



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR NOOSA

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

**REVENUE (COST OF LIVING RELIEF LOCKED-IN LAW) AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms BOLTON** (Noosa—Ind) (5.06 pm): I wish this budget did not look and feel like last year's. However, it does, and what is worse so far is that we cannot find the instrumental, critical and life-saving increases needed. In my 2025 speech on the budget I said—

... at grassroots the reality is that we have overburdened not-for-profits and volunteers delivering everything from food and accommodation through to counselling and haircuts at ever-increasing rates to struggling families.

In the 12 months since I said that in this chamber, the reality for Queenslanders and those not-for-profit organisations and volunteers has worsened.

As I said last time, the housing crisis is now a full disaster and, regardless of announcements in this budget, there are no solutions for our workers who are sleeping in their cars—not even an emergency rollout of caravan parks. In Victoria, people can at least get on the waitlist for social housing as the single entry income threshold is \$30,000 higher than in Queensland, as I raised this morning. We are in a spiralling out-of-control scenario that government have yet to fully acknowledge, and the belief that more land sold to developers will deliver genuine affordable housing is a fallacy. I would like anyone to explain to me how it can deliver homes for \$600,000 in the SEQ corner, as that is basically what banks will lend working couples. Million-dollar homes do not deliver affordable rentals.

I would also like someone to explain to me why having a social housing target of 53,000 or 54,000 by 2044, when we probably need about 350,000, is a sensible lens through which to view the needs of Queenslanders. Within the budget there is an additional just over \$1 billion over five years to work towards that 53,000-home target compared to \$2 billion for trunk and essential infrastructure to activate residential developments, although they do not have any affordable housing requirements, and \$3.5 billion for athletes villages, although with no guarantee that they will be repurposed for affordable housing for our people.

I can only say it again: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs might be old but it has never been so relevant. How can you address the many issues impacting our communities—mental health, crime and demands on health services—when the main contributor, the lack of secure housing, remains? The \$130 saving by freezing water charges for two years is only possible if you have a house. However, I want to move to the positives.

For Noosa, reassurances of funding for the Lake Macdonald Dam project of \$486 million, \$500,000 for the toilet block on the foreshore, the Pomona pedestrian crossing, Pirates Rugby League Football Club solar panels and Sunshine Beach fire hydrant upgrade of \$705,000 are all appreciated.

There is \$4.2 million over three years for the Lake Macdonald housing project and for the Doonella Street Tewantin 32-unit project amongst the \$1.024 billion social housing investment program. Hopefully we will see shovels in the ground come November.

Happily, as we advocated for, there is an uplift to the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme, some increases for foster carers, pathways for product stewardship and recycling reforms, and I am really pleased to see remote rehabilitation detention for youth offenders. I thank the government for that. As well, there is funding for intensive 12-month rehabilitation programs after detention and the Grassroots Environmental Grants. In addition, there will be Maroochydore courthouse upgrades plus additional funding over four years from the mental health levy which was urgently needed, and I hope this will deliver properly for Noosa the extra services needed. A commitment to implement regionally focused management of feral pigs and wild dogs is also welcomed by my community.

With regard to policing, I will go to another excerpt from my speech last year where I stated—

I am still trying to figure out how the gaps left by the various forms of leave, including long service leave and leave for those suffering PTSD, will be addressed. We need to see both the new allocation modelling and the analysis of the impact 1,600 new recruits will have.

We are still in the dark because what we really want to know is: how many extra police do we actually have on the ground—that is, the new ones less the attrition? With new legislation, including on e-devices, an increase in visible police presence is essential and, as my community reports, still not evidenced. Ongoing and appreciated are the Play On! sports vouchers, the 50-cent public transport fares and increases for the Back to School Boost which will provide some relief to our families.

I turn now to what we could not find. There is no new station for Tinbeerwah fire brigade, nor needed increases for the majority of foster carers. There is no dedicated funding for children in DFV refuges, nor for the Sunshine Beach High School Manufacturing Hub which can deliver so much, including needed workers and facilities. This year the students built the ablution block for our women's safe car park, one of the first in Queensland, and are now onto building the accommodations—absolutely brilliant but we need greater capacity. There is nothing for increased MSQ resources or community legal centres. Mentioned is a strengthened shark control program which we trust will use evidence and technology to reduce the harms and ineffectiveness of shark nets.

