



Speech By  
**Jann Stuckey**

**MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN**

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

 **Mrs STUCKEY** (Currumbin—LNP) (9.58 pm): In rising to make my contribution to the 2018 appropriation bills, I make the comment that here we are in June addressing the 2018 budget. The state election was seven months ago and many honourable members still have not been given the opportunity to give their first speeches since the election. I am one of those members, and I wish to place on record my frustration that I have been unable to formally thank all those who helped me win a sixth term at the 2017 election. Whilst I am on my feet delivering my budget reply, may I say a huge thank you to everyone who helped with the Currumbin LNP campaign. You are simply the best.

The Treasurer's 2018-19 budget slugs Queenslanders with five new taxes. In typical Labor fashion, they revealed four of them just prior to the 25 November election saying they would be the only ones they would introduce for this 2018-19 budget, but now there are five. The fifth is a waste tax. It was not part of an election promise but is a devious money grab from a government that grows more arrogant by the day. It is estimated that \$1.3 billion will be raised over four years, but it is going into Treasury coffers and there is no guarantee it will not hit families hard too.

Of note is what was not in the past few budgets—that is, several billion dollars in underspend, and that should be concerning to all Queenslanders. Interest on current debt borrowing was \$6.2 billion over the past three financial years. These years of Labor inaction slowed Queensland's economy, and now they want you to believe that we are the land of milk and honey as they splash billions of dollars of cash they have borrowed and every Queenslanders will have to pay it back in infinity.

Now we know that Queensland is heading for a record \$83 billion worth of debt. Treasurer Trad sounded proud of it in recent interviews; she used that word a lot. Queensland's debt per capita is the second highest in Australia at \$14,000, and we are paying off about \$1.7 billion in interest every year. Rather than forge plans to pay down debt, the Palaszczuk government will do the usual finger-pointing and blame the federal government. Labor spends, spends and spends like there is no tomorrow and then expects someone else to pay for it.

Greater royalties from coal than were expected is a case of good luck rather than good planning. Estimated at around \$3.7 billion, this represents an increase of \$530 million or more on the midyear forecast. Here Labor show their true, sneaky and shameless form as they play the anti-coalmining game to appease the Greens. In the *Courier-Mail* on Saturday, 9 June, senior political reporter Steven Wardill commented that Labor's search for an economic narrative since winning government in 2015 has been largely fruitless. That is a profound understatement, as Labor's economic narrative does not exist. Here we have a Treasurer who thinks being a good Treasurer is to spend what you do not have and to heck with the consequences. This is a borrowing budget that will bury us further into debt.

It is hard to know what Labor stand for as they sway this way and that, dancing to the beat of their masters, the unions, and also the Greens. It certainly is not jobs for Queenslanders, unless of course it is the public service. Before members opposite get their knickers in a knot, let me say that I have a lot of respect for public servants. I have family members who worked at state and federal levels. The Premier's mantra that she is rebuilding the Public Service rings hollow, or perhaps she just cannot count. Who could forget that she did not even know the GST rate?

CCIQ said the Public Service headcount continues to grow unsustainably, demanding a heavier reliance on tax revenues. CCIQ are calling for a moratorium on pay rises for public servants until private employers can catch up. They were not alone in their criticism. On 23 April, the *Courier-Mail's* front-page story by Steven Scott headed 'Fat Cat and too many friends' stated—

The Queensland Government has gone on a staggering hiring spree for highly paid public servants, ballooning the number for senior bureaucrats by 30 per cent in Annastacia Palaszczuk's first term in power.

More than 4,000 extra jobs were created at the top end of the Public Service on salaries of more than \$147,000, exploding at three times the rate of the rest of the bureaucracy and costing taxpayers a minimum of \$700 million a year. How many front-line teachers, nurses or police are on \$147,000? Not many that I talk to in Currumbin. So much for their 'jobs, jobs, jobs' mantra. Queensland had the worst unemployment rate in Australia under this Palaszczuk government at 6.5 per cent, with 9.5 per cent and 8.7 per cent reported for Wide Bay and Ipswich respectively.

