




Speech By
Mark Boothman

MEMBER FOR THEODORE

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE
AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; STATE FINANCIAL
INSTRUCTIONS AND METWAY MERGER AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BOOTHMAN** (Theodore—LNP) (4.10 pm): Today I rise to make a contribution to the appropriation bills debate. There have obviously been a lot of speeches before mine as I am the last LNP opposition member to speak in this debate, but I want to make my contribution about my electorate and the things that I want to see in my electorate—an electorate that I am truly humbled and proud of and an electorate where residents go the extra mile to help each other. We saw that recently with the Christmas storms. Residents gave up their time, even in the middle of the night, to go to their next-door neighbour's property to see if they were all right and to clear driveways and roadways. That shows what a true strong community can be.

As I travel across my electorate—whether it is doing my regular roadsides in the afternoons, doorknocking, doing letterbox drops or during storm clean-ups—I continually hear the frustration of so many residents when it comes to the issues facing them. As other members of the opposition have said for quite some time, there are four issues: the cost-of-living crisis, the youth crime crisis, the housing crisis and the health crisis. As we hear regularly in this chamber, these complaints are not unique to the northern Gold Coast but are ingrained across the length and breadth of our state.

The great Australian dream that many of my residents look forward to is one day owning their own home, but rent increases on the northern Gold Coast are far outstripping their ability to ever save enough to buy that dream. I refer to people like Andy, who is paying \$750 a week in rent on a single income while trying to look after his family; or Ben, who is now living with friends and family after a desperate bid to pay \$850 a week in rent; or Emma and her partner, who are both working but put all of their wages into their rent, which is \$950 per week in Maudsland. This is crippling families. Emma moved to the Gold Coast for the lifestyle. She has no lifestyle. She is struggling to pay the rent, to keep the kids in school and to put food on the table.

We hear all of these promises about housing. The government says, 'We're going to complete all of these new houses. There's a \$2 billion fund.' These residents do not believe that. Members only need to walk about a thousand metres from where we are today down Albert Street to see the stream of homeless people sleeping on the footpaths, in tunnels and on benches. We live in a modern, First World country and that is something we should be ashamed of. It is put down to poor planning and poor investments. We need to take serious action because these are our residents—our voters—who are crying out for help.

I now want to talk about victims of crime. I want to talk about Pat. Pat's house was broken into a while back. Afterwards he felt that his life was violated and that his house—his dominion, his castle—was violated. To add insult to injury, his insurance costs went up because crime is forcing insurance premiums to go up, and with serious repeat offender rates skyrocketing by around 66 per cent since 2019 we can certainly understand why. These residents are taking matters into their own hands. They

are out there doing security. Some of them—and this concerns me greatly—are forming mobs to patrol their own streets. The last thing I want to see is people placing themselves in harm's way. Let's look at the number of offences against property by 10- to 17-year-olds from the crime report of the Queensland Government Statistician's Office for 2022-23. There were 37,775 offences committed. The second highest age group with regard to those offences was 30- to 39-year-olds, with 20,502 offences. That highlights the problem we are dealing with.

I turn to hospitals. Ed is a fantastic fellow. He tirelessly gave up his time to work with Crime Stoppers to try to make a difference for our community. He is on the waiting list for a heart operation and he keeps being told that his treatment will be delayed and deferred. He is frustrated. His family is frustrated. When he recently got up out of a chair, his blood pressure dropped to such a low level that he collapsed back into the chair. As I said, these are our residents, these are our families and these are our voters.

The northern Gold Coast and the Theodore electorate—somewhere, as I said, I am truly proud to live—has the Coomera River running from west to east straight through the heart of it and, together with the M1 motorway that runs north to south, pretty much divides my electorate into four corners. On the western edge is Mount Tamborine. Mount Tamborine has two main thoroughfares from the Gold Coast—Henri Robert Drive and Tamborine Oxenford Road. Unfortunately, there continue to be deaths on that road because this road has become a major thoroughfare for commuters coming from the western side of Tamborine Mountain to the Gold Coast. It is a steep mountain road. Only a couple of weeks ago a truck lost control and that driver paid with his life. This happens too regularly. Therefore, we need to find a solution to get vehicles away from using these mountain roads and give them a viable alternative by properly planning future road infrastructure to connect the areas west of the Darlington Range to the Gold Coast.

Tamborine Oxenford Road is becoming an extremely busy road. It carries over 20,000 cars per day. It is a single-lane bidirectional carriageway. Hope Island Road, which carries 32,000 cars a day, is a dual-lane bidirectional carriageway, which means it has four lanes, whereas Tamborine Oxenford Road has two lanes for the vast majority of it. Every single morning, cars are queuing up to go down Tamborine Oxenford Road because the road simply does not have the capability to take that amount of traffic. To make things even more scary, in 2017, when we had a large flood in the area, the connection road to the bridge washed away. To this day, that has not been properly repaired to prevent any future major erosion events of the riverbank upstream from the John Muntz bridge. Twenty thousand vehicles will have to find another route to get across the M1 or to use the M1. Last time it happened, queuing was immense. It sent the electorate into meltdown and it was killing businesses up in Mount Tamborine. That road is important. This is the main thoroughfare for tourism for Mount Tamborine. It hurt them. It destroyed many businesses.

In relation to our interchanges, a few years ago the government spent \$25 million on exit 57. Those upgrades have done virtually nothing to help the congestion at that interchange. That interchange is still as much of a quagmire as it was back in 2019. Exit 54 is beyond its capacity. There is extensive queuing there from Foxwell Road in the electorate of Coomera and from Days Road. It has gone past its capacity. We need to build another road between those two interchanges to relieve the stress on those interchanges so that people on the western side of the motorway can use the Coomera Connector. That will make a real difference. The Gold Coast city council has been pushing for this and it is something that we need to get behind.

Another issue that perplexes me, looking through the budget documents, is that much of the money spent in my electorate we have known was coming. At Coomera State School there are 150-year-old classrooms that came from the old Maudsland school, which closed in the sixties or seventies. That has white ants in it now. It desperately needs restoration work. The last thing we want is that piece of history to be demolished. That school is in desperate need of a playground. Park Lake State School is desperately after air conditioning for its hall because in summer the hall is—there are no other words for it—like a sweatbox. It is too hot for students to sit there.

We have seen a massive increase in the patronage of our sporting clubs. We are getting a lot more young ladies participating in sports such as AFL, cricket and soccer, and they need facilities. We need sporting grants for big infrastructure to open up again. These clubs want to get young girls involved in these sports, but at the moment they have to share the change rooms with the boys.

I reiterate my support for the vision of the Leader of the Opposition when it comes to home ownership. This will make a real difference. That \$2 billion infrastructure fund to help local government build the infrastructure we need will make a massive difference in the regions of the northern Gold Coast and other parts of Queensland. Home ownership is something that we all should strive for. As

many members have said here today, the abolishment of stamp duty for first home buyers will go a long way to help younger families. The member for Coomera has one of the largest populations of younger people anywhere in Queensland and it will be very much welcomed in his area.

Many of my residents are desperate to see a change. The LNP has some very good candidates whom we are taking to the next election. We have great candidates—all the way from Cairns with Bree to Gaven with Bianca—who will fight for our residents. Queensland needs a new direction so we can take ourselves out of the dark ages of the last 10 years and we can finally have our golden age of home ownership.