



Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2017

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

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (9.03 pm): We have heard Labor describe this year's state budget as a jobs bonanza. What an absolute oxymoron! Labor has failed to create jobs over the last 2½ years and, with the definition of 'bonanza' being a situation which creates a sudden increase in wealth, good fortune or profits, it is safe to say the Labor budget is no bonanza. It is really more like a re-run of the 1970s western TV series of the same name. Madam Deputy Speaker Linard, perhaps given your youthful appearance I can inform you that *Bonanza* was the first TV series where the episodes were based around a family and their week-to-week troubles—very much like the dysfunctional and divided Palaszczuk Labor government!

The Labor state government budget for 2017-18 can only be described as one of spin and rhetoric or, alternatively, it could be classified as smoke and mirrors trickery. This year's Labor government budget must also be seen in the context of the previous two Labor state budgets which saw raids on both public servants' superannuation and long service leave entitlements and debt loaded onto our government owned electricity companies. The 2017-18 state budget shows a blowout in debt, deficits and expenses growth, with revenue forecasts also being revised down. We know that the Palaszczuk Labor government uses selected statistics to hide the true picture that is facing ordinary Queenslanders, including my constituents in Moggill, in relation to employment and higher cost-of-living pressures. Under Labor, unemployment is projected to remain above six per cent. Less jobs are forecast to be delivered, with employment growth being revised down. Queensland is fighting South Australia for last place when it comes to unemployment. Debt is projected to increase to over \$81 billion by 2020-21. This will be the first time in Queensland's history that debt will exceed \$80 billion.

Independent reports continue to illustrate that Queensland is falling further behind other states when it comes to business confidence and economic performance. Thousands of full-time jobs have been lost in Queensland over the last year. To the beginning of May 2017 and looking back over the past year, the number of young Queenslanders in a job has fallen by thousands. Infrastructure spending over the next four years is still going to be half a billion dollars lower than what the LNP was set to deliver and bankruptcies are up in Queensland due to Labor. We know that the Palaszczuk Labor government is beholden to unions and that Queensland is the strike capital of Australia. Over the last year more than 50,000 working days were lost in Queensland due to strikes. This is almost double the number lost when compared with New South Wales. Previously in Brisbane we have seen unionists undertake unlawful industrial action. As the member for Kawana, Jarrod Bleijie MP, has said, these strikes are adding to the cost of buying a home or adding to the cost of doing business and everyday Queenslanders are picking up the tab.

With declining business confidence, consumer and retail sector spending are also both under significant pressure. Queenslanders are rapidly losing confidence in this Labor government. The Palaszczuk Labor government's lack of a cohesive strategy and plan to create jobs, expand our economy, build infrastructure and provide the health and education services we need is being felt not only in my electorate of Moggill but also right across Queensland. This do-nothing Palaszczuk Labor

government has been rated as the worst by the property and construction industry. Also, all Queenslanders are paying the economic price for Labor's failure to address union bullying and intimidation on Queensland's work sites.

Under this Labor government, building approvals have fallen and investment has declined. Labor's youth jobs crisis is affecting urban, regional and rural Queensland. In parts of our state youth unemployment is well over 20 per cent and in Western Queensland it exceeds 40 per cent. Queensland should be leading our nation in terms of job creation and job security, but sadly under this do-nothing Labor government Queensland is coming dead last. Cost-of-living pressures continue to increase for families and residents in my electorate of Moggill. We are all being slugged higher electricity prices under this Labor government. Labor has loaded up government owned electricity companies with \$5 billion of debt and increased dividends to 100 per cent, forcing government owned electricity companies to increase electricity prices. There is no doubt that having debt-laden government owned generators inevitably leads to higher electricity prices. Households will be paying \$105 more a year and small businesses \$200 more a year.

Through an exercise in creative accounting, the state Labor Treasurer has also said that he is going to pay for part of the power price rise that his Labor government created by subsidising the increase with taxpayers' money, so in the end under this Labor scheme the increase will be twice as much as forecast with taxpayers also being hit with a bill for hundreds of millions of dollars. In Queensland taxes have increased more than \$200 per family since Labor's election to government. Queenslanders do not need more feasibility studies; what they need is real action. Queenslanders are desperate to build a better Queensland, and that is exactly what the Liberal National Party will do. Over the last few years we have also seen the state Labor government slug my constituents and the people of Queensland with 3.5 per cent increases on car registration. For the past two years Labor has been treating Queenslanders like cash cows. It must be remembered that the LNP froze car registration for the three years it was last in government. As outlined by the LNP opposition leader today, a future Nicholls LNP government has committed to a family car registration freeze.

In my electorate of Moggill and more broadly in the western suburbs of Brisbane, there is a desperate need for an integrated and coordinated road and public transport plan funded collaboratively by all levels of government. Since being elected at the 31 January 2015 state election, I have been consistently advocating and fighting for this plan. Appropriately considered and designed engineering solutions with respect to bridge and rail access can be an important part of regional transport infrastructure planning to ease traffic congestion. However, importantly, this planning requires good community consultation on locality and functionality to avoid unintended consequences and to deliver the desired outcome. Despite raising this issue in the Queensland parliament on numerous occasions and asking questions about various issues in correspondence to the relevant ministers and departments, in this budget Labor has still failed to act.

