



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Main Committee

APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 1) 2010-2011

APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2) 2010-2011

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENTARY
DEPARTMENTS) BILL (NO. 1) 2010-2011**

Second Reading

SPEECH

Tuesday, 1 June 2010

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Tuesday, 1 June 2010
Page 4846
Questioner
Speaker Georganas, Steve, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Mr GEORGANAS (Hindmarsh) (4.47 pm)—I rise in support of the Appropriation Bill (No. 1) 2010-2011 and cognate bills. This budget is a responsible budget which will see us back in surplus in three years time—that is three years early. This is also a budget that further strengthens our economy. It helps families and small businesses and it certainly helps to strengthen the economy. In my electorate of Hindmarsh, it helps the families of Hindmarsh and it helps the small businesses in the electorate of Hindmarsh and all of Australia. It also makes the tax system fairer and simpler and it continues to provide the much-needed health and hospital reforms. It invests in skills training and infrastructure, areas that we saw neglected before this government came in. It invests in a Renewable Energy Future Fund to help tackle climate change. It provides more money to protect our troops and borders, all the while delivering a return to surplus three years ahead of schedule.

This budget carries on much of the vital work begun previously when Australia was going through the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression and which, without early and decisive action by the Rudd Labor government, would have cost many of my constituents in Hindmarsh their jobs. Only the other day I was at the opening of the Glandore Community Centre's training facility—they were lucky to receive some funding from the Rudd Labor government—and I happened to speak to the builders and the project managers who were there. They were saying how grateful they were for the infrastructure projects which ensured that they took on more employees over the last 18 months. They explained the position they would be in if we had not injected money into the economy, compared to where they are today. They were very grateful that they had been able to continue to win contracts, continue to work and put people into work.

If we look at what was facing us 18 months ago, we would have seen unemployment surge with close to an extra 200,000 jobs lost. In my electorate I have the AAMI Stadium—Football Park—which holds 50,000 people, and I told my constituents that it would have been the AAMI Stadium filled four times with unemployed people. You could see the devastation that would have caused around Australia, the families that would have been hurting, and where we would have been today. But the opposition of course opposed it and continues to oppose it.

There is a stark contrast between our responsible budget and the risky policies of the opposition. Mr Abbott and Mr Hockey opposed, as I said, our actions to support jobs during the global financial crisis and now they will oppose our actions to keep government finances strong. The opposition talks tough about government spending but their blocking of our measures would only make the deficit worse. Despite this display, the Rudd Labor government continues to exercise its fiscal responsibility wisely with high regard for the wellbeing of our whole nation, not just the top end of town and mining companies.

This budget contains a raft of measures which will make Australia more competitive on the world stage and which will provide Australia with a strong foundation on which to grow and prosper over many years. This budget will boost rail productivity, support the growth of responsible aviation, improve safety standards within the region and continue the overhaul of transport regulations including the implementation of an aircraft noise ombudsman, something for which I have been campaigning for a very long time and on which I presented two private member's bills to this House while in opposition. I am very glad that the minister has seen them having value and has now endorsed them as policy.

In the electorate of Hindmarsh there are many projects which the Rudd Labor government has delivered on since the last budget, and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of those projects. I would like to ask the opposition: which of these projects will they cut or not go ahead with if they are elected to government? These are the questions that my constituents are asking.

For example, there is the King Street Bridge in my electorate, perhaps one of the most important election commitments which I am very proud to have delivered on. The King Street Bridge is a vital link for the traffic route that parallels Tapleys Hill Road, passing through West Lakes, Grange, Henley Beach, West Beach, along Adelaide's coastline west of Adelaide airport, connecting the arterial roads and suburbs to the south. The King Street Bridge is a significant piece of infrastructure not only for the people of Glenelg but also for the many

thousands of people in South Australia who visit the area. The bridge has been in worsening condition for some time. It has been closed and there have been weight limits imposed on traffic, which have affected the movement of public transport. Last year we also saw buses being stopped from going over the bridge because it was so dangerous. This has of course caused a substantial degree of distress among many local residents of Glenelg and Glenelg North who rely on the bridge to connect them not only to most areas in their own suburb but to the local community, to shopping, transport facilities and other services.

Local residents led by John and Peter Bijok and many other locals in the area campaigned strongly on the need for the bridge and to get the funding it needs to remain open. I recall writing many letters to the former minister for transport asking what funding was available and whether they could please take it into their hearts to feel for the people who live on this peninsula who, without the bridge, would not be able to cross and do their shopping and who would have to divert miles to get to the main centre of Glenelg. Yet it fell on deaf ears continuously whilst we were in opposition and the other lot were in government.

