




Speech By
David Lee

MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY

Record of Proceedings, 26 June 2025

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

 **Mr LEE** (Hervey Bay—LNP) (2.03 pm): I rise to speak to the Appropriation Bill 2025 and to the Crisafulli government's first budget. We are restoring respect for Queenslanders' money after a decade of Labor's magic puddings. Our first budget is truly a fresh and invigorating start for Queensland and great news for our Hervey Bay community. I commend the Treasurer, Minister for Energy and Minister for Home Ownership, David Janetzki, for his diligence and tireless work in preparing this groundbreaking budget. Our first Crisafulli budget is about calmly and methodically laying a solid, measured and enduring foundation in Queensland and, by implication, my electorate in Hervey Bay. What a contrast to Labor's previous budget, which the *Australian Financial Review* on 11 June 2024 described as a 'populist clown show that ... trashes Queensland's traditional reputation as a low debt, lower taxing, business-friendly jurisdiction'.

On the subject of clown shows, do members remember Labor's desperate and panic-stricken pre-election bid to lower energy prices and buy back Powerdirect Australia after they sold it off for \$1.2 billion in 2007? Let's never forget the truth about who sold Queensland's assets. I table a copy of 'The truth about who sold Queensland's assets'.

Tabled paper: Document, undated, titled 'The truth about who sold Queensland's assets' [807](#).

The former Labor treasurer in his 2024 budget speech said—

Queenslanders will be asked to make a choice about their future, not to express an opinion about the past.

Well, Queenslanders certainly did just that and decisively rejected Labor's legacy of debt, deception and deficit. The Crisafulli government is restoring respect for Queenslanders' money.

When it comes to Labor's economic agenda, it is all about superficial and deceptive slogans. Labor is all form and no substance. In Hervey Bay, the previous Labor government had a vacuous slogan of 'building a better Hervey Bay'. Predictably, no-one knew what that slogan meant. It could not have been about tackling youth crime, because Labor said it was a media beat-up. It could not have been about housing, because Labor said that was a council problem, while social housing waiting lists ballooned. It could not have been about lower energy costs, because Labor is always tilting at windmills. We all remember Labor's negligent oversight of the Callide C4 coal-fired power station. It could not have been about access to health care when and where you need it, because the second level of the Hervey Bay Hospital ED remained empty for nearly a decade and elective surgery and medical specialist waiting lists were bloated. It could not have been about elevating the status of TAFE Queensland, because the former Labor member for Hervey Bay and the member for Bundamba stood outside the Hervey Bay TAFE site with a sledgehammer. Labor's plan for Hervey Bay was a straw house, a house of cards—a metaphorical house desperately and reactively constructed on deceptive and unfunded budget promises.

I am delighted to be part of a Crisafulli government that is all about substance over form. We are laying the firm foundations for a healthier and stronger Hervey Bay. We are slowly, proactively and methodically constructing an enduring legacy. Brick by brick, we are building a solid foundation for a healthier and stronger Hervey Bay. The philosopher and great conservative thinker Edmund Burke speaks to the concept of a social contract. He said—

Society is ... a contract ... not only between those who are living, but between those who are living, those who are dead and those who are to be born.

This statement raises the importance of legacy. I understand the importance of leaving an enduring infrastructure and service legacy to my community in Hervey Bay. That is why I am delighted to be part of the Crisafulli government's first budget. We are carefully building a healthier and stronger Hervey Bay, and that is why I have been actively collaborating with the Fraser Coast Regional Council to release more land for future housing development. Labor's legacy in Queensland's social housing is a waiting list of over 52,000. I welcome the \$14.7 million investment into social housing and a further \$2.3 million to address the challenge of homelessness. Hervey Bay is not immune to the housing crisis. I know that we have many seniors in my community living on the verge of homelessness. Some are and have been the victims of unconscionable conduct. I made a submission to that effect during the recent elder abuse inquiry.

The Crisafulli government is delivering the right care at the right place and at the right time for Queenslanders. Dr Nick Yim, a local general practitioner and president of the Queensland AMA, has said that our \$33.1 billion healthcare expenditure shows that the government recognises the urgent need to invest in our healthcare system. Dr Yim said—

It is a relief to see that health remains a high priority. Patients are waiting far too long for life-saving healthcare and this funding is essential to turn that around.

Ambulance ramping under Labor hit a catastrophic 45 per cent. In my electorate of Hervey Bay our hardworking paramedics could be tied up most of the day in the hospital's ED. The Crisafulli government has set a benchmark to get ambulance ramping down to 30 per cent by 2028, and we have invested \$1.7 billion to achieve this target. We have also abolished Labor's patient tax to improve timely access to health care. Labor's patient tax put substantial pressure on our hospital ED and potentially compromised the health and wellbeing of my community.

We are delighted that the Crisafulli government is providing \$94 million to finally fit-out level 2 of the emergency department and construct a new state-of-the-art helipad. It comes after 10 years of Labor's neglect. The LNP started this project and we will finish it. This announcement is a fresh start for health care in Hervey Bay, with 25 medical and 10 ICU beds. We are also delivering 167 new car parks for staff, visitors and carers.

