



Speech By  
**Jann Stuckey**

**MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN**

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL**

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (5.53 pm): There had been much anticipation as Queenslanders waited for this budget and, despite a few leaks and teasers, the Treasurer claimed there would be no frills and no pain. We knew that Labor had no plan, but now we know that they are up to their usual tricks of smoke and mirrors, with no signs of relief from government charges and levies. This first-time inexperienced Treasurer has presented us with a budget of sneaky accounting moves as he plans to pickpocket the long service leave and superannuation of public servants. By raiding quarantined funds, Labor plans to cut spiralling debt by shifting it onto the books of state owned power companies. An article in yesterday's *Australian* newspaper by economist Joe Branigan says, 'The central plank of the fiscal charade is that Labor will treat the equity in Queensland's Government Owned Corporations as a giant ATM ...', thereby forgetting that the responsibility for those businesses ultimately lies with the Queensland taxpayer and not the government.

After having the handbrake on Queensland's economy for the past six months and business and investors holding their breath, there is nothing in this budget that builds confidence in our future prosperity. The 'jobs, jobs, jobs' mantra of this Labor government is also true to form. They believe governments create jobs, not the private sector, and will hire at least 10,000 extra public servants, despite a directive that departments slash more than \$1 billion in spending over the next four years. In fact, 3,000 of those jobs will be created in the Public Service this year, causing a \$1 billion blowout in employment costs, while the rest of the state stagnates and unemployment is predicted to remain at 6.5 per cent.

On Monday, 6 July, the Leader of the Opposition launched the LNP's Real Economic Plan for Queensland, focused on jobs, economic diversity and growth, because we know that a sustainable and growing economy does not just happen; it requires a properly developed plan. However, those opposite think the exact opposite. Having found themselves in government without any plans and realising that they have inherited back their own debt, they decided to load up the ledgers of the GOCs with more debt which, in effect, is just kicking the can down the road. Nothing has changed. The Premier's priority has been putting union bosses in the driver's seat and trying to turn school principals and other public servants into union recruiters under Labor's commitment to union encouragement. Is that why the contract of the director-general of the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games was terminated five months after this government's election? Wouldn't he toe the line on union encouragement? Did the Premier and cabinet wait and see who signed up the most union members and sack those who underperformed?

I would like to acknowledge the remarkable and innovative efforts of Dr Richard Eden, who has given some 25 years of apolitical and absolutely professional service, which saw him awarded the Public Service Medal in 2014 for outstanding public service to education, training and employment for the period when those opposite were last in government. Yet the Premier has expressed Labor's

appreciation by disgracefully showing him the door. It is a tale all too frequently being told as ministers are too busy or too arrogant to treat people with respect.

The member for Ashgrove went to the media bragging that she was managing her workload very well, but it seems that others do not agree. The sudden resignations of Tourism Events Queensland board members, including chairman Stephen Gregg, bring whispers of low morale and a minister who is too busy to show interest. Did the minister ask him to stay? Did she ask him to go? What did he have to fear? The reason Stephen Gregg was there in the first place was that the industry wanted him and I know, because I consulted them. Has the minister consulted broadly to install a new chair of Tourism Events Queensland? Under Labor, the chair came from outside Queensland and the industry felt neglected and resentment was widespread.

Everywhere I go around the state, tales of discontent with Minister Jones prevail. One operator came all the way from the outback for a scheduled appointment and was told that the minister had stood them up and gone to an appointment elsewhere. When in Winton for the new branding launch in this budget, she brushed aside the same person as she wanted to go shopping in Winton. Similarly in Yeppoon, Minister Jones was too busy to visit any tourism operators, who were affected very badly when Cyclone Marcia hit Byfield. Other industry organisations are mockingly told to join the queue for an appointment with this minister because there are 600 in front of them. In Melbourne at the Australian Tourism Exchange, or ATE, the very same minister embarrassed Queensland tourism operators when she shamefully politicised the event and talked down Queensland. Sunshine Coast operators were appalled. They were riding high with a big boost to their domestic visitor numbers. One operator was so disgusted that Queensland's tourism minister would politicise an international industry event that he wrote a media article about it.

May I remind the minister that the LNP doubled the level of funding for regional tourism organisations, which she referred to as regional tourism operators in one of her releases. We doubled it to \$7 million per annum ongoing. I hope the minister has worked out the difference by now and maintains RTO funding.

Earlier this month the minister put out two releases on national visitor statistics on the very same day. One was gloating the fact that there was an extra 900,000 visitors to Queensland. The other was blaming the low numbers to the Whitsundays on the LNP's supposed funding cuts. This minister cannot even agree with herself.

If the minister is genuinely concerned about the Whitsundays, why is she not holding this year's DestinationQ forum there? Why not hold it in the magnificent Whitsundays? They are one of Queensland's big five tourism destinations and are totally dependent on tourism. You would think she would make it a priority. But the local member is from the LNP. According to my colleague the honourable member for Whitsunday she has not even bothered to visit the region once. I have registered my interest in attending Townsville's DestinationQ forum and I will be interested to see how my application is processed.

