



Speech By
Hon. Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE AMENDMENT AND TRADE AND INVESTMENT QUEENSLAND BILL

 **Hon. JA STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games) (3.06 pm): I rise to speak in this cognate debate on the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2013, the Appropriation Bill 2013 and the Revenue Amendment and Trade and Investment Queensland Bill 2013, all introduced into this House by our Treasurer and Minister for Trade, the Hon. Tim Nicholls, MP. It is fitting that I should be addressing this year's state budget, a budget for Queensland's future, on Queensland Day. As the Minister for Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games and the proud member for Currumbin, I am delighted to speak to this, the 2013-14 budget—a budget that again demonstrates the faith this government places in tourism and small business to help lead the way in growing our economy, creating jobs and rebuilding a more resilient Queensland.

It is common knowledge that when we formed government in March last year we inherited an economy in a dire financial state, an economy that had suffered for over a decade under the incompetent management of the ALP. Queenslanders deserve better, and the LNP government has worked around the clock over the last 12 months to fix the mess that was left to us by those opposite to get Queensland back on track. In handing down this, his second budget, may I commend the Treasurer for continuing the hard work begun last year to set Queensland's finances on the road to recovery, a road that has been made more difficult by the effects of natural disasters earlier this year.

When speaking to last year's budget, I informed the House that tourism was one area of our economy that deserved recognition for being a key job and wealth creator. It is no surprise then that the LNP took tourism to the 2012 state election as one of the four pillars of the Queensland economy together with construction, agriculture and resources. We in the LNP recognise the value that the tourism industry plays in the Queensland economy, supporting 220,000 direct and indirect jobs and investing \$18 billion in revenue. Our goal is to return Queensland to its rightful position as No. 1 preferred destination in Australia and to double overnight visitor expenditure from \$15 billion to \$30 billion by 2020.

Collaboratively, we have achieved a lot over the last 12 months by implementing a range of proactive strategies achieved through forging strong industry relationships compared to 12 months ago. I have to say that the mood then across the state amongst the industry was far less optimistic than it is today. In June last year the Premier and I hosted the inaugural DestinationQ forum in Cairns where we signed a landmark partnership with industry leader QTIC. The 2013 forum is to be held on the Gold Coast in August where we will discuss a 20-year plan for tourism. In 2012 Queensland welcomed more than 20 million international and domestic overnight visitors to the state, a six per cent increase compared to the number in 2011.

We have increased aviation route access into Queensland, welcoming China Eastern, China Southern, Hawaiian Airlines—and I have to say 'aloha'—and the return of Qantas to the Gold Coast. With assistance from my colleague, the Hon. Steve Dickson, the Minister for National Parks,

Recreation, Sport and Racing, we have cut green tape and developed an ecotourism plan. With Minister Emerson we released our Drive Tourism Strategy with an aim to grow the Queensland drive visitor market.

This budget commits more than \$127.1 million to continue to support the state's pro-growth tourism industry. Our Tourism Investment Attraction Unit has a growing list of Queensland investment opportunities, including 56 projects on the tourism investment opportunity register. In December last year we created Tourism and Events Queensland, combining the expertise of the former Tourism Queensland and Events Queensland into one superentity. This entity has already proven instrumental in allowing Queensland to attract new events and produce engaging marketing activity to promote Queensland's regions, both domestically and internationally. \$111.6 million of the budget funds are for this new entity to continue to drive visitation across Queensland's regions through its integrated tourism and events approach, and \$15 million is allocated to build upon the impressive results delivered through the tourism investment strategy from last September's budget.

Regional tourism organisations have not missed out in this budget, with \$7 million provided to the network. \$3.89 million of this is in contestable funding, which is more than double the amount Labor contributed. Queensland boasts a rich and diverse calendar of events that boosts drive visitation into Queensland's regions in our typically quieter periods.

Last week I had the pleasure of welcoming the Bolshoi Ballet premiere *Le Corsaire* here in Brisbane. This is the first time the Bolshoi Ballet has performed in Queensland since 1985, and this is a real coup for our first-world capital city. Later this month Queensland will welcome the British and Irish Lions on their Australian tour, and I understand that many members will be there to cheer them on. In July, 13,445 competitors who have already registered will be visiting the Gold Coast to compete in the Gold Coast Airport Marathon.

Over the next 12 months we will continue to develop Queensland's event calendar with an exciting mix of sporting, cultural and participatory events right across Queensland. These events bring huge economic and social benefits to all of our regions. With nine out of 10 tourism operators also being small businesses, we understand that tourism and small business are intrinsically linked.

The Queensland government is unashamedly pro-small business and is committed to getting Queensland's 412,000 small businesses back on track. After all, small businesses are the backbone of the Queensland economy, representing over 96 per cent of Queensland businesses and employing approximately 50 per cent of all private sector workers. This year's budget allocates \$7 million to continue support for small businesses and deliver business to government services.

This funding will be used to continue the successful whole-of-government business and industry portal, our one-stop shop for business access to government services. Since taking office, we have grown the number of guides on the business and industry portal from 150 to over 600. Over the last 12 months we have seen an increase of over 300 per cent in unique visitor numbers to the business and industry portal, and I am thrilled to report that on 4 June the portal recorded over one million unique visitors—a sure sign it is delivering what small business wants.

