




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Record of Proceedings, 12 October 2017

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 2); APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2)

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (5.41 pm): I rise to contribute to the cognate debate on the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2). As we heard earlier from the shadow minister, the LNP opposition will not be opposing these bills. These bills seek parliament's approval for unforeseen expenditure authorised by the Treasurer in the 2016-17 financial year—one bill relates to the departments and the other relates to the Legislative Assembly.

Part of this bill also permits Queensland Treasury to repay \$1 billion in debt which has been enabled by the spike in coal prices in 2017. Whilst the repayment of this debt is important, it should not overshadow the fact that under this Labor government debt is increasing to more than \$80 billion for the first time in Queensland's history. I think it is important that we put this debt in perspective. The quantum of the interest payments in one year on this debt—that is approximately \$10 million per day—could fund the building of 3,650 kilometres of road, a distance that is slightly longer than the direct distance between Brisbane and Perth. That is the length of road that cannot be built in Queensland every year because taxpayers' money has to be paid in interest repayments on the debt. It puts the size of that debt and the size of the interest repayments into perspective for average mums and dads.

There is no doubt that this Labor government is having some issues managing its finances. It is probably not the best manager of finances and it has had some trouble with its estimates. I have an example where it has tried to short-change a project in my electorate. In September 2014 the South West Hospital and Health Board made a statement, and I quote—

According to the master plans, the estimated cost of a new hospital for Roma is between \$90 and \$99 million, while the cost of a new hospital for Charleville would be between \$70 and \$78 million.

What did the Premier announce in January 2017? She announced a \$70 million Roma Hospital. This Labor government short-changed the project by \$20 million to \$29 million. Last month the minister announced that the Department of Health also had reviewed the funding for the new Roma Hospital to ensure the current levels of investment met future requirements. Following this review, a submission was made and accepted by the Palaszczuk government to increase the allocation for the new hospital from \$70 million to \$90.4 million. That is how the Labor government manage finances—by short-changing much needed major projects commenced by the LNP. No wonder we are here today dealing with unforeseen expenditure bills.

Mr DICK: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. If the member for Warrego does not want the additional \$20 million, I will find another electorate where I will invest that money.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Minister, what is your point of order?

Mr Seeney: The Speaker made a ruling about frivolous points of order.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Callide!

Mr DICK: The member for Warrego is clearly misleading the House—clearly—and should withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is not a point of order either, Minister. The member for Warrego has the call.

Ms LEAHY: If the minister takes some offence to something then I withdraw. I commend the bill to the House.