It is this government's attacks on small business and private enterprise that are causing enormous angst. Everyday living costs have shot up under this fake regime. Water and electricity costs have skyrocketed and the new waste tax will cripple many. I am proud to be part of the LNP which genuinely backs small business. We always have, we always will. Labor continually tear them down, drown them in red tape and punish them.

Premier Palaszczuk let Peter Beattie loose again in Queensland to wreak havoc, this time as chair of the Commonwealth Games, where he showed his hatred of and disdain for small business on numerous occasions, labelling them whingers, telling them to suck it up and casting their genuine concerns aside with a sneer. What did the Minister for the Commonwealth Games do? Did she defend them? Of course not. She was too busy trying on her dresses and deciding what to wear. She completely ignored their pleas for help.

It was just like the poor residents who were told the Tugun desalination plant was for the common good. The contractors visited them to document the status of their homes pre construction, but once the plant was built they left town and left residents high and dry with damage to their homes. The same has happened to businesses which lost weeks of trade due to the Commonwealth Games. They were told business would be booming, that the games would be a huge opportunity, but that was not the case for so many of them who now find they have no-one to report their complaints to—no claims, no compensation.

That is why I will be encouraging them to send submissions and respond to the survey launched by the Education, Employment and Small Business Committee's wage theft inquiry. It is not good enough that hundreds of small businesses have to wait until next year for Goldoc to hand down any reports into their losses. They are hurting now. Why isn't there money in this budget for them?

Like all Labor MPs, Ms Jones pays lip-service to small businesses because they cannot and do not understand them. They are too infatuated with unions, and now they have introduced another five taxes to whack them some more. That is why the term 'milkshake duck' fits this Labor government so well. 'Milkshake duck' was Macquarie Dictionary's word of the year for 2017. The dictionary defines it as—

a person who is initially viewed positively by the media but is then discovered to have something questionable about them which causes a sharp decline in their popularity.

It plays to the simultaneous desire to bring someone down and the hope that they will not be brought down themselves, which is exactly the strategy adopted by the Palaszczuk government—do nothing, set up 150-plus reviews, blame the LNP for everything and scare people with fake news. There is something highly questionable about this government.

I move now to my beloved electorate of Currumbin. There was not much new money in this budget, with projects such as the Coplick's sports park receiving funds allocated in previous budgets. New classrooms for Palm Beach Currumbin High School—which is now in the Burleigh electorate but has the majority of its students living in Currumbin—are also part of an ongoing development. Our local councillor advised me that \$2 million of funding has apparently been approved from the Cycle Network Local Government Grants for an ocean pathway to be built from Bilinga to Tugun, but I have not been able to trace that in the budget papers.

After years of inaction from successive incompetent Labor governments, there is finally movement on upgrades to the M1 in my neck of the woods. Minister Bailey and the newbie member for Gaven can finger-point all they want that the LNP in less than three years of government did not build new roads, but talk about the pot calling the kettle black. Labor had the best part of 20 years and they did nothing about the increasing congestion, and meanwhile costs soared. They did not even do a business case to get the M1 into the infrastructure queue. Of the 16 priority projects listed in Infrastructure Australia's 2017 report, the Varsity-Tugun section of the M1 was not mentioned. The milkshake ducks were at it again.

The honourable member for Gaven is trying to take credit when she did nothing to get the ball rolling. I bet she did not sign my M1 petition. Labor were too busy building stadiums that no-one can afford to go to and that have little or no public transport—even the sporting teams cannot afford to play there. It took the Turnbull federal coalition government to break the impasse of M1 funding. This was swiftly followed by a pledge from our leader, the honourable member for Nanango, to match the funding and get on with the job of upgrading this road that is commonly known as the car park.

