




Speech By
Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 30 October 2018

REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 2); AND APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2)

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (3.22 pm): It is a pleasure to be standing here talking today with you in the chair, Mr Deputy Speaker McArdle. I rise to support the Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) and the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) being debated in cognate today. I am very happy to be speaking to these bills as the assistant Treasurer in the Palaszczuk Labor government under Jackie Trad, who is doing a fantastic job as Treasurer in this state. The Revenue and Other Legislation Amendment Bill makes a variety of amendments to legislation that will make our system work better.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BUTCHER: I will not take that interjection because he is not sitting in his correct chair. These are simple changes that make things easier for Queenslanders: for example, encouraging e-conveyancing to let people conduct a variety of transactions more quickly and easily; supporting our primary producers who are doing it tough in the drought as we all know—enabling farmers to succession plan and hand down their businesses without incurring duties; and encouraging the safety, health and wellbeing of Queenslanders in some of our most remote communities, particularly Mornington Island, by cracking down on turbo yeast, as we have heard today.

The Appropriation Bill simply provides for the government to cover unforeseen expenditure for the last financial year, as happens every single year. This has been caused largely this financial year by changes to the Commonwealth grants payments. Unforeseen expenditure is expenditure from the consolidated fund above the amount approved via appropriation bills introduced annually with the budget. In this instance, the relevant appropriation bills are those that were introduced in June 2017 alongside the 2017-18 budget.

The Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) 2018 seeks parliamentary approval of supplementary appropriation for unforeseen expenditure incurred by the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service in the 2017-18 financial year of \$5.14 million. The unforeseen expenditures incurred by the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service were primarily due to costs associated with the 2017 electoral boundary redistribution and the state election that we had.

The Appropriation Bill (No. 2) seeks parliamentary approval of supplementary appropriation for unforeseen expenditure incurred by departments in the 2017-18 financial year to the sum of \$494.915 million. Approximately 47 per cent of this total unforeseen expenditure was incurred by the Department of Transport and Main Roads and related to state and Commonwealth accelerated funding for capital programs, including the Bruce Highway upgrade and other state roads. Of the remainder, approximately 38 per cent was incurred by the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs, which was primarily due to the Commonwealth government's prepayment of 2018-19 funding for financial assistance grants to local governments.

The level of unforeseen expenditure required each year can be influenced by a range of factors, including significant one-off factors like natural disasters that we have in Queensland. It can also reflect new decisions made during the year, additional appropriations associated with additional Commonwealth grants and the pull-forward of capital spending from future years. Over time, agencies are constantly improving their scrutiny and monitoring of their expenditure to improve value for money and to efficiently deliver their services.

These are bills that are all about getting on with the job of governing in Queensland, focusing on growing jobs and also delivering infrastructure in this wonderful state. Unfortunately, as we have seen time and time again from the opposition, they would rather waste everyone's time talking down the Queensland economy, bleating on and cherrypicking statistics, rather than actually working with us to pass simple legislation in the interests of Queenslanders. The fact is that our economic plan is working to transition us out of the highs of the mining boom and into a sustainable future in our state. It is an economic plan that keeps our assets in public hands and that funds the infrastructure we need and the frontline services Queenslanders deserve in this state—unlike those opposite, who fired 14,000 public servants, planned to sell off our assets and closed schools and TAFEs.

We just heard them say that we are taxing our way out of \$83 billion of debt, but not one of them over there has said how they expect to pay that debt down—not one of them. The only way they will get this debt down if they ever get re-elected is to sell or sack. It is in their DNA and we know that.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BUTCHER: I know they are not that smart, but if you do not tax and you do not get income coming into the state, the only way they can do it is, as they have said before, to sell assets or sack staff in Queensland.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BUTCHER: You have already done it. We have to tax people in this state to get money for our infrastructure, our jobs and our teachers.

Let us look at the comparison—from the Sensis Business Index which the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is so fond of quoting. Let us look at the June report, the most recent, which looks at business confidence in Queensland. Confidence across the state is now +48. What was it in December 2014 under those opposite? It was just +14. How about in regional areas? The member who is speaking next will be interested in this. It is at +41 now. When we inherited it, it was just +11 in the opposition days. How about the labour force? Under the LNP here in Queensland, they had the highest number of unemployed people ever, with 165,300 unemployed people, despite the labour force being six per cent smaller. No wonder they were voted out.

In my community of Gladstone the people care about government getting on with the job, they care about getting things done and they care about us doing what we are doing in Queensland and not playing politics like those opposite. The members opposite claim they do not get enough time to represent their community. I would wager that if they went out and talked to anyone at the shops in Everton, Kingaroy or Kawana they would find that those people are not worried about how long their local member had to debate committee reports, as we heard this morning. They would want to know that their member was ensuring they could get a stable job, their kids could get a great education, students could get training and skills, they could have access to health care when they were sick and they got the roads and the public transport they needed in their own communities. That is what these bills are about. It is about the Queensland Palaszczuk Labor government getting on with the job. I commend these bills to the House.