




Speech By
Stephen Bennett

MEMBER FOR BURNETT

Record of Proceedings, 27 June 2025

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

 **Mr BENNETT** (Burnett—LNP) (4.41 pm): What a change the October election has meant for Queensland. It is timely that we remind Queenslanders what we promised—respect for taxpayers' money, respect for our public servants and acknowledgement of those industries that drive our state's prosperity. We promised we would deliver our election commitments and a fresh start.

The budget delivers community safety, health, road, water and energy initiatives. We are funding responsible and ongoing cost-of-living relief. Many Queenslanders struggling with everyday expenses will benefit from a range of cost-of-living measures in the budget, from cheap public transport to power bill relief and an expanded solar renters program. This budget funds the services that those opposite failed to fund. This will prevent job losses, saving public servants from Labor's incompetence.

We are saving key infrastructure projects like Paradise Dam and Bundaberg Hospital that would never have been built. These projects were poorly scoped, badly managed and significantly underfunded. Let's never forget those opposite said it would take \$1 billion to build Paradise Dam and it is now sitting at \$4.4 billion, and the Bundaberg Hospital is now doubling in price—all hidden from the people of Bundaberg before the last election.

Before I explore this great budget, we can never forget, or let Queenslanders forget, what Labor's last budget revealed—the record debt, the deficits and, more seriously, the deception. When every member opposite stands to read their prepared speech notes condemning this budget, they should remember their legacy. Members opposite should all take this opportunity to apologise for debt projected to reach \$218 billion. That is debt per capita of \$40,000—the highest in the nation.

This budget ceases the out-of-control budget blowouts. This budget also reflects the reality of federal Labor's GST reduction to Queensland of \$2.3 billion. The budget also prioritises paying down Labor's ballooning debt and reins in public sector spending while delivering cost-of-living relief.

With all the scare campaigns from those opposite, a record \$33.1 billion will be spent on Queensland health and hospitals, which is a 10 per cent increase on previous years. Importantly locally, our \$18.5 billion Hospital Rescue Plan will deliver our new hospital, new beds and level 5 services.

The budget details a record \$116.8 billion Capital Works Program over the next four years, which is the largest ever infrastructure spend. It is great to see that huge investment will go towards roads. Some \$9 billion has been allocated for upgrades to the Bruce Highway and funding for the Isis Highway is secured. Many will be excited to see the increase in the Electricity Maintenance Guarantee to \$1.6 billion to maintain our generation assets. This will drive down electricity prices. We are funding our frontline police officers with nearly \$150 million to better equip them with tasers, tyre deflation devices and body worn cameras and replace load bearing vests, tactical first-aid kits, roadside breath devices and portable handheld radios. There will be more police officers on the beat.

Queenslanders will get government help to buy a home worth up to \$1 million—the most generous shared equity scheme in the nation. Singles earning up to \$150,000 and households with two adults earning up to \$225,000 will be eligible under the Boost to Buy program. The LNP Crisafulli government is delivering for all of Queensland, and Bundaberg and the Burnett, including by cutting taxes like stamp duty, and GPs will be permanently exempt from payroll tax and the patients tax. This will protect bulk billing—something that many in my electorate were scared about losing.

There is a record health budget, with \$33.1 billion for health services. There will be a record investment in education of \$21.9 billion. We are also delivering the \$100 Back to School Boost. We are providing a new nation-leading \$165 million Boost to Buy scheme. There will be an injection of over \$209 million into crisis accommodation and \$37 million to enhance police responses. We are extending the first home owner grant to \$30,000.

This budget delivers for the health and wellbeing of Queensland women, including a new four-year, \$20 million return-to-work package. We are so proud of the \$560 million to be delivered to make our communities safer. That was something that was promised and we will deliver for our communities crying out for support. This budget ensures Queensland's environment is protected, with \$117 million to support natural resource management groups. We are investing \$26.3 million for our Supercharged Solar for Renters Program. We are reducing red tape for small businesses. We are extremely excited about the first \$1 billion of the \$2 billion Residential Activation Fund, and we look forward to seeing that rolled out in the next couple of weeks.

This budget sets the foundation for delivering the fresh start we promised. Here at home, every single local election commitment for the electorates of Bundaberg and the Burnett are fully funded. These include: \$142,000 for Brave Brothers in Bundaberg as they work to deliver Brave Place Safe Spaces and suicide awareness services; \$1 million over four years for Impact Community Services; \$300,000 for the Wide Bay Sports Academy out of the \$250 million Games On! grassroots infrastructure program; \$620,000 to the Bundaberg Netball Association; \$542,000 to the Burnett Bowls Club; and we have commenced the rollout of nine short-stay programs for youth who are demonstrating high-risk behaviours, including one to be rolled out in Wide Bay.

We will see more health workers on the ground, with 4,022 full-time-equivalent positions. We will see the progression of the planning stage for the Childers Multipurpose Health Service. I have mentioned the new hospital, finally rescued from oblivion. A new Paradise Dam wall will be delivered. Water security is of huge importance in my electorate and we could not be more excited to see that go ahead. The commencement of the new Bargara police facility is welcomed.

We will see maintenance of our schools at a cost of nearly a million dollars. Agnes Water State School will be getting \$180,000 for a new covered access ramp. There will be \$267,000 for upgrades to the water reticulation systems at Yandaran State School. Some 60,000 Queensland kids are set to benefit from free health checks at kindergarten. The government is delivering for Queensland, locking in a 20 per cent uplift in funding for homelessness services. Parents with children aged between five and 17 years are eligible to apply for the \$200 Play On! vouchers.

In conclusion, this budget delivers the fresh start Queensland needed and Queenslanders voted for to address the youth crime crisis, the health crisis, the housing crisis and the cost-of-living crisis. It is a great budget for my area and a great budget for Queensland, and we could not be more proud of the team who put this together.