




Speech By
David Kempton

MEMBER FOR COOK

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

 **Mr KEMPTON** (Cook—LNP) (5.00 pm): I rise to applaud the Crisafulli LNP government's first budget handed down on Tuesday this week and congratulate the Premier and the finance team. David Janetzki, the Treasurer for Queensland and the member for Toowoomba South, was charged with a juggling act on a scale approaching that of Enrico Rastelli, the great—a juggler obviously. The Treasurer's performance is equally impressive as that of the grand master as he balanced diminishing income against rising expenditure in the face of the crippling debt inherited from Labor all in the context of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, which is just seven years away. That on anyone's account is a lot of pins in the air.

Under successive Labor governments Queensland has grown old over the last 30 years. Our roads are struggling under increasing loads, our health system is buckling under the burden, our frontline workers are falling behind in the face of increasing queues—just some of the examples of Labor's failures. Our great state has been doing more with less for far too long and is crying out for a fresh start. Under successive Labor governments' fiscal mismanagement, we are seeing Queensland's debt soar whilst essential services are delivering less and our infrastructure is in a state of disrepair. Labor has left every Queenslanders with an interest debt alone of almost \$10 billion per annum. That is \$2,000 for every man, woman and child per year.

An example of aging infrastructure without a plan is the Barron River bridge at Kuranda on the Kennedy Highway in the far north of the state. Over three million vehicles traverse this bridge every year as it is a vital, and the only viable, link from Cairns to the Tablelands. The bridge is over 60 years old and after a decade of neglect by Labor, the load limits were continually reduced until one lane was closed. Labor talked a lot but had no plan to replace this bridge. Under Labor's plan of doing nothing, we would see the load limits further reduced on the bridge until it was no longer safe for trucks, buses and heavy vehicles, all of which would have to find an alternative route.

On the other hand, our LNP government promised to replace the bridge to bring certainty and reliability to commuters and transport users. The \$245 million required as the state's share for the new bridge was included in this year's budget. We said we would do it and it will be done. For days and days Bree James, the member for Barron River, and I stood on the bridge waving placards claiming only the LNP would build a new bridge. This week Bree James and I have delivered on our commitment.

Another example of Labor's neglect and lack of planning is the Cooktown community health centre. The health facility is over 50 years old and comprises a ragtag of lean-tos and portable buildings. It is no longer fit for purpose. Labor talked and talked, drew a picture, promised the world and delivered nothing. On the day the Premier announced my preselection, on 7 May 2024, he promised to upgrade the Cooktown Hospital. I am pleased to see \$200 million in the 2025 budget to see that this happens. This is another example of our government doing what it says it will do.

Other examples in the budget of the LNP meeting its commitments in the electorate of Cook include several primary health centres, water and sewage plants, school improvements and upgrades, culture and tourism centres, walking trails and boardwalks, ongoing support for the Mossman cane industry, security cameras—and so the list goes on. The people of Cook have much to smile about. Labor painted a pretty dismal picture for the future of Queensland over the last decade and was convincingly voted out of the competition in October 2024.

I return again to our Treasurer and his juggling skills. The 2025 Queensland budget delivers massive operational expenditure in health, education and frontline services just to arrest the decline in the integrity of those essential services; infrastructure expenditure to bring the state's facilities up to world standard; and reinvigorated management to ensure those standards are maintained. Transport infrastructure has attracted an enormous amount of the available funds as we embark on the enormous task of repairing the state's road network following years of underfunding for maintenance by Labor and devastation across most of the state following recent natural disasters. On top of this, our government has embarked upon an ambitious upgrade of our highways and is paying particular attention to the Bruce Highway, which ultimately services my distant electorate of Cook.

The Crisafulli LNP government's response to the youth crime crisis in Queensland has drawn heavily on the state's resources in terms of detection, arrest, detention and intervention. The response by our government was timely, proportionate and necessary to ensure the number of victims is reduced and people feel safe in their homes and on the streets. Green shoots are emerging which show some signs of encouragement.

There is an underlying principle in relation to Queenslanders' money: for every dollar spent there must be a benefit, be it economic, social, cultural or environmental. Queenslanders benefit in different ways from our careful and considerate use of their money. Being able to access his blockholder lease in Hope Vale following our road upgrade is as important to Bernard Hart as is uninterrupted travel between Cairns and Mareeba across the Barron River bridge for thousands of commuters.

Above all, this budget delivers a clear message to all Queenslanders: it is a foundation for a fresh start and it is a clear indication of how the Crisafulli LNP government has respect for Queenslanders, their lifestyle and their security—economic and personal. Finally, there is no show without punch. I wish to commend the meticulous work of the Deputy Premier, Jarrod Bleijie, as he supported the Premier and the Treasurer in the delivery of the first budget of the LNP government. I am proud to again be the member for Cook in this LNP government.