The Rudd government, I am pleased to say, is providing \$1.5 million towards this \$3 million project to replace the bridge, with the local council providing a matching \$1.5 million through the Roads to Recovery program. Today we hear that the opposition, if elected, would look at all the projects including under Roads to Recovery, and I would like to ask: will they prevent the King Street Bridge from being built if they win government? That is a really serious question that needs to be answered. As I said, the \$1.5 million in funding will be provided to the City of Holdfast Bay through the Rudd Labor government's Roads to Recovery program. In 2010-11 in fact, \$11.2 million was provided to councils in my electorate of Hindmarsh for Roads to Recovery projects, which has easily eclipsed the \$9.9 million spent from 2005-06 to 2008-09. I think that the residents of Hindmarsh deserve to know what the opposition will do if they come to government and whether these projects will be cut.

Another project in my electorate has been the Glenelg to Adelaide Parklands pipeline. South Australians have been desperate for improvements in the coastal waters of Gulf St Vincent, in the diversity of the supply of fresh water to metropolitan Adelaide and in the supply of fresh water to the ecological jewels of the Murray River and adjacent wetlands for a long time—not just for the last couple of years but for many years. This summer we have seen fairly good progress in and around my electorate of Hindmarsh, which we have not seen for many years. I had the pleasure of attending the turning of the tap with the Minister for Climate Change, Energy Efficiency and Water, Penny Wong, in Adelaide in early January. We opened the Glenelg Waste Water Treatment Plant and turned on the tap to the Adelaide Parklands pipeline. It was funded to the tune of \$30 million by the Rudd Labor government, which was matched by the state government.

This will supply billions of litres of recycled water for use between the bay at Glenelg in my electorate and the city. Along the way it will feed water to many of the parks, schools and ovals, including Richmond Oval, which is the great ground of the famous West Adelaide Football Club in my electorate. It will feed off into other areas as well. This is another project I wrote to the former government about many times, asking and pleading with them to look into it and fund it. Again, it fell on deaf ears. It took the Rudd Labor government to fund it, and we have now seen it come to fruition.

Living on the coast, you become acutely aware of both the diversity and importance of our marine life. The Star of the Sea Marine Discovery Centre is an important teaching and learning facility where students can get up close to look at our marine life and learn about ecosystems and the importance of protecting our environment. The last budget delivered \$10,000 of additional funding on top of \$287,000 which was provided in 2007-08. This enabled the Marine Discovery Centre to upgrade its facilities, which were officially opened just a few months ago by the minister for climate change, Penny Wong, and me.

It was fantastic to see the kids at the school and the joy on their faces. They had clearly put so much effort into the opening and they were so proud of the Marine Discovery Centre. They were dressed in marine creature costumes and they put on a fantastic live performance for the crowd. The Marine Discovery Centre will allow groups of visitors and children from other schools to experience the wonder of our native marine life in the electorate of Hindmarsh and to learn about the importance of protecting our oceans and the marine environment.

The Marine Discovery Centre is situated in one of my local schools, the Star of the Sea School. On top of this funding they have also received \$200,000 from the National School Pride Program, under Building the Education Revolution, for refurbishments, a shade structure, an upgraded playground and outdoor areas. Also, they received \$3 million from the Primary Schools for the 21st Century program under the Building the Education Revolution program to construct a new library and resource centre. This has commenced and will be completed very soon.

On the day I was there I spoke to the parents, the teachers and the principal, and they were all looking forward to these new facilities and the resource centre that they never had before.

The lighting at Richmond Oval is something else that I am very proud of. You may have heard me mention the West Adelaide Football Club earlier. As the No. 1 ticket holder of the West Adelaide Football Club it was a privilege to be able to deliver \$92,000 in funding under the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program for the installation of lights at Richmond Oval. I was very proud to attend the very first game under lights just recently at the club—which we won against Norwood. Now we have the ability to host more SANFL games and to see some night football, which makes it more accessible for families who want to attend a footy match on a Friday or Saturday night. I also have the Glenelg Football Club in my electorate at the Glenelg Oval. They also received \$70,000 under the program for the upgrade of a stone wall surrounding the oval.

In just over a year, the Rudd Labor government's Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program has delivered \$1 billion to build and renew community facilities across Australia, making it the largest single investment in local infrastructure in this nation's history. Most importantly, it has created thousands of jobs around the country that kept the economy going and ensured that we did not go into recession.

