes, but they made a promise and they broke it. I have a document here with some lovely social media tiles that shows this. On 13 May 2024 David Crisafulli said, 'No ifs, no buts, no shortcuts—only the LNP will build Sunshine Coast heavy passenger rail all the way to Maroochydore.' On 29 January 2025 the *Courier-Mail* stated—

... Jarrod Bleijie has walked back on a commitment to finishing the Sunshine Coast Rail...

I love this picture of the member for Buderim with some DL flyers that say, 'Heavy passenger rail all the way to Maroochydore.' That is something the new transport minister will need to deal with. I table that document.

Tabled paper: Bundle of extracts from articles and social media regarding election promises [808].

The LNP have boasted about their investment in housing and homelessness, but homelessness is getting worse in my area under the LNP government. More and more homeless people are coming into my office because they cannot get help from the LNP government. It is because of the cruel and harsh criteria they have introduced to deny homeless people emergency accommodation. People are being forced back into tents and back into parks because they have been booted out of their emergency accommodation under the LNP's new threshold for accommodation.

I recently spoke to one person in Deception Bay who was homeless and living in their car or couch surfing. This person has been on the housing list for over 12 months. She cannot afford current rents because she is on JobSeeker. She was provided emergency accommodation in a motel for two weeks a couple of months ago. When that time ran out, she had nowhere to go so she ended up living in her car. She was told by the department recently that the rules have changed and they can no longer find her accommodation. They could only refer her to a local service provider. She was referred to all the homeless service providers in the area, but they have been inundated by people who have been booted out by the LNP. One of our services has 500 people who have been shuffled off by the LNP on its waiting list. That is only one story of homeless people being forced out of emergency accommodation. I have many more.

This is not the only barrier put up by the LNP that is devastating for local people. The threat to kick housing tenants out of their homes according to an earning threshold—whether it be \$50,000 or \$80,000—is scaring local public housing tenants no end. I will give one more example of another local I met. When I met her she was very upset. She could not sleep properly. She could not even go to work because of what she had heard. She fears she will be forced out of her home of nearly 20 years. She is a DV survivor as well.

A government member interjected.

Mr WHITING: This is what people are actually experiencing because of the LNP. A DV survivor who has a lower level job in the government and whose child has just started in an entry-level job fears that she will be forced out without adequate notice or support. She fears that she could not get a home at her age. She fears trying to find private rental in a market with nearly zero vacancies. She said to me that the announcement by the government was 'uprooting our lives without prior communication'. Said she was upset about the 'condescending', impersonal tone of the minister. She said, 'All I want is

somewhere safe and stable to live—that is all I want.’ She said, ‘I am terrified about the future.’ She said, ‘The Liberals just don’t care about people.’ These are the effects that this new LNP regime is having on homeless people and public housing tenants in my area.

Another issue that local residents keep talking to me about is the Redcliffe Hospital. People keep stopping me at the shops, or wherever I am, to ask what is happening. All I can say is nothing—nothing is happening. The Redcliffe Hospital will remain overcrowded and staff will remain stretched with no start in sight for the next stage of expansions. I am hearing reports of no beds being available and staff being crammed into any available space they can find. It is very clear that we need this expansion now to cater for the expanding and growing area, but the expansion site remains abandoned. I think it will be years before anything happens on the Redcliffe Hospital expansion site. The budget gave no details about what is happening and when. It is a mystery. It is a mystery to me. It is a mystery to everyone. It is a mystery to all of the people in our Moreton Bay region.

Construction was actually underway before the LNP halted it. As I said before, the last piling equipment was pulled off the site the same day they announced that they were building a new Olympic stadium. The expansion that had already started was for an extra 204 beds; a nine-storey clinical services building; the expansion of medical imaging, pharmacy and pathology areas; additional operating theatres, emergency department treatment spaces and birthing suites; and endoscopy, outpatient consult and diagnostic rooms. These things were on the way. The foundations were already partially installed at this site. The only detail we have heard of the LNP plan is that it is being redesigned and that there will be 210 beds. That is all we have heard. My community need more details because we need that hospital expansion now. It is no good for it to sit there and for nothing to happen for a couple of years while they get it sorted out.

The LNP have not given a specific budget. From what I have seen it is listed alongside seven other new and expanded hospitals in a \$13.4 billion fund. Yet, if you look at the budget papers—I think it is on page 70 in Budget Paper No. 3—there is \$13.4 billion for all of these hospitals, but next financial year there is less than \$1 billion being expended. That is what I can see. I may be wrong, but I am pretty sure I am not.

Mr O’Connor: You probably are given some other things we have heard.

Mr WHITING: You’re breaking my heart here.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Order, member for Bonney!

Mr WHITING: I must have offended you, member for Bonney.

Mr O’Connor: Well, you haven’t sent any of those cases through. I just checked the office.

Mr WHITING: You just checked the office! I get stopped all the time by—

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Members, direct your comments through the chair, please. Cease your interjections.

Mr WHITING: If this is the only way we have to solve people’s problems in this state—that we have to send every homeless person through to the minister’s office—what kind of system is that? We had a great system before the LNP got in. If this is the only way that we can get things done for homeless people in this state—to send them through to the minister’s office—I am going to encourage everyone in my area to ‘Get on the phone to Sam. He’ll fix it for you.’

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, members!

Mr O’Connor interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bonney, you are continually interjecting. If you do it again, you will be warned.

Mr WHITING: We are inundated with people from all over coming to see my office about homelessness and housing. We have sent many of those through here. I will continue to advocate for all of those people in my area. We will certainly be encouraging them to contact the minister’s office personally to get their cases sorted out.

The last thing I want to say is that I thought we still had free TAFE. Do we still have free TAFE under this budget? Do we or do we not? There seems to be some confusion about that. Do we still have free kindy? No-one seems to be answering me on this.

(Time expired)