A healthy community requires investment in sporting infrastructure, so I am delighted that we are receiving \$190,000 to upgrade the LED night lights at the Hervey Bay AFL Bombers football ground. This means Friday night games. The Bombers also have 220 juniors who are embracing AFL. Many will no doubt avail themselves of the opportunity under our \$200 Play On! sports vouchers.

Our local hardworking Queensland Police Service does an amazing job keeping our community safe. The Crisafulli government is providing \$28 million for a replacement police station. I look forward to engaging with the local QPS leadership to ensure we get a fit-for-purpose and strategic solution to law enforcement in Hervey Bay. It is not possible to exhaustively identify all of the 2025 Hervey Bay budget items today. That is because there are so many of them. I will continue to calmly—

Ms Boyd: What about the fire station?

Mr LEE: I will take that interjection from the member for Pine Rivers. Yes, what about the fire station? On your watch it was completely unfunded. It was a mirage. You got the land. Purchasing the land does not constitute building a new fire station.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McDonald): Member for Hervey Bay, direct your comments through the chair, thanks.

Mr LEE: It is a great example of Labor's slogans. The former member said, 'I delivered it for you.'

Mrs Poole: Smoke and mirrors.

Mr LEE: Yes, smoke and mirrors—*Pink Panther* stuff. It is all another Labor mirage, an illusion. We called you out on it, member for Pine Rivers. I am currently working with the local fire brigade to ensure that under the LNP government this fire station will be delivered. As the local member, I have given an undertaking to advocate strongly for a new fire station. Labor neglected the fire and rescue station on that current site since 1962. Those opposite have real form when it comes to economic

literacy, because purchasing a block of land does not constitute building a new fire station. You can put up pre-election fences and banners; that does not mean anything. Our local community saw through those express and implied misleading misrepresentations.

I will continue to calmly and methodically lay the firm foundations and, brick by brick, build a healthier and stronger Hervey Bay community. That is the Crisafulli government's enduring legacy to the Hervey Bay community—not Labor's legacy of smoke and mirrors.

The Deputy Speaker has reviewed and approved the remainder of my speech on the budget for incorporation. As such, I ask that the remainder of my speech be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*.

The speech read as follows—

Hervey Bay has a population of 58,000 and is growing at a rate of 2.1% per annum. We have numerous over 50s lifestyle villages and several high-rise development approvals including the 18-storey Sheraton Hotel. I am determined to continue advocating for a new Hervey Bay Fire and Rescue Station. Labor misled our hardworking firefighters into believing that a new fire station had been delivered. Labor will say and do anything to stay in power. The new fire and rescue station was yet another unfunded and broken promise. Our hardworking firefighters deserve better and that's what they will get with a Crisafulli Government.

Our approach to the budget process is exemplified in a commitment to fiscal responsibility, transparency, accountability and a focus on delivering tangible and sustainable results for Queenslanders.

In contrast, Labor's recklessly reactive and irresponsible management of our Queensland economy, knew no bounds.

In September 2023, the Standards and Poor's (S&P) Global Ratings Agency affirmed Queensland's credit rating at AA+ with a stable outlook. However, in February 2025, the S&P revised the outlook to negative, due to factors such as weakening fiscal discipline and a growing infrastructure pipeline. This was Labor's legacy to the incoming Crisafulli Government.

Queensland Labor's fiscal profligacy was evident in their frantic pre-election manifesto of \$1.4 billion for school lunches, state-owned servos and a proposal for 50 state-run bulk-billing medical practices.

In desperation, Labor then aired a desire to re-purchase an energy retailer, ostensibly to reduce retail energy costs. It was Labor who sold the retail arm of Ergon Energy (Powerdirect Australia) in 2007 for \$1.2 billion.

Since the 2024 election, the Crisafulli government has calmly and methodically identified Labor's capital project blow outs and overruns across all areas of government, including but not limited to:

- Cross River Rail—up \$494 million.
- Gold Coast Light Rail—up \$330 million.
- Hospital Capacity Expansion Program—blowouts pushed \$9.785 billion to 16 billion.
- CopperString—up \$2.8 billion.
- Pioneer-Burdekin—up \$24.8 billion.
- Borumba Pumped Hydro—up \$3.8 billion.

The Queensland Treasury's economic modelling over the term 2024 to 2030 estimated Labor's Best Practice Industry Conditions tax would have likely increased project costs by up to 25 per cent and created a net economic cost of \$17.1 billion. Talk about a drag on our economy!

Queensland was forecast to be \$218 billion in debt by 2027/28. It's now \$190 million (\$27.5 million) less than the 2024/25 Mid-Year Fiscal Economic Review.

The Crisafulli Government is taking a fiscally responsible approach to the management of our economy and that is why we have established the Queensland Productivity Commission. The Commission's first task is to review the building and construction industry, including the Best Practice Industry Conditions (BPIC) the CFMEU tax.