There are other projects. For example, the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health and Ageing, which I chair, recently conducted an inquiry into obesity. I see that the member for Parkes is here. He was part of our group at the time. One of the most interesting things we discovered is that people are getting bigger because our cities are being designed around cars and not around walkers or bicycle riders et cetera. The government has recognised the importance of both physical activity and sustainable transport and has, in this budget, provided my electorate with \$169,000 in new funding for the development of new bike pathways in Hindmarsh, including on Grange Road, Henley Beach Road, Holbrooks Road, Richmond Road, Diagonal Road and Marion Road. This is in addition to funding previously provided by the Regional and Local Community Infrastructure Program, which has already delivered \$94,000 for construction of a dual use cyclist and pedestrian pathway in West Lakes.

I spoke briefly about the Building the Education Revolution. Of all the initiatives of the Rudd Labor government's Nation Building Program, the Building The Education Revolution is the one on which, as I said earlier, teachers, parents, students and principals in Hindmarsh continually congratulate me and the government. Hindmarsh has 112 different projects being funded at a total cost of \$80 million as of 11 May 2010. I will mention just some of them here. These are schools that did not previously have any infrastructure that now have infrastructure that was much sought after, that they needed and wanted.

Many of the schools in my electorate held their assemblies in the school quadrangle. They desperately needed this infrastructure. For example, Ascot Park Primary School obtained funding of \$125,000 for refurbishment of buildings. That project has been completed. The same school, Ascot Park Primary School, obtained funding of \$1.7 million for construction of a new multipurpose hall. That project has commenced. Here is a school which has a large population of close to 800 or 900 students. It is one of the largest schools in the electorate and it had nowhere to have its assemblies. It had a small area where the staff and students would meet for school assemblies, many of which I attended. The assemblies were very crowded and, when the school wanted to put on special days and invite guests, it got extremely crowded. This is something that Ascot Park Primary School desperately needed and I am pleased that it has received the \$1.7 million for the construction of the new multipurpose hall. I believe that will be completed soon.

Community and neighbourhood houses and centres in my electorate received funding for a teaching and learning capital fund and for vocational education and training. As I mentioned earlier, I recently attended the Glandore Community Centre, which received \$249,845 to enable it to train and educate people so they can gain the skills they need for employment. It was very interesting, as I said, to speak to the builders who completed this project. They were telling me where they were two years ago and where they are today and how they had had to take on extra staff, extra builders, extra bricklayers et cetera because of the projects they had won in and around the electorate of Hindmarsh.

Cowandilla Primary School, the school that I attended many years ago, was successful in gaining \$150,000 for refurbishment and building an ICT facility, a shade structure, fencing et cetera and \$630,000 for the construction of a new outdoor learning area. It also got \$1.8 million for a multipurpose hall through Primary Schools for the 21st Century, part of Building the Education Revolution. Here is another school, an inner western suburbs school in Adelaide with a huge migrant population and special English learning facilities for kids et cetera, that did not

have enough room to have its assemblies. It did not have the room to invite parents and have special days. Now it will have the infrastructure in place to be able to do all of that.

Forbes Primary School is another area where \$1.5 million was spent on refurbishment of classrooms and construction of a covered outdoor learning area. I can go on and on about the projects in my electorate. We have listed them and there are many. We think of the jobs that were created and then think of the unemployment if we had not gone through with these projects. Of course the schools have gained infrastructure and buildings that will be used well into the future. They will be used well after we are gone and well after most of the people in this place are gone. There will be proper facilities and children will feel absolutely proud about those learning facilities.

Small business tax breaks is another area that I am very proud to speak about. There are no less than 5,340 small businesses in Hindmarsh, many of which are family operations running through several generations. This budget delivers tax cuts to them which will help them compete with larger stores that have the advantage of national distribution networks and enormous marketing budgets. Sole traders, partnerships and incorporated small businesses will be able to instantly deduct the cost of assets valued at up to \$5,000. They will also benefit from a reduction in the company tax rate from 30 per cent to 28 per cent from 1 July 2012.

Another area I am very proud of is pension reform. Being the member for an electorate with one of the highest number of people aged over 65 years in Australia—over 20 per cent of my constituents—I have been advocating long and hard for an improvement to the income for pensioners. I know that living on a single age pension is very, very tough. How do I know this? Because my constituents have been telling me this at street corner meetings, at forums, at shopping centres and when I am out and about. They also tell me this at functions and at meetings in my office. They have not been telling me this just since Labor have been in government, they have been telling me this for a long time, way before we were in government. This is not something which has just happened. It has been around for a long time.

I was extremely proud last year when the budget delivered a meaningful increase for the pensioners; the biggest reforms to the pension since it was introduced 100 years ago. All 3.3 million age pensioners, disability pensioners, carers, wife pensioners and veteran income support recipients benefited from these increases in their pension payments. The increase brought the single rate of pension up to two-thirds of the combined couple rate.
(Time expired)