




Speech By
Jonty Bush

MEMBER FOR COOPER

Record of Proceedings, 26 June 2025

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

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (4.31 pm): I want to start by sharing a little known fact about my beautiful partner, Matt, which is that he is colourblind—and he is not alone. There are, in fact, about 235,998 Queenslanders who are colourblind. By deduction, this means there are about 5,382,777 people who are waking up to the Crisafulli LNP government's first budget and asking: what on earth has happened here? Why is Queensland's identity now drenched in blue when we are, in fact, a maroon state? This sneaky move to align Queensland's colours with the LNP's political colours sums up their entire approach to governing and to their first budget—no style, no substance, broken promises and the wasteful spending of taxpayer funds on ideological pursuits and controlling the narrative.

Premier Crisafulli ran the ultimate small-target campaign and that lack of substance and vision has followed the Premier now into government, with very little on the *Notice Paper*. The only real announcements have been trying to rebrand the Miles Labor government's 50-cent fares as their own—which no-one in this state buys for one second. They did make a few promises to Queenslanders. They promised to reduce debt. They promised to extend the former Labor government's cost-of-living support measures like energy rebates if people were still doing it tough. They promised not to cut projects and services. Since the election, there has been nothing but disappointment and a deluge of denial, deflection and disregard for Queenslanders from this dodgy government that continues to break promises and avoid scrutiny.

The Premier himself committed to continuing the Miles Labor government's cost-of-living measures, like our \$1,000 energy rebate and 20 per cent car rego fee reduction, if people were still doing it tough when the budget was handed down, but now we see that the Treasurer has cut those measures from this budget. Is it that they have misled the public about that commitment during the election, or are they so out of touch that they do not realise that families are still struggling to make ends meet?

When we were in government we had the unemployment rate down to 3.7 per cent—the lowest year average unemployment rate since the ABS began recording monthly data. We halved the debt inherited from the Newman LNP government and introduced progressive coal royalties which delivered vital cost-of-living relief to Queenslanders. In contrast, this government has cut those measures for everyday Queenslanders. They have cut \$13 billion from infrastructure projects, put an end to free TAFE, paused hospital expansion works, walked back on their commitment to deliver direct rail to Maroochydore and cut funding to important programs like the Environmental Defenders Office.

This government is throwing an additional \$2 billion into additional prison capacity, stating that it is to deal with projected additional demand. What an incredibly underwhelming response from a government that cannot find \$2 billion for services to keep people from crime but can somehow manage to find it for prisons. Some \$2 billion would fund an additional 23,000 addiction and recovery services in Queensland; an additional \$4,600 mental health beds for this state; and build thousands of additional homes. Those items would be a much greater and far more effective use of taxpayers' funds and would go a long way towards ensuring crime reduces and fewer people are victimised.

It would be remiss of me not to comment on how the budget meets—or rather, misses—the needs of Queensland women. The first comment I will make is there is scant detail provided in the government's Women's Economic Statement. In contrast to Labor's 46-page statement from last financial year, their four-page summary is lacking both detail and ambition. Last year's Women's Economic Statement delivered on five priorities, including to evaluate the voices of women of colour and those with lived experience of disability and to progress a comprehensive strategy around women's safety, health care and economic prosperity. This week, the new LNP Treasurer delivered their signature announcement for the women of Queensland: a \$20 million return-to-work package. This investment would amount to a cup of coffee a week for each working woman in Queensland. There is no plan to close the pay gap, no plan to support women in male-dominated work, and they have already repealed the respect at work legislation that would have strengthened women's and men's rights and safety at work.

If we need yet another example of the LNP's ideological pursuits interfering in the work of the Public Service, we have now seen references to gender equity and gender equality disappear from the Office for Women in Queensland. When we were in government we undertook comprehensive consultation with hundreds of Queensland women which resulted in the Queensland's Women's Strategy, which we then used to underpin investments in economic security, health and safety and to evaluate those voices for women.

I am pleased to see funding in the budget for the capital works that are occurring at the Red Hill Special School in my community—almost \$24 million for this year and a further \$29 million to finalise the project after that. It is a project I really care about and have advocated for since my election in 2020. It involves the amalgamation of two campuses into one larger purpose-built campus. The educators at the Red Hill Special School, under the leadership of principal, Steven McKnoulty, do an outstanding job of caring for these students. The parents are gorgeous, as are the kids, and they deserve a first-class, purpose-built educational facility and that is what we will deliver for them.

During the recent election, I was able to secure a commitment that the second campus would continue to be a specialist education facility. We were advocating for a dedicated school for autistic children which would have been the first school of its kind in the inner Brisbane area. Sadly, the new education minister has confirmed to me in writing that they will not honour that commitment, so now we do not know what they will do with that site once it becomes available. Will they turn it into offices or will they sell it off? With so many young people now diagnosed with autism, we need to think about having a range of educational offerings available for students. Many of our parents were behind us on that campaign and many local teachers who absolutely see a need for additional support for autistic students. I hope the minister comes back to the negotiating table and delivers that necessary support for our community.

That is it for my electorate in this year's budget. There are no school upgrades, no funding for climate adaptation and disaster resilience for suburbs that flood every time we get heavy rain, particularly those areas in Ashgrove, Milton and Rosalie that are known to be very problematic. There are no upgrades for our sporting facilities, let alone support to purchase and expand the courts, fields and sportsgrounds that we are so desperately in need of. I cannot even find any funding for Walkabout Creek, which I understand had funding allocated for upgrades, or for additional rangers for D'Aguilar or even for MS Queensland based in Milton for their additional neuro wellness centres, which I understand was an election commitment from this government.

A final blow to my community and to Queensland generally is the discovery that the LNP will be scrapping our renewable energy targets, described in the budget as a discontinued measure. We have just wrapped up a committee inquiry into the planning and other legislation bill and heard from Queenslanders from the city to the bush about the important role of renewables in our energy transition. I will quote the chair of our committee, the member for Lockyer, who often said throughout the committee hearings to stakeholders 'what gets measured gets managed'. This decision to scrap targets, coupled with the defunding of the EDO and the introduction of this POLA legislation, will have a chilling effect on renewables in Queensland. We are heading towards an unmitigated environmental disaster if we continue to go down this path. I really fear for us and I fear for the next generation. These actions really are reprehensible.

Finally, after all the Premier's song and dance during the election about debt reduction, there is a budget deficit this year of \$8 billion, so Queensland has higher debt and no real cost-of-living relief. I am sure Queenslanders will find relief in knowing that the government found the funding to upgrade ministerial offices and that funding was available for a Lexus for the Deputy Premier! These are, of course, the right priorities for this government.

I know this small target government's aim was to deliver a small target budget, but this is a bad budget. It is a budget that delivers greater debt, higher energy bills, fewer hospital beds and no substantial cost-of-living support for hardworking Queenslanders. This is not a fresh start for Queenslanders; it is a false start.