



Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 20 August 2019

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Economics and Governance Committee, Report

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (12.33 pm): I rise to address the recent budget estimates hearings and the Appropriation Bill 2019, specifically that area of responsibility of consideration of the Palaszczuk Labor government's proposed expenditure by the Economics and Governance Committee. One year ago—in fact, almost to the exact date—I began my contribution to the debate on the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2018 by stating, 'The first issue I want to draw to the attention of the House is that of transparency and accountability with respect to the Palaszczuk Labor government.' One year on and absolutely nothing has changed. From start to finish, the consideration by the Economics and Governance Committee of the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2019 was dominated by the latest Palaszczuk Labor government integrity and accountability crisis that was initially brought on by revelations that the Deputy Premier had purchased a property that stands to benefit greatly from the Cross River Rail project and, furthermore, that the Deputy Premier had also failed to adequately disclose this purchase on her parliamentary register of interests. That is outrageous and very embarrassing. It also shows the Deputy Premier's absolute contempt for this parliament and the people of Queensland.

During the estimates hearing, thanks to questioning by the Leader of the Opposition, it was also revealed that the Palaszczuk Labor government's 2019 integrity and accountability crisis was to be further compounded by revelations that \$267,000 of Queensland taxpayers' money was funnelled into a company part owned by the Premier's chief of staff. The dark cloud and debacle of Labor's integrity and accountability scandals that dominated the 2019 estimates hearing is one that the government has failed to lift. With each passing day—in fact, every day since those hearings—Queenslanders are learning more and more about the absolute lack of commitment to accountability and transparency by the Labor government in Queensland. These are serious issues that strike at the very heart of the principles of transparent government and ministerial accountability. The abandonment of such principles by the Palaszczuk Labor government—which, on reflection, were abandoned years ago—gives every Queenslanders the right to question the processes and decisions undertaken by this Labor government, particularly when it comes to how this state government spends the dollars that have been hard earned by Queensland's taxpayers.

As this year's Economics and Governance Committee estimates hearing revealed, when it comes to the 2019 state budget, the Palaszczuk Labor government has made nothing but terrible decisions—decisions that cripple our economy and burden Queenslanders with taxes for generations

to come. This state budget is one of more debt, higher taxes, fewer jobs and less infrastructure. The Palaszczuk Labor government, which has no shame whatsoever, is allowing state debt to balloon to more than \$90 billion over the next four years. On top of Labor's debt, Queenslanders have to contend with the 10 new or increased taxes that the Palaszczuk Labor government has applied this term, including the nearly \$3.5 billion in new taxes, fees and charges over the last two state budgets.

The Economics and Governance Committee's examination of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships portfolio did nothing to ease the concerns of the Liberal National Party as to this Labor government's woeful inaction on closing the gap. There is a real lack of progress on closing the gap in Queensland, with the state at the bottom of the national league table when compared to that of other state jurisdictions.

It is time the Deputy Premier and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships ceases the endless blame game. The fact remains that what Labor has done and what it is doing for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to close the gap is simply not good enough. Perhaps it is time that such a crucial portfolio be put in the hands of a minister who can give this portfolio the attention and commitment it so rightly deserves.

These estimates hearings also revealed that the Palaszczuk Labor government did not feel the need to consult with key stakeholders and seemingly the entire Family Responsibilities Commission about the state government's intention to abandon this incredibly successful and community supported welfare reform initiative.

(Time expired)