Small business is a major pillar in our Queensland, regional and local economies.

There are 495,000 small family businesses in Queensland that employ one million Queenslanders and contribute an estimated \$131 billion per annum to our Queensland economy. Small businesses create jobs, pay taxes and stimulate economic growth.

In and about my electorate of Hervey Bay, there are 6,726 registered businesses with 21 per cent of these in the construction industry. The construction industry represents the largest share of small businesses in Queensland.

Fraser Coast Regional Council has valued 2024/25 building approvals at \$641 million. So, it should come as no surprise that we need a stronger construction industry to support housing construction.

The Crisafulli Government is committed to partnering with Fraser Coast Regional Council to release more land for the development of affordable housing.

I encourage Fraser Coast Regional Council to apply for funding through the Crisafulli Government's Resident Activation Fund (RAF). The \$2 billion RAF is set to deliver critical infrastructure to get more homes built sooner.

Many young Hervey Bay families aspire to own their own home and welcome the Crisafulli Government's stamp duty exemptions for first home buyers and the \$30,000 first home buyer grant.

Homelessness in Hervey Bay is a challenge just as it is in many other Queensland locations.

The causes of homelessness are many and varied. The Crisafulli Government has committed \$365 million for crisis accommodation to address homelessness, and I am exploring accommodation options for victims of domestic violence.

Did you know the Fraser Coast Region has the highest rates of chronic disease, as a total proportion of the Fraser Coast population, in Australia? Thirty-one percent of our population is aged 65 and over. The median age of a Hervey Bay resident is 52, against a Queensland median age of 38. This is a challenging demographic.

Let's not forget Labor's tragic record of the highest ambulance rates in Australia; a doubling of elective surgery waiting lists over 10 years and 300,000 Queenslanders waiting to see a medical specialist.

However, our Hospital Rescue Plan is about easier access to healthcare by lessening elective surgery and medical specialists waiting lists and reducing ambulance ramping.

Labor's health cost blowouts are hurting Queenslanders. The Sangster review into Labor's Capital Expansion Plan (CEP) concluded that it was "deeply flawed" due to significant cost overruns, budget blowouts, and flawed procurement strategies. The initial \$9.8 billion plan was forecast to reach \$17 billion.

In Hervey Bay, Labor's mismanagement of the Hospital's Emergency Department level 2 fit-out and helipad resulted in a capital cost blowout of \$56 million (from \$40 million to \$96 million).

I will stridently advocate for a Hervey Bay Hospital construction pipeline that meets the rising healthcare needs in my community.

Nearly 5% of our population are under the age of 5 and are set to benefit from the Healthy Kindy Kids program.

The Crisafulli Government will commit \$37.5 million over 5 years under the Healthy Kindy Kids program. Did you know that 60,000 Queensland kids are set to benefit from free health checks at Kindergarten in the Crisafulli Government's first Budget?

The free health checks will assess the vision, hearing and speech of children before they start prep or school, in order to identify the need for early support, so children are better prepared for long-term success.

Hervey Bay is the whale watching capital of Australia. We also have Fraser (K'gari) Island, a UNESCO world heritage listed site that includes nearly 1,840 square kilometres of national parks on our doorstep.

The Crisafulli Government's Destination 2045 Tourism Plan is fantastic news for Hervey Bay.

Tourism in our Fraser Coast region is big business, and according to Tourism Research Australia, in 2023/24 generated just over \$1 billion in gross value to our regional economy and supported nearly 7,000 jobs.

I will continue to advocate for Fraser (K'gari) Island infrastructure improvements including establishing an emergency management precinct in Happy Valley. In 2021, devastating bush fires affected nearly half of the island, threatening residents, visitors, flora and fauna.

The Crisafulli Government is dedicated to the provision of consistent, reliable and cost-effective baseload power supply. We are committed to ensuring that our coal-fired power plants have maintenance guarantees in place.

Hervey Bay small business owners and pensioners are struggling with Queensland having one of the highest energy price increases in Australia and we are committed to having the lowest energy prices in ten years' time.

Hervey Bay families have welcomed the Crisafulli Government's cost of living relief for Queensland families with new \$200 Play On! Sports Vouchers, for summer or winter sport.

Our Queensland Budget allows kids to Play On! In their favourite sport and stay active, with a \$62.5 million investment each year. These new sports vouchers will boost participation for children living in my community.

The Crisafulli Government continues to strengthen the frontline, with 130 new officers to graduate from the Queensland Police.

There are more than 680 recruits currently in training at QPS academies and there are more than 1,880 applicants in the recruiting pipeline.

The Crisafulli Government is reversing the declining police numbers and has delivered a net increase of 283 officers in just over six months, compared to Labor which only increased the headcount by 174 police officers over four years.

In closing, the Crisafulli Government's first budget is about setting the foundations for generational government. A fresh start for Queensland! I commend the Appropriation (2025/26) Bill 2025 to the House.