The minister has made some very misleading claims about supposed funding cuts to the Tourism budget in coming years. I ask honourable members to listen carefully. If we took Labor's election promise seriously, then we would see that she is being untruthful with funding figures and has not delivered on Labor's own tourism election guarantee. Labor's election documents pledged to restore funding they claim the LNP cut from the TEQ budget and provide an additional \$40 million over four years. Minister Jones's claim that the LNP was ripping \$188 million out of TEQ is a complete untruth and exposes her as short-changing the industry somewhere in the vicinity of \$60 million over four years, just so she can claim cheap political points.

The LNP committed to maintain funding levels for Tourism and Events Queensland. In fact, we committed an additional \$60 million on top of Tourism and Events Queensland's base funding for the Queensland first tourism fund for events.

Our January 2013 Drive Tourism Strategy recognised the importance of this market and saw brilliant destination picture signage. Some 300 signs were rolled out across Queensland. In the 2015 election we pledged another \$20 million for more of these and improvements to Queensland's 730 roadside rest areas. Will Labor continue this fabulous tourism initiative? Capricorn Enterprise were recently praising the rollout of these attractive road signs and the success of the LNP'S Drive Tourism Strategy, which concludes this year.

This budget has created doubt about the government's intentions to implement Destination Success, the LNP government's 20-year plan for tourism's future prosperity, in full. A lot of work has gone into the DestinationQ strategy by industry. Where is Labor's commitment to follow through?

All this minister does is carp and moan and she is becoming increasingly loose with the truth. The V8 contract was negotiated under my guidance for three years ending in 2016. The budget for this did not come from Tourism and Events Queensland; it came from Treasury and is administered through TEQ. So her scaremongering that major events could be lost shows how out of touch and uncommitted she really is to tourism.

Of real concern, though, are the Treasurer's comments that funding is guaranteed for events like the V8s. Is this funding now going to come out of TEQ's budget for the first time? If so, it will blow a hole in the extra \$10 million promised each year on top of TEQ's supposed restored funding.

The Palaszczuk government just does not take tourism seriously. Labor have fudged their election pledge of a tourism cabinet subcommittee and one for the Commonwealth Games by combining the two into a three-person committee. This committee is made up of the Minister for Tourism, the Deputy Premier and the Treasurer. None have any tourism or Commonwealth Games experience. This trio will only meet quarterly yet the LNP had up to seven ministers on a dedicated cabinet committee and it met bimonthly.

What damage to Queensland's tourism industry did Labor and the Greens' relentless attack on the health of the Great Barrier Reef do to turn people away? Tourism operators say this ongoing negative scare campaign has done enormous damage to the reputation of the reef and visitation. No wonder Labor has put up \$100 million over five years—not in the Tourism budget, I might add. But the amount is truly tokenistic when compared to the LNPs \$35 million per year towards reef water-quality improvements.

Then there's the killing off of proposed ecotourism projects like the Obi Obi zip line. On 28 September 2014 then shadow environment minister Trad said—

We don't think that national parks should be opened up to full commercial ventures. I think it really will make people think twice about coming to Kondalilla ...

The proponents recently cleared another hurdle, but if Trad has her way this project will not ever see the light of day. It was this antidevelopment culture of successive Labor government's that starved Queensland of new product offerings. It was this culture that stalled the development of Great Keppel Island.

What about Trad's decision on North Stradbroke Island to cut mining jobs in 2019 but not start the new development at Toondah Harbour until around the time mining has been forced to stop? All these jobs will be lost. The Deputy Premier said sandminers could swap jobs! What? Miners working in construction without proper training! What on earth would the unions say about that?

Gold Coast Tourism's Martin Winter said that the tourism economy throughout Queensland—in fact, throughout the world—relies on two things. One is a strong and vigorous campaign to tell people why they should come to the destination and the second is in supporting tourism infrastructure. This government has already failed in both areas. They have been campaigning to drive people away from our magnificent Great Barrier Reef and imposing heavy-handed union restrictions that discourage new investment and infrastructure.

Queensland's racing minister is described as the invisible man—a phantom. He gained that moniker for his reluctance to meet with industry groups. However, his brusque manner and disrespectful sacking of Queensland Racing's three boards via voicemail or a staff phone call exposed him as a person unprepared to do a minister's job and one who gets others to do his dirty work.

The member for Rockhampton is part of a government intent on destroying Queensland's \$855 million racing industry, crushing public confidence and using the MacSporran report into atrocious live-baiting practices in the greyhound racing industry to take a swipe at all three codes. Out of the 15 recommendations, the only one that Labor moved to implement was abolishing the three boards, which will do nothing to stop this abhorrent practice. Now the minister is using scare tactics to frighten jockeys and trainers with reductions in educational training and coveted prize money.