A huge thank you goes to the long-suffering people of Currumbin whose lobbying of the Palaszczuk government through a 10,000-plus petition in 2016 got the ball rolling, with a commitment of \$5 million for a business case into the widening of the M1 from Varsity Lakes to Tugun. Then the federal government came on board in the beginning of April this year, and the Premier was forced to bow to pressure after forceful vocal advocacy from the majority of Gold Coast residents and shaming from our local newspaper, the *Gold Coast Bulletin*. It was then that the Premier announced she would match the federal government's funding.

Labor's track record for delivering major infrastructure on the southern Gold Coast on time and on budget is woeful. I remind honourable members of the Tugun bypass debacle once again. It was the federal government that put the money on the table, while Queensland under Labor failed to get New South Wales Labor to come to the party.

New South Wales not only did not pay a cent for the road but held a weak Queensland Labor to ransom by wanting a route that ended up costing almost 10 times the original project cost. To add further insult, New South Wales Labor tried to slug Queensland with a \$235,000 land tax bill for building part of the bypass on their land. At just one minute past midnight on 3 June Queensland finally handed responsibility for the bypass tunnel over to New South Wales. It has cost Queensland taxpayers upwards of \$70 million all because Labor could not get their Labor counterparts in New South Wales to pay anything for it. That is Labor's economic credentials for you—or lack thereof—and they have not changed.

Take a look at the desalination plant—\$1.2 billion—built with countless avoidable problems that cost taxpayers plenty. It was rushed through by the asset-selling Bligh government because Labor had not planned for water security or built any dams. The words 'Mary River' still haunt many to this day. Labor owes the good people of Currumbin big time: all that lost revenue—hundreds of millions that could have fixed the M1 congestion years ago.

In the past three years attacks on bus drivers, escalating rock throwing at buses and a massive increase in fare evasion have largely been ignored by the Palaszczuk Labor government. Yes, they did commence a bus safety review in 2016, and we have just heard there is a five-point strategy that includes a voluntary code of conduct for passengers. However, there was nothing to stop the appallingly high number of fare evaders, which has jumped from 425,000 in 2015-16 to over a million in 2016-17, costing \$25 million in lost revenue per year. It took 18 months for this review to see the light of day. Whilst there are some positive initiatives, tens of millions of dollars of revenue every year is lost through fare evasion and nothing is being done to stop it. Meanwhile people say they will not use public transport such as trains because the fares are too expensive. Why should honest passengers have to foot the bill for cheats?

Bits and pieces along Currumbin Creek Road were spruced up for the Commonwealth Games cycling events, but instead of a long-term legacy for the people of Currumbin, who suffered significant disruption, a few signs is all we get. Minister Bailey simply cannot be serious about cycle safety if he is prepared to promote a narrow, dangerous section of road to cyclists yet refuses to widen it. Minister Jones led people to believe she was serious about getting some legacy items. That is what she said in front of a crowd at a chamber breakfast held in Currumbin before she shot off to bask in the limelight where she could avoid difficult questions.

I have often spoken of my admiration for the staff who perform miracles at Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary Hospital, treating in excess of 10,000 injured wildlife each year. Numbers are rising and funding is critical to carry on this wonderful work. I note the budget has \$250,000 for the hospital—the

third year of a four-year commitment. The LNP promised \$350,000 a year for four years commencing this final year, which was significantly more than Labor's offering and gave longer certainty. Given Labor's proclaimed desire to protect koalas and other wildlife one would think they could allocate more.

Finally, we have seen Labor's long overdue Koala Expert Panel's final report released. It is interesting that of the six key objectives there are 43 recommended actions, but only half of those actually get full government support. Most are in principle. It is little wonder that peak environmental groups are seeing through Labor's sincerity on this issue with the government's response slammed by the Australian Koala Foundation as just hot air.

I cannot speak about Currumbin without acknowledging all of the fantastic community and sporting groups, our surf lifesavers and front-line service people: our police, ambos, teachers, health workers and many more.