In May this year I launched the Queensland small business strategy and action plan 2013-2015, a plan that builds on the government's efforts to date and articulates the policy directions and actions to be delivered over the next two years. Until now there has been no specific, clear plan for supporting small businesses, which drive growth across all industries in Queensland. Under Labor there was not even a department. Labor did not like small business and suffocated them under 92,000 pages of red tape and regulations.

Outlining 32 actions to be delivered across 10 government agencies, the Newman government has committed more than \$1 million in funding for initiatives that will directly assist small micro and non-employing businesses. The inaugural Queensland Small Business Week is just one of the 32 actions in this plan. To be held from Wednesday, 24 July to Wednesday, 31 July, this week will include Buy Locally Saturday on 27 July, which will be the culmination of the Think Queensland, Buy Locally campaign. During this week, events, workshops and seminars will be held across the state in cooperation with industry partners such as CCIQ. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the staff in my department who deal with small business and members of my Queensland Small Business Advisory Council for their enthusiasm and professional expertise, which has seen us achieve such stunning results.

The biggest sporting event Australia has seen in a decade is coming our way in 2018: the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games. With less than five years to go, it is important that the planning and development of the games progress steadily. The colourful and creative emblem has

been launched and brand protection legislation enacted. We are where we should be in the preparation stage of the games. This budget allocates \$100 million to continue these preparations. This funding includes \$59 million for my department and the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Corporation to continue their planning work and progress with the redevelopment of what will be a state-of-the-art Gold Coast aquatic centre, to be completed by June 2014 in time for the Gold Coast to host the 2014 Pan Pacific Games.

It is anticipated that approximately 350 jobs will be created from this development, and an additional \$41 million has been allocated to the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning to develop the Commonwealth Games Village at Parklands. Site works for this village, which is the single-most significant urban renewal project ever undertaken on the Gold Coast, are scheduled to commence from 1 October this year. We are committed to ensuring that preparations progress in a timely manner so that we can deliver the best Commonwealth Games yet and leave behind a lasting legacy for all of Queensland. I am sure that under the experienced guidance of Nigel Chamier and his board, the team at GOLDOC and my hardworking departmental staff, these goals will be achieved.

I now turn to my beloved electorate, Currumbin, where residents are set to benefit now and into the future from a number of ongoing and newly introduced measures. On behalf of local residents, may I thank the relevant ministers for their foresight.

Our two high schools have been big winners, with Palm Beach Currumbin High receiving \$4.3 million to go towards building additional classrooms, and Elanora High School receiving close to \$300,000 to conduct refurbishment works. This is a part of the LNP government's commitment to education, which has seen schools in Currumbin receive well in excess of \$1 million to clear the maintenance backlogs which were left behind by Labor.

Following on from last year's budget, Gold Coast South Home Assist Secure Service has received another \$523,000 to allow them to continue to deliver support for those aged 60 and over. Grants for disability services in Currumbin will total \$4.166 million and are a most welcome assistance for Queenslanders with disabilities, their families and their carers. Social inclusion services in Currumbin will receive a \$2 million boost for a number of worthwhile causes, including youth support and domestic and family violence prevention. A further \$68,000 has been allocated for child safety services in Currumbin, and I commend the government for recognising those in our community who most need the services of the state government.

Over the last 15 months, this government has been unwavering in its resolve to clean up the streets and make our neighbourhoods safer. This budget has allowed \$3 million to continue funding of the Gold Coast police helicopter service, which is an invaluable asset to our area. There has also been \$63 million set aside for the funding of an additional 267 police officers this coming year, as well as the 300 recruited last financial year—part of a recruitment drive which will see 1,100 new police officers over the next four years.

One million dollars has also been set aside to assist Neighbourhood Watch and Crime Stoppers in Queensland. The seven Neighbour Watch groups in Currumbin are very active. We have an eighth group currently in its formation stage. I applaud the government's ongoing commitment to supporting community policing initiatives.

The budget allocates \$260,000 for Energex to upgrade the existing Palm Beach substation located in my electorate as part of a larger project, with a total cost of \$13.8 million to increase network capacity and improve reliability.

Community groups and organisations in the electorate have, through a variety of grants since the 2012 September budget, courtesy of our Treasurer, received funding of over \$500,000, with some big-ticket items including \$93,000 for Tugun Bowls Club to upgrade their ditches and support lawn bowls on the Gold Coast.

The Currumbin electorate has a number of events that are supported by the Newman government and TEQ. Right now Cooly Rocks On is rocking along in Coolangatta, attracting tens of thousands of visitors. Upcoming events in the electorate include Australian Stand Up and Paddleboard Festival, Bleach Festival, Kirra Kite Festival, the AHM Wave Warriors Junior Challenge and the Queensland Ocean Swim Series. It does appear that you need to get wet if you want to attend some of these events in Currumbin but, then again, we do have the cleanest beach in Queensland. Events like these are always well received on the southern Gold Coast as they attract visitors from near and far to celebrate the lifestyle and culture on show on the southern Gold Coast, which we call the gateway to Queensland.

In closing, this is a tough but fair budget. The natural disasters of January and the economic disasters of the ALP left Queensland finances with a gaping hole and with the need for a budget that

promotes growth and rebuilding. This budget is more than a plan for the next 12 months; it is our plan to build upon the solid foundation established in last year's budget to fix Queensland finances, grow the economy and rebuild a more resilient Queensland.

I sincerely thank the staff in my ministerial office; my assistant minister, the honourable member for Cairns; my department; Tourism and Events Queensland; and the TEQ board members. Without them we would not have been able to achieve what we have these past 12 months.