Country racing events are in the minister's sights too with a commitment of only one year. The LNP recognised the social and economic value of country racing and revitalised it across Queensland. We remember what happened to country racing the last time Labor was in power. Rather than sit down and talk with industry representatives from Racing Queensland, the member for Rockhampton chose

to meet with former deputy chair Barry Taylor three times whilst refusing to meet with others who were prevented from sharing their strategies to improve the financial position of Racing Queensland.

Just like Minister Jones talks down tourism, Minister Byrne talks down racing. I fear his late decision to finally consult with staff from Racing Queensland, the Office of Racing and, you guessed it, unions will not spare some more staff from the scalpel. Whispers of a stitch-up are rife and names like Ludwig and Bentley are frequently uttered.

One of the biggest losers in this budget is Currumbin. It does not even feature on the Gold Coast and Logan regional map in the budget papers. The majority of new infrastructure and roads were already in the pipeline for the 2018 Commonwealth Games, which, I might add, I am proud to say the LNP left well prepared, on time and on budget.

In the lead-up to the 2015 election I made a fully costed, fully budgeted pledge of \$450,000 over three years for the Currumbin Sanctuary Wildlife Hospital to continue its life-saving work treating over 8,000 injured wildlife annually. After an unnecessarily rude response to a question on notice from the Minister for Environment, it comes as no surprise that those opposite have turned their backs on the hospital yet again. When the member for Ashgrove was previously environment minister, she waxed lyrical about koalas but failed to even visit Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary or offer a single cent to assist it, with successive Labor governments exploiting the sanctuary on numerous occasions by using it for cute, cuddly photo opportunities.

Thank goodness for funding allocated by the LNP government, including \$300,000 worth of infrastructure for our picturesque and popular Currumbin Creek to provide better and safer amenities for a multitude of user groups. The establishment of the Gold Coast Waterways Authority by the LNP in 2012 has enabled the provision of new infrastructure thorough community consultation. Over the last couple of months we have had a very popular boat ramp upgraded at Winders Park and a community pontoon installed. Funding has been set aside and the process is well underway to have another pontoon installed up the creek at Preston Park.

It is an undisputed fact that, after years of a limp-wristed approach by Labor to law and order, and specifically the unchecked behaviour of criminal motorcycle gangs, crime on the Gold Coast had reached unprecedented levels. Our dedicated men and women in blue were denied the funding, resources and legislative support they needed and deserved to do their jobs. Morale was low.

Currumbin has a close-knit community that works with our police to keep our neighbourhoods safe, but prior to the election of the LNP we had a government which buried its head in the sand and refused to acknowledge, let alone act, on the escalating problems of hooning and criminal behaviours. This House is well aware of the events that led to legislation being passed in this House that sent an unmistakably clear message to low-life thugs—they could no longer live outside the law; their time was up. Those associated with criminal motorcycle gangs were told, 'You do not own our streets and your behaviour will not be tolerated.' Figures released in late 2014 speak for themselves, with downward trends right across the state, especially in Currumbin.

I stood in this House in 2012 and said that criminals should be afraid of the LNP, that they should clean up their act or get out of Queensland—and they heard it, loud and clear. But comments from Labor's Attorney-General suggesting that the legislation will be watered down and possibly removed are sending shivers down the spines of all law-abiding citizens. The election result on the Gold Coast sent a strong message that people were happy with the tough stance the LNP took on crime. My office regularly received emails from constituents thanking the LNP for introducing the legislation. Now the emails are pleading for this government to listen to the people and to keep these laws.

Police are deeply concerned about bikie legislation being overturned—and already there are signs of a bikie comeback. As I was driving home to Currumbin on the M1 from Brisbane two weeks ago, a patched Mongol zipped by on his bike. Cab drivers were telling me recently that over the past 18 months they have noticed a huge difference when working on night shifts. They feel safe and say there is also that feeling in the community compared to before the new laws were brought in.

Currumbin has its share of public housing and homeless accommodation needs, with some 493 government owned and managed social housing properties. I really hope that some of the funding included in this budget will filter through to Currumbin so those in need will have certainty of a roof over their heads. Blair Athol offers crisis accommodation on the southern Gold Coast, and due to a service shortfall it turned away thousands of people seeking shelter again this year. Again, it would be hoped that we will be getting some relief to address those services.

What has Labor done though as far as cost-of-living measures are concerned? Nothing. They have offered a hike in car registration, whilst the LNP has promised to freeze this to CPI. The former Labor government failed to provide adequate funding to support grassroots sport and recreation. So

today I would like to commend the Minister for Sport for recognising the importance of the LNP's highly successful Get in the Game initiative. Like so many in Queensland communities, I am very pleased to see funding allocated to this LNP program. I commend former minister Steve Dickson for it.

I would like to finish by congratulating the Gold Coast Airport at Coolangatta on its impending \$200 million redevelopment upgrade, with long-awaited aerobridges and extra parking bays. As the gateway into Queensland, we will be able to welcome even more visitors to our magnificent Gold Coast—and let us hope we soon have an ILS to support it.