




Speech By
Fiona Simpson

MEMBER FOR MAROOCHYDORE

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APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2)

 **Ms SIMPSON** (Maroochydore—LNP) (3.26 pm): Do members ever think that this parliament is stuck in some form of weird parallel universe when we hear the Labor members in some form of incredible debt denial—those dodos of economic management—failing to acknowledge that they were the ones who lost the AAA rating of Queensland’s financial system? It is just incredible! They have learned nothing. They were the ones who were responsible for destroying Queensland’s proud AAA credit rating. Today I have heard this next generation of Labor MPs who learnt nothing spruiking their self-professed financial credentials and denying that they lost the AAA rating due to their appalling financial management and their incredible administrative incompetence. I will never forget that this Labor government cost Queenslanders that AAA rating and also saw a ripping up of Queensland’s low tax status where this government misled people deliberately with regard to taxes which it said it was not going to increase—taxes such as the excise where in fact it took away that fuel tax exemption and put Queenslanders back into a higher rate of tax on their petrol. We have a situation where this Labor government under this Treasurer has now raided the superannuation funds of public servants in a highly risky manoeuvre. Those opposite are breathtaking in their arrogance. They are breathtaking in the risks that they take with public money and in this case with public servants’ money.

Never forget that it was Labor that had dams without pipelines, pipelines without dams and now it has trains without drivers and tracks without trains. This Palaszczuk Labor government is not just asleep at the wheel; it is not even at the wheel! Like the trains, this is a driverless government—and we are not talking smart car driverless here, if members are wondering. It is definitely not smart technology. It is an absence of leadership and ministerial responsibility and it hurts jobs, particularly in the regions, and the business opportunities for those who build the jobs. Labor has not learnt that jobs that create the opportunity in Queensland are actually not public servant jobs—and we need good public servants—but it is actually jobs in the private sector that generate the wealth and that generate the sustainable jobs that are able to keep the regions throughout Queensland economically sustainable and the people in those regions employed.

A few minutes ago we heard from the transport minister. In a ministerial statement, he advised the parliament that, after the debacle of last week, there are yet more changes to the train timetables. This morning, the minister was asked whether there would be more changes to the timetables. He would not answer. He did not give a guarantee. Then after lunch he snuck in here and advised that, shock, horror, there are going to be more changes and that he wants them to be bedded down. How incompetent! It is about time this minister resigned. The government cannot manage a chook raffle, let alone a train system.

Ms FARMER: I rise to a point of order. Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek your ruling on relevance, please.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Furner): Order! I will ask the member for Maroochydhore to come back to the subject matter of Appropriation Bill (No. 2).

Ms SIMPSON: It is entirely relevant. This mob, the Labor Party, cannot manage to run a chook raffle, let alone the finances of Queensland. It is a bit rich to hear the member rise on a point of order. This bill goes to the bone of this government. This government is rotten to the core. It has learned nothing. The transport minister, in the true incompetent managerial style of Labor, denies that he is responsible. We have 200 fewer services but, they are going to run on time. It is a bit like that episode of *Yes Minister* about a hospital that was efficient, but it did not have any patients.

Mr POWER: I rise to a point of order. The Deputy Speaker, the member for Bulimba, rose on a point of order on relevance. This is not relevant to the bill. I ask that the member be brought back to the bill.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Once again, member for Maroochydhore, I will have you refer to Appropriation Bill (No. 2).

Ms SIMPSON: This bill relates to unforeseen expenditure. Under the review system of this parliament, that unforeseen expenditure is brought before the parliament. That gives us an opportunity not only to look at the amount of money that has been spent but also to look at how well it has been spent. That Labor mob could not run a chook raffle. The members opposite squawk and squirm and take points of order, but this bill goes to the heart of the issue: they cannot run the finances of Queensland. They cannot even run the train system. They think the way for the trains to be efficient and run on time is to have fewer trains. They are incompetent. They need to be thrown out. Labor cannot manage money. It cannot manage the services. Certainly, Labor is not just asleep at the wheel, it is driverless. This is a government without leadership.

This review system of supplementary or unforeseen expenditure by the parliament was put in place by the former LNP government. We believe that good economic management is about ensuring that parliament scrutinises the expenditure of taxpayers' money in a timely way. I acknowledge the work of the Leader of the Opposition as treasurer in the former government, who ensured that supplementary, or unforeseen, expenditure is scrutinised by the parliament in a timely way. As far as I am aware, previously, that had never happened.

In the bad old days of former treasurer Andrew Fraser and premier Anna Bligh, on average, Queenslanders saw an overspend of \$3.4 billion a year. We all remember the wasteful spending and the debt spiralling out of control—except those debt deniers and dodoes of economic managers on the government benches. Queenslanders deserve better than this mob who cannot manage the finances. It does not matter how much money they chuck at something, they always seem to muck it up. This government needs to learn the lesson that good financial management is good for Queensland. They do not know how to manage the books.

Unfortunately, we see the lack of confidence in so many regional areas where the unemployment figures have not recovered. People in the business sector who want to put on more people or create more jobs say to me, 'Look at the other states.' Even—shock, horror!—some Labor states are out there doing a better job than this Labor government. The business sector sees that this leaderless government has resulted in a lack of confidence. They see a sovereign risk in their investment in this state. I do not want to see that. I want to see a state where people are confident in knowing that they can do business with a government that is not only managing taxpayers' money well but also recognising that private investment matters. Private investment is where we will grow the jobs for Queenslanders.