




Speech By
Rob Molhoek

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (11.20 am): I rise to speak in respect of the budget. I start by congratulating our leader on an outstanding response here in the House yesterday. I also want to make a few comments. I received a few text messages while our leader was speaking yesterday, complimenting her and asking for my opinion. Deb is an outstanding leader. She has worked to pull our team together like no-one else in the eight years I have been a member of this parliament. She is hardworking. She is engaging. She is committed. In fact, I would go so far as to say that she is a top-quality, quintessential Queenslander. She understands the challenges Queenslanders face. She is well connected and well acquainted with both the city and the bush. I am very proud to be part of the LNP team in this House.

I turn my attention now to the electorate of Southport. I am immensely proud of what our local community has achieved in the eight years I have been the member for Southport. I am immensely proud of the progress that has been made in Southport. This in no small part goes back to the early declaration by our government at the time of Southport as a priority development area. That is thanks to the great work of Jeff Seeney, the then deputy premier, the planning department and people like Councillor Dawn Crichlow, our mayor and John Howe, who really saw the need to implement some very strong measures in respect of the revitalisation of Southport. I want to talk about some of those achievements.

Over the past eight years we have seen incredible growth in jobs and opportunity within the Southport electorate. We have seen some \$3 billion invested in the Southport electoral district by way of the light rail, the Commonwealth Games village and the new hospital. On top of that, there has been an incredible amount of private investment as Southport has released the shackles and opened the way for its redevelopment as a very chic urban suburb. According to the state government's own figures, over the next 16 years the population of Southport is forecast to increase by 60 per cent and will peak at about 80,000 people. That is testament to the hard work of so many good people within my electorate.

I was pleased to hear Bernard Salt's comments at the Future Tourism event yesterday. He recognised that Southport had the second highest number of new jobs in the last census and over the last period. There were 10,100 jobs—more even than Brisbane city, which is fantastic. I make the point that the Southport electoral district accounts for about 16½ per cent of all jobs on the Gold Coast. Some 38,507 Gold Coasters find employment there, and Southport continues to grow and thrive as the now recognised official CBD of the Gold Coast.

This morning the member for Cooper suggested that some of us had not bothered to read Budget Papers 1, 2, 3 and 4. I have read them. There is really not much in there for Southport. I will tell members just how much is actually in the budget for the 18 schools in my area. For Keebra Park State High School there is absolutely nothing. That school is continuing to grow and is in a strong growth area, but there is absolutely nothing. How much has the Minister for Education allocated for the schools in

Benowa—Benowa State High School and Benowa State School? I have looked through the budget documents and can see absolutely nothing. How much is there for Bellevue Park State School? Again, there is not one cent. Ashmore State School is absolutely at capacity, has ageing classrooms and is in desperate need of a significant revamp and investment. How much is in the budget for Ashmore? Absolutely nothing.

We have heard from the education minister great platitudes about how great the children of Queensland are, how much we need to prepare for growth and how we need to be supporting our young people, but she completely fails to recognise the need for any infrastructure investment in schools within the Southport electorate.

There is still plenty of work to be done within the electorate of Southport. We certainly need continued investment in our local courts and courthouse facilities. As so many services are, they are under pressure. As I have highlighted, there will continue to be increasing growth pressure on our schools. Most of the schools are at capacity or approaching capacity. With so many people moving into the area through infill development and growth within the Southport electoral district, there will be an urgent need. I am putting the House on notice that there will be an urgent need for significant investment in our local schools.

It is not just the schools that need attention. Some 10 or 12 years ago the then member for Southport, Peter Lawlor, released a beautiful glossy brochure about the need to upgrade Southport Nerang Road, basically from Wardoo Street all the way through to Queen Street. If you drive that corridor you will see large parcels of land sitting vacant and businesses set back in anticipation. What has happened? Absolutely nothing. There is not even any money in the budget for that. There is nothing in the forward estimates. There is nothing in QTRIP. The Southport Nerang Road realignment from Wardoo Street to Queen Street is a priority. It needs to be looked at, along with significant adjustments to, or realignment of, the intersection at Edmund Rice Drive and Southport Nerang Road because of significant congestion issues around nearby schools. With the continued growth of Griffith University on the southern side of Smith Street, which also feeds into Edmund Rice Drive, that section of road is coming under more and more pressure.

I was pleased to see that our mayor has announced the realignment of, and improvements to, the old Sundale Bridge, the Southport-Main Beach bridge. That is a great step forward. I congratulate the mayor on that initiative. It is something that many of us have been talking about for a long time. The additional lanes on that bridge will certainly ease some of the congestion issues at Main Beach and The Spit.

This budget is disappointing. Many members have risen in the House over the past 24 hours to talk about the debt burden, the higher taxes and the lack of critical spending in important areas. One of the things that continues to concern me and my colleagues is the lack of responsiveness in relation to law and order. As I understand it, the Southport Police Station currently has 80 to 90 officers assigned. It covers one of the largest policing districts on the Gold Coast. It is in fact one of the busiest police stations in the state. It is a police station that is constantly under pressure.

I am told that around 30 per cent of Southport Police Station's workload deals specifically with domestic violence and family related issues. If we do the maths and work out what a typical seven-day roster looks like, we can appreciate just how stretched those resources are. My plea to the minister is that the government review policing numbers for the Gold Coast, particularly for the Southport policing district. We absolutely need to get these youth justice issues resolved. The pressure that it has put on the Southport watch house and employees of the Southport Police Station in terms of having to look after the overflow from Brisbane watch houses has been significant. We absolutely need urgent action to support our officers on the ground.

There has been a lot said in the budget reply speeches about health. While I am extremely pleased that we have one of the largest and most modern hospitals within the electorate or on the fringe of the electorate as a result of the boundary changes at the last election, that hospital continues to come under incredible pressure. It is just appalling to think that in just four short years we are back to the situation we were in under the previous Labor government with ambulance ramping at the hospital and many occasions where the hospital is absolutely stretched to the limits in terms of its ability to cope with the demand.

Our leader said it well when she said that the role of government is to help Queenslanders get a job and get ahead. Our leader also said it well when she made the comment that it costs a lot of money to be this bad at running Queensland. Along with my colleagues, I am absolutely appalled at the lack of response from the Treasurer on how she intends to manage the issue of debt. I am absolutely appalled and concerned about the legacy of debt that we are leaving for our kids. As a father of four

grown-up boys and now a grandfather, the legacy that we are leaving for future generations is completely unacceptable. We heard the Leader of the Opposition talk about how Labor does things—that is, when it runs out of money, it comes after yours with higher taxes and charges. I can assure members that an LNP government will not spend more than it receives, just like every household—

Ms Pease interjected.

Mr MOLHOEK: I will take that interjection, because the commentary that I am hearing about sacking is coming from the same government which has announced a razor gang to reduce the Public Service by some 17,000 people over the remainder of this term. The hypocrisy of those on the other side of the House is breathtaking.

After five years in power, all the Palaszczuk Labor government has done is delivered higher taxes, more debt and fewer jobs. As a representative of the people of my electorate, all I can say is that I am incredibly disappointed with this budget. The government has failed to deliver on some of the fundamental needs of the electorate. It is failing our local schools because there has been no provision made for the expansion or growth of schools. It is failing in terms of dealing with some of the road issues. Those opposite have a lot to say about jobs, but while they are talking about creating jobs we have got on with the job in Southport. I am incredibly proud of the fact that we are recognised as the No. 2 jobs growth electoral district within the state. There are a great many hardworking people within my electorate who can be proud of the work that they have done to make that possible.