At the last state election Queensland Labor, preferred by the Greens, promised to progress an integrated road and public transport plan for the western suburbs, including my electorate of Moggill, but Labor has failed to do so and Labor has failed to act. The unprecedented motion that was passed last night in the Queensland parliament condemning cuts to road funding by the Palaszczuk government proves that Labor has no plans to deliver. Owing to their consistent mismanagement in government, Labor has failed to progress such road and transport infrastructure. It must be remembered that Labor has been in power in Queensland for 24 of the past 28 years.

Unfortunately, this Labor budget has also seen pork-barrelling—school funding for Labor electorates purely for political purposes. Yet Labor has conveniently ignored the plight of residents in my electorate of Moggill and many residents in the adjacent electorate of Ipswich West. Investing in a new high school for the residents of Mount Crosby, Karana Downs, Lake Manchester, Karalee, Chuwar and Barellan Point is very much needed. Local residents who continue to sign a Queensland parliamentary petition are overwhelmingly calling for this investment to occur. So why will not the Labor Minister for Education, the Hon. Kate Jones MP, act not only for the residents of my electorate but also for the residents of the electorate of Ipswich West? The Labor member for Ipswich West, Jim Madden MP, is right behind the campaign to get an additional high school. I say to the Minister for Education to listen to a member of her own government in relation to the educational infrastructure that is needed in that region. There is also a requirement for a continued financial investment in classrooms and facilities at Kenmore State High School. Local residents, parents, students and teachers as well as P&C representatives are all in agreement about this. Again, I call on the Labor government to act on evidence and support the residents and families of my electorate.

However, I will give credit where it is due. Following my advocacy and sponsoring of a petition to the Queensland parliament and my ongoing work with the Brisbane West Bike User Group, Chris Cox and Councillor Kate Richards, I am very pleased to see that the minister, the Hon. Mark Bailey MP, has

directed the Department of Transport and Main Roads to commence a planning study to look at solutions for cycling infrastructure along the Moggill Road corridor in Kenmore and Chapel Hill but, more broadly, improving access to the Centenary Highway bikeway from Brookfield to Fig Tree Pocket. This is extremely important for safety, given the number of tragedies involving cyclists in my electorate of Moggill. This planning study is a start, but what is then needed is the implementation of practical solutions via both the Brisbane City Council and the state government.

Sustained leadership and a proactive commitment combined with a coordinated strategy is needed to deal with a range of law and order threats. The potential linkages between international organised crime, local crime gangs and other community safety threats via money laundering, illicit drug trafficking and other crime related activity cannot be underestimated. Crime is rapidly increasing across Queensland. The 2017 Labor budget reveals that Labor has underspent on critical police resources. Only the LNP can be relied upon to ensure community safety. We know that Labor is soft on crime and soft on law and order generally. Our police should be supported by being provided with the equipment and resources they need. Our police and emergency services workers should be supported by practical action, not the simple hollow rhetoric of the Palaszczuk Labor government's failed policies.

Fortunately, the LNP has a number of policies that will deliver economic, social and other benefits to all Queenslanders, including my local constituents. The LNP will make Brisbane an even greater and more attractive investment opportunity and enhanced tourist destination by delivering the Brisbane entertainment and educational precinct. Queensland desperately needs innovation via private sector-led proposals. This purpose-built entertainment and educational hub, located in Brisbane's CBD, would include a new university campus, a 17,000-seat arena, film and production studios, new commercial facilities and residential apartments, 12 hectares of new public space as well as additional educational and health services. The LNP will make market-led proposals a reality. This estimated \$2 billion project would deliver up to 7,750 jobs during construction.

The LNP is also committed to building the roads, bridges and dams that Queensland needs. Having worked in rural and regional Queensland as a doctor, I know how vital the LNP's \$500 million Royalties for the Regions program is to provide safer roads, deliver more community infrastructure and better services, and ensure resilience when cyclones and floods occur.

By committing to a 20 per cent red-tape-reduction target over six years, the LNP is listening to Queensland businesses and helping them to be more focused on employing Queenslanders, including in my electorate of Moggill, rather than being tied up in bureaucratic red tape. My LNP colleagues and I want businesses to spend less time complying with burdensome paperwork and, in doing so, allow them more time to focus on creating jobs so as to employ more Queenslanders.

The LNP Get Queensland Working plan will create up to 20,000 jobs for young Queenslanders, promote training and apprenticeships, and encourage businesses to train and retain young Queenslanders. The LNP will promote Queensland's key tourism destinations through the increased use of social and digital media. We will do this through a \$3 million capital infrastructure program provided over three years to roll out 500 new wi-fi hotspots to key tourism destinations such as Cairns and many other communities right across Queensland.