Nowhere can I see sufficient increases to accommodate upgrades for our sports clubs in order to host pre-games training. These include for Noosa Tigers for female changing rooms, for the Dolphins for their redevelopment or for the Noosa Aquatic Centre and multipurpose facility incorporating the basketball courts that have been needed now for some 15 years. There also appears no increase for national park maintenance, though it is appreciated that there is \$111 million in there to increase the actual holdings. The arts get very little mention.

Allocations for much needed upgrades across multiple departments in ICT systems appear absent, though the Open Data SDS notes a lead role in 'designing, maintaining and securing' critical government ICT systems, but there does not appear to be any money to progress that, including for information sharing between QPS and QPWS.

With the Queensland Health SDS stating that core portfolio values are to decentralise resources and implement local health solutions, one wonders why efforts to remove our dental clinic services and centralise them in Nambour continue.

Again, as with last year, we cannot find where other identified needs to address crime are located, such as extension of the vehicle immobiliser subsidy scheme and financial support to victims of non-violent crime. I trust within the Department of Justice their key priority to minimise gambling harm will include ending parties receiving donations from gambling entities and gambling ads on public buildings and spaces.

There is no mention of Noosa Hospital, though both Sunshine Coast Regional Health and Ramsay advise they are progressing. The \$30 million for Beckmans is again not in QTRIP, but we realise there are new methodologies. Both TMR and Noosa Council have reassured us it is on track. However, as we are all aware, \$30 million is only a fraction of what is needed to do that whole bypass.

I turn to our small businesses that still need relief. Last budget, through the Small Business First agenda, there was \$130 million for red-tape reduction and services to support businesses. However, within this budget so far, I can only find a mention of 'to support red tape reduction'. To quote another cut and paste from last year, I stated—

Disappointingly, we have not seen any change in the land tax rates, which have not been updated in 16 years, regardless of land values exploding, leading to increases flowing down to tenants.

Again, there has been no change there, nor on the payroll tax, except for the 50 per cent rebate for apprentices and trainees, or on any of the issues impacting small and medium businesses that are the backbone of our communities. The ongoing omission of the tangible assistance they need is glaring. We still have teachers leaving for the many reasons outlined previously, including the behaviour of students and parents, shortage of alternate schooling for disengaged students and endless administrative tasks.

Touching on the Sunshine Coast Waterways Authority, I cannot find any mention in the budget, but I am sure it is hidden well away. Still nowhere in sight is the rail shuttle needed from Gympie to connect with the Nambour timetable, nor the Northern Transport Strategy originally due in 2025. Sadly, as with the last budget, there are no fairer funding models for palliative care hospices. There has been the temporary closure of Hummingbird House in December, and since then the Katie Rose Cottage and Fraser Coast Hospice have both suspended services. Overall, within those Service Delivery Statements and snapshots, there are absences of the very needed words 'uplift' or 'increase' with plenty of 'continues', 'work with' and 'promote'. Many announcements are existing programs and initiatives.

Fixing the decisions that have led to the current challenges over the last 60 years of successive governments of both colours in state and federal realms cannot be fixed overnight; we know that. It takes a brave government and an integrity driven government to move beyond the next election to one that promotes bipartisan agreements and solutions that address immediate emergencies—and we have plenty of those—whilst making provision for the future. This budget sadly does not end the increasing divide between incredible wealth and everyday hardworking Queenslanders. The government has the ability to end these divisions that are harming Queensland and to remedy the disasters. Good announcements are appreciated; however, the ones missing in action are deeply concerning.

I want to thank the Treasurer and all who work to do the best they can with what they have. We are a wealthy state, yet this budget does not reflect that, as Queenslanders will still be sleeping in their cars whilst millions are spent on government advertising. May items so far not unearthed be revealed during the estimates hearings and may government be bold and fix what is severely broken, including the parliamentary culture, systems and processes that prevent the 'fixing'. It is government that has the power, and again I make a plea on behalf of Queenslanders to do what is right and decent for them.