




Speech by

Mark Boothman

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Hansard Thursday, 13 September 2012

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; FISCAL REPAIR AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Albert—LNP) (12.04 am): I rise to speak in support of the first LNP budget—the first conservative budget—in 15 years. This is a budget about building Queensland's economy. It is about building a bright future for Queensland. As a former mortgage broker, I understand families' budgets. One of the primary issues which confronted my clients was the increases in the cost of living. This was a direct result of the previous government's inability to manage our state's finances. It is not the former members of parliament who suffer, but it is the hardworking mums and dads of the Albert electorate who try to make ends meet.

Mr Rickuss: Would you give this previous government a mortgage if you were a mortgage broker?

Mr BOOTHMAN: Definitely not! They have overspent on the credit card. They could not service the mortgage, unfortunately.

Our budget is about building a four-pillar economy focusing on all sectors, not solely relying on the finite resources of one sector. This budget provides corrective measures to rectify the greatest increase in government expenditure—interest. Interest has been the fastest growing expense in the Queensland budget. An amount of \$3.5 billion is needed to service total government sector debt. This will increase to \$5.3 billion, or nine per cent of revenue, in 2015-16. This is a direct reflection of our state living beyond its means. As stated in the independent Commission of Audit report, gross debt is expected to hit \$92 billion in 2015-16 and \$100 billion by 2018-19 if we do not undertake corrective measures now. This would mean a greater burden on every man, woman and child in Queensland. We need to take action. By undertaking responsible fiscal management, we will save taxpayers \$1.3 billion in interest payments over the forward estimates. This represents 1,300 hospital beds, 16,250 additional teachers, or 26 brand-new primary schools.

The electorate of Albert is located within the expanding northern Gold Coast growth corridor where good fiscal management is required to meet Albert's future needs as the population increases. This means that the demand for services and facilities will naturally increase. The previous government certainly was not considering Albert or its residents when continuing to increase the state's debt. Such drunken-sailor spending has hurt our state and has placed large demands on our limited resources. The inability of the previous government to fund adequate infrastructure has left the state with substandard roads and transport networks. Once again, its poor fiscal management and lack of vision is obvious. To those who have lost their jobs I say: I am sorry. However, this is the legacy that Labor left us—a legacy of debt.

Our budget recognises the failures of the previous government to deliver the basic maintenance in our schools. Simple maintenance issues can now be addressed by those who know the issues firsthand—the P&C associations. The Advancing Our Schools Maintenance Fund gives P&Cs the ability to hire local tradies, therefore, keeping the money local and getting the jobs done effectively and efficiently. This has added advantages to eliminate a large proportion of bureaucratic nonsense which they currently endure. There is one school in Albert that desperately needs to repair a faulty roof which is partly collapsed, and the Advancing Our Schools Maintenance Fund is delivering the P&C the power to get this fixed. Albert

residents are also winning in this budget with the delivery of upgrades to the surface of the M1, capital works programs for the Coomera Springs State School early years centre and upgrades of social rental housing properties across various South-East Queensland electorates. This budget has delivered funding for the construction of a new John Muntz Causeway bridge. This bridge was damaged during the natural disasters which hit our state and is a vital arterial road for the Albert community. The Newman government has listened and has provided for Albert residents.

Another issue which is important to Albert is the delivery of police officers on the beat. Our budget is providing an additional 300 new officers for our region over the next four years. During my roadsides and whilst out doorknocking in my electorate, police and policing are generally the first issues raised with me. Delivering this budget commitment shows that the Newman government is listening. Our government is committed to addressing crime through this budget by establishing a major and organised crime squad on the Gold Coast. This commitment will incorporate an illegal firearms team to fight crime.

As several of my colleagues have already mentioned, the first Newman budget is about supporting new home buyers with a more than doubling of the first home owner grant. This initiative will have a flow-on effect to many industries within Albert. It is not about building high-rises; it is about building the family home, the bread and butter for our tradies. As we all know, it is not just the builders who can benefit but also carpet manufacturers, those selling window-dressings, electricians, those selling kitchen and hardware supplies and nurseries. We all know that there are a number of bits and pieces that go into the construction of a new home. As Albert is located in the growth corridor of the Gold Coast, the flow-on effect of this budget initiative has the potential to influence and benefit a broad range of local businesses.

Finally, this government will continue to fight the cost-of-living pressures on families, singles and pensioners. We have proven ourselves by freezing family vehicle registration and electricity tariff 11 and now by providing a water rebate of \$80 to domestic households in South-East Queensland. I wish to thank the Treasurer, the Premier, ministers and my colleagues. This budget is about getting Queensland back on track.