The LNP has always been committed to the Great Barrier Reef. In government, the LNP commenced a multimillion-dollar annual investment in reef water quality initiatives. We remain committed to implementing the recommendations of the Great Barrier Reef Water Science Taskforce. With the allocation of additional funding by the state government to the Great Barrier Reef comes the mandatory responsibility to measure and report on translational outcomes. The additional \$175 million over five years to deliver improvements to water quality in the Great Barrier Reef catchment areas needs a transparent measurement of outcomes. The LNP will work with the Commonwealth government to further protect this unique and very important ecosystem for future generations, including discharging our jurisdictional obligations under the Reef 2050 Long-Term Sustainability Plan.

Unlike the Palaszczuk Labor government, the LNP will not demonise our agricultural, resource and mining sectors. The LNP will balance commerce with protecting and conserving areas of unique and high biodiversity value. The LNP will work collaboratively and constructively to achieve this outcome on behalf of all Queenslanders.

I want to touch on a couple of other areas in the state budget that are either directly or indirectly related to my shadow ministerial portfolio. The LNP has already announced its commitment to a number of great balanced policies for the environment, such as its commitment to phase out single-use plastic bags and collaboratively achieve national consistency on this as well as our commitment to introduce a container deposit scheme for Queensland, which will cut pollution, improve our environment and create hundreds of jobs in Queensland's recycling sector. The Boomerang Alliance, via its media release issued yesterday, once again congratulated the LNP opposition for taking the initiative to publicly back

these initiatives. I note that, after nearly 2½ years in government, Labor has finally allocated a mere \$2.5 million to implementing a CDS and plastic bag ban. This financial allocation seems low and it is still 12 months off a go-live date of 1 July 2018.

There is no doubt that plastics and related debris have significant impacts on our marine life and that a comprehensive strategy needs to be implemented to reduce the harms of such products. Our sea turtles, which have survived and evolved for over 120 million years, are particularly vulnerable to the harms of such plastics. Recently, I visited the Moreton Bay Research Station, which is a terrific research and educational facility that has a focus on marine studies, environmental sustainability and mine rehabilitation. I certainly thank station manager, Kevin Townsend, and Dr Clint Chapman for their assistance in facilitating this visit.

There is no doubt that government at both the state and Commonwealth levels can be an important enabler of education and research that can benefit all Queenslanders. I note in the budget the additional funding of \$40 million over two years to revitalise our national parks, assist with their management, and enhance nature opportunities. Given the failure of the Beattie-Bligh years, this funding is overdue. We can only hope that the inefficient and non-productive nature of this Labor administration does not result in a failure to produce an on-the-ground improvement to our national parks.

The LNP will deliver a common-sense, proactive crocodile management plan which focuses on public safety whilst also ensuring the long-term sustainability of crocodile populations. Allowing and legalising crocodile egg harvesting has the capacity to create jobs and facilitate the establishment and further consolidation of an independent, viable industry here in Queensland.

Finally, the LNP supports renewable energy, but not when it forces up the price of power bills or needs huge subsidies to compete with other cheaper and more reliable methods of power generation. Implementing climate change mitigation strategies, including reducing carbon emissions, is important, but it should not be done, as Labor does, via poorly designed policy that will punish and penalise both average and vulnerable Queenslanders. Unlike Labor, the LNP will create real jobs, better manage Queensland's finances, build stronger families, create safer livable communities, build the roads, bridges and dams Queensland needs as well as deliver better government, not more government. The LNP will do this by focusing on our tourism, agriculture, resource and mining, building and construction sectors, as well as enhancing Queensland's education, information technology, science and knowledge based industries. Together let us build a better Queensland and, in doing so, leave the dark economic days of the Palaszczuk Labor government behind.

The Palaszczuk Labor government has delivered a rail fail to South-East Queensland, Labor has delivered a return of ambulance ramping and the Palaszczuk Labor government has allowed the Child Safety department to fall into crisis and chaos just like it did under the failed Beattie Labor government years. The Palaszczuk Labor government has failed on openness and transparency and this is evidenced by its introduction of compulsory preferential voting with only 18 minutes notice and Labor's intention to release only a redacted and diluted version of its Cross River Rail business case. So much for openness and transparency by the Palaszczuk Labor government.

In my closing remarks I want to comment briefly on homelessness and public housing. In Queensland we have a population of over 4.5 million people with approximately 20,000 experiencing homelessness. The reasons for homelessness are varied and complex. I find it offensive when some Labor members assert that the LNP does not care about the vulnerable and those who are homeless. Despite Labor's state budget announcement, it is very disappointing that the Labor Minister for Housing and Public Works cancelled the Logan Renewal Initiative that would have seen 2,600 community houses built and maintained by the private sector but staying in public hands. The federal Liberal National Party government's allocation of \$117 million in funding for homelessness services to 2018 via the National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness is a strong commitment to the vulnerable.

In conclusion, the legacy of Labor is always mismanagement, broken promises and economic vandalism. The choice at the next election is clear: only the Liberal National Party will build a better Queensland by tackling cost-of-living pressures, including rising family car registration, rising power costs, rising water and electricity costs and getting the finances of our great state of Queensland back on track. Together let us build a better Moggill and a better Queensland.