



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Cleveland—LNP) (2.30 pm): I rise to speak to the government's 2015-16 budget handed down by the Treasurer on Tuesday, 14 July. Previous budgets of the LNP government delivered essential infrastructure and services for the people of Cleveland and Queensland, while repairing the debt and deficit-laden government finances.

In government we delivered fiscally responsible budgets in the face of the difficult economic circumstances we inherited from 14 years of Labor governments. We reduced Labor's debt while investing what was available in schools, hospitals and roads, among other things. We made significant progress in restoring the finances, growing diverse economies and revitalising front-line services. In real terms we increased spending in front-line services like health, education and police.

At the end of our term in government we had reigned in Labor's debt and deficits and left the state's finances in a healthier position than the way we found them. We turned an unsustainable situation that we inherited into a more sustainable one.

With the change of government, the Labor Party inherited a more stable economic situation on which to build. They have an opportunity now that we never had. However, unfortunately, instead of continuing our successful financial strategies they have reverted to type and have brought down a bad budget that increases deficits, increases the debt burden on our children and grandchildren and only delivers for unions.

This first Labor budget is bad for the economy, it is bad for jobs and it is bad for growth. Cumulative over the next three years we see that economic growth is 0.5 per cent lower, employment growth is down 1.75 per cent and unemployment will likely remain at 6.5 per cent. It does not produce the jobs now nor in the future. It does not build confidence in the Queensland economy.

It is a budget of tricks and raids on public servants' long service leave and superannuation entitlements. Despite the assurance from the government, the budget papers reveal that Labor will rip \$3.4 billion from the long service leave fund. The raid on public servant superannuation has no mandate as Labor did not tell Queenslanders they were going to do this before the election.

Of the funds raided, only \$2.6 billion will be applied to debt in 2017-18, but debt will continue to rise. The debt shuffle from general government debt to government owned companies will not pay down debt in any real terms and does not provide a pathway back to a AAA credit rating that the previous Labor government lost.

In my electorate of Cleveland this budget effectively delivers an infrastructure freeze. The government has admitted that in the budget there are no major projects for mainland Redland City. This admission is most evident in the government's own Brisbane regional budget statement that I have here. We all have a copy of the regional budget statement for Brisbane. It has a map in the middle of it. It outlines 17 things that the government is wanting to deliver.

Members can see that across the eastern side of the map—the bayside area of Redland City—there is nothing. There is nothing except towns, areas and suburbs named Cleveland, Sheldon, Victoria Point, Redland Bay and Mount Cotton. All the way through Redland City, the mainland of Redland City, there is nothing at all. We have an infrastructure freeze. That says it all.

There is a freeze in terms of Health infrastructure for Redland City. The government's Capital Statement, Budget Paper No. 3, states that \$1.3 billion will be spent on capital purchases for the Health portfolio, including several identified major projects at Queensland hospitals.

But what is revealed with respect to the greater Brisbane region—that the Redlands and my electorate of Cleveland is a part of—is that no capital funding appears to be set aside for Redland Hospital. The government appears to be planning a drought for capital Health spending in Redland City.

No commitment to the Redland Hospital expansion by widening the hospital precinct footprint on government land north of the current site is evident. The Metro South board was in the process of securing the surplus and unusable greenfield TAFE land north of the hospital to set it aside for the long-term expansion of Redland Hospital—in response partly to my initiative to lock that land away for the hospital precinct—using the QTAMA legislation to achieve that very important outcome.

After five months of no apparent progress on that matter, plus the undoing of the QTAMA legislation, and now with no apparent funds set aside in the budget, the situation is unclear. I call on the health minister today to confirm whether my land acquisition proposal for locking that land away for future hospital expansion is still in process or whether it is no longer being considered.

The budget suggests that there are no capital projects being planned with regard to the Redland Hospital like an intensive care unit, a further rehabilitation area, a wing or a separate area with more beds or even a car park area. There are no plans that can be made out from this current budget. I would be happy for the health minister to explain if that is not the case.

The local health achievement that I was most satisfied with under the LNP government was the establishment of a new \$5.9 million palliative care service or unit at the Redland Hospital. This new health service includes an in-hospital five-bed palliative care service based at the Redland Hospital itself, plus additional in-house or in-home capacity all based out of the Redland Hospital. This was a hard fought for initiative that over a number of years working together with the community we were able to achieve in our time in government.

We also completed the construction of the new emergency department at the Redland Hospital, including a paediatric section and 10 new short-stay beds, among other things. The joke however at the Redland Hospital was that when Labor did the initial planning of the emergency department expansion they forgot to budget for the recurrent costs to employ the additional ED nurses and doctors. So there was no money left to employ anyone when it was opened.

