



Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Record of Proceedings, 20 August 2019


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Economics and Governance Committee, Report

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.42 am): The Palaszczuk Labor government's 2019 budget was a bad budget for all of Queensland. It was a bad budget even by Labor's low standards. Labor's latest budget delivered nothing for Queenslanders except for higher taxes, more debt, fewer jobs and less infrastructure. After five years of failure, all we have heard from Labor is the same old story. When the Palaszczuk Labor government run out of money, they come after yours. Queenslanders are being bailed up to bail out this incompetent and wasteful government.

The budget introduced new taxes that will rip \$1.25 billion out of the economy. Over the last two budgets, Labor have smashed Queenslanders with \$3.5 billion worth of extra taxes. Labor's taxes are toxic for jobs. Labor's taxes are why we have the highest unemployment rate in mainland Australia. More than 173,000 Queenslanders are now looking for a job thanks to the failed policies of the Palaszczuk government.

Even with Labor's torrent of new taxes, our debt is spiralling further and further out of control. Our debt is now forecast to reach almost \$91 billion. There is no plan to control the government's debt. Labor do not even pretend to have a plan. All Labor have to say for themselves is, 'We're borrowing to build.' Well, Labor are definitely borrowing—that part is 100 per cent accurate—but they are not building. The budget documents showed that Labor are actually cutting infrastructure spending. They are spending less than the previous LNP government and, proportionally, they are spending less than every other state. Labor's economic record is simply woeful, and Labor's ethical record is no better.

Thirty years on from the Fitzgerald report, there are huge question marks over this government's transparency, accountability and integrity. I