Mr Crandon: So they call that a joke now?

Dr ROBINSON: It was the joke going around. Under the LNP government more ambulance officers and new ambulances were provided at Cleveland and Birkdale stations. A new and better ambulance station was built in Cleveland to replace the old one that burnt down. It is not clear from the budget papers whether Cleveland and Birkdale stations will receive anything in the future. We will have to wait and see whether my ambos will be supported to do their jobs, I guess.

The Labor government's budget reduces the increase in Health spending to a mere 4.1 per cent. This is substantially less than the increase in Health spending in the last LNP budget. So we see that Labor has reduced the rate of growth of Health spending by cutting funding, in all likelihood, from areas like Redland City and Redland Hospital. People are receiving no identifiable infrastructure funding.

This compares poorly to the substantial investment in capital and recurrent funding at the Redland Hospital under the LNP government. Under the LNP government we got our fair share of Health funding, but under this Labor government we are getting a hospital infrastructure freeze in Redland City. Sadly, this budget not only imposes an infrastructure freeze on capital expenditure at the Redland Hospital but it cancelled the LNP's Mums and Bubs initiative. This initiative supported new mums at one of the most vulnerable times in their lives. Now this government has cut that support for our mums and their babies.

There is also a freeze on education infrastructure in Redland City. The government's Capital Statement, Budget Paper No. 3, states that Labor will make capital purchases of some \$427 million in schools across the state. But none of this funding is identified for projects in Cleveland schools. Cleveland schools do not appear to be receiving their fair share of capital funding—again, we see an infrastructure freeze in Redland City. It seems that, with less than 50 per cent of the seats, Labor

electorates will receive some 60 per cent of listed education capital funding. That explains why Cleveland does not appear to be receiving our fair share.

Under the LNP government, important capital works occurred like the construction of the Cleveland State High School year 7 building and the Bay View State School indoor auditorium. But there are still challenges remaining that this bill should be addressing in my view, like the indoor multipurpose auditorium for Cleveland High. It is one of only two state high schools, I am told—I believe—that is without a hall or auditorium in which the whole school can assemble undercover. Almost 1,900 students now attend Cleveland District State High School and soon it will be 2,000. An undercover auditorium is badly needed.

Under the LNP government, Cleveland schools loved receiving the Great Results Guarantee funding. It is a pity that from 2016, at least, there is no guarantee of the guarantee. Labor has also failed to plan for the 443 extra classrooms statewide that our students will need over the next 10 years. Some of those additional classrooms will soon be needed at Cleveland State High School. In time a new high school will likely be needed in the southern Thornlands area. I call on the government to investigate this and respond to these emerging needs.

The last LNP government budget contained an increase in education funding of seven per cent over the previous year. The increase in education funding provided improved education for Queensland children. The Great Results Guarantee initiative invested millions of dollars in the schools of the Cleveland electorate, together with our fair share of the \$300 million school maintenance program.

The installation of flashing school lights at Wellington Point State High School, Wellington Point State School, Thornlands State School and Redlands Special School has improved safety for our children going to and from school. Star of the Sea Catholic School and Redlands College have a commitment to receive flashing school lights in the near future as well.

There has also been a freeze on public transport and major arterial roads in Redland City and the Cleveland area. The government's Capital Statement, Budget Paper No. 3, states that there will be \$3.9 billion spent on transport and main roads across the state. But again the infrastructure freeze upon Cleveland and Redland City means no funding for major transport and main roads infrastructure.

The government has provided no funding for the Eastern Busway, as the former Labor premier Bligh and the current Premier when transport minister standing by her side promised to do. They promised to do so, yet there was no funding from the state coffers in the forward estimates. They have no funding for the rail duplication to Cleveland station, despite the Labor candidate in the 2012 election promising, as part of an election promise, that they would duplicate the rail line to Cleveland station. I call on the government to fulfil that commitment of one of its candidates. They have no funding for upgrades and car parking at Ormiston and Birkdale stations. There is nothing for public transport.

A government member interjected.

Dr ROBINSON: I am happy for the member to point out where it is in the budget, but it does not appear to be there. There is no funding for major arterial roads that are already suffering from traffic congestion. Labor's solution to traffic congestion in Redland City is more cars on the roads and less public transport. There are no dollars for Rickertt Road in a joint funding arrangement with the Brisbane City Council. It is admittedly a Brisbane City Council road but in the past it was jointly funded with state funds and Redland City Council funds for the Redland City side of the road—so there are no funds there. There are no funds for the Cleveland-Redland Bay Road duplication, no funds for Old Cleveland Road, no funds for Mount Cotton road—nothing.

In comparison, the LNP in government continued to invest in things like the Eastern TransitWay, provided an additional 450 seats at peak time on the Cleveland line and upgraded the Cleveland station. Probably the biggest achievement of the LNP government in Redland City was the planning of Toondah Harbour. This PDA PPP development and transport hub is a \$1.3 billion mixed commercial-residential-marina and ferry terminal project that was made possible by the LNP's Economic Development Act. It will generate 1,000 jobs per annum in the construction stage and many jobs beyond that ongoing in tourism, hospitality and small business. But those jobs will not replace Labor's job losses on North Stradbroke Island. So the securing of this project by the LNP in our time in government should not be used as a reason for this government to impose its infrastructure freeze upon Redland City.

In terms of shutting North Stradbroke Island mining down by 2019, I want to make just a few comments—and much more in the future will probably need to be said, and also in terms of Toondah Harbour there is much more to be said. This year's state budget has delivered bad news for North

Stradbroke Island residents. Without consultation they have discovered that this government will legislate to shut mining down by 2019, sacking up to 600 workers in direct and indirect jobs—and 50 of those are Indigenous workers with very dignified, well-paid jobs. I am proud of the Dunwich community as one of the finest examples of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people living together. One of our best communities is now going to have up to 50 Indigenous jobs taken away by a decision of this Labor government, and I think that is an absolute shame. I do not see how that in any way closes the gap that we see here in Australia and in Queensland, when many of us with a background like me in Indigenous education have tried to do what we could. This is an absolute disgrace.

I call upon the Premier to intervene and to listen to what the local people are saying. There has been outrage, an outcry, on the island from all segments across-the-board with a few exceptions. The chamber of commerce and the Australian Workers' Union have come out and condemned it. It is an interesting day when the Australian Workers' Union comes out and supports the same thing that an LNP member of parliament is saying. I think if that is not sending some warning bells to those opposite about this decision, I do not know what is. I ask them to consider that and give it further thought before the final decision is taken.

Labor has decided in this budget to put up some \$20 million for the short-term problem, but this will not make any significant dent in the major gap that will be caused by another recession that will happen on the island. I do not have time in this speech to address that in any great detail, but I intend to in the future. I just hope that we can find a bipartisan solution to this so there is not this chopping and changing, stopping and starting—a new date and then another date—so that people can have some certainty about their lives, their businesses, their homes. The prices of homes are going up and down. All of that is very disruptive to their lives. I believe there is a better way to go forward on this.

The \$20 million will not go very far. What will be needed is hundreds of millions of dollars over the next five or so years if 2019 is still the date of when it is going to happen. Everybody is against it. Brisbane Marketing has come out and said that you cannot have a replacement economy with tourism in that period of time. They have come out and said that the previous Bligh plan could not be done in that time frame either. Much longer lead times are needed to grow tourism and that is a very important thing. We would need apparently something like five Tangaloomas almost instantaneously to substitute for the economic loss that would come from the mine closing in such a short period of time. It is not workable. Nobody believes that it really is. I call on the government to think about that and for us to try to come up with a bipartisan solution, and I would be very happy to be a part of making that happen.

In terms of recreational fishers and boaties, there is not much for them to see in this budget. We had a good record while we were in government with the \$50 million Marine Infrastructure Fund. About \$1 million of that was spent on new boat ramps and upgrading boat ramps and floating walkways in the Cleveland area, which was received very well by recreational fishers and boaties. But, unfortunately, this government has cut \$10 million out of their recreational fishing with its cuts to the Marine Infrastructure Fund.

It was a \$50 million fund. I had something to do with putting together the policy a little way back. That \$50 million over four years has become \$30 million over three years. So it has gone from \$12½ million per annum to \$10 million per annum. In anyone's terms, that is a \$2½ million cut per year and \$10 million over the forward estimates for four years. It is a disgrace and it will not be received well by recreational fishermen across Queensland. I am sure they will be very unhappy when they find out that Greens preferences have once again put them backwards. Who knows about the Labor tax on fishing that may be coming with the recreational fishing licence that has been discussed?

In conclusion, much was achieved by the LNP government in the Cleveland electorate. I am very proud of what we achieved, but this infrastructure freeze from this bad budget that has been imposed by this Labor government on the people of Cleveland is unacceptable. I will continue to fight for our fair share of Health, Education Transport, Main Roads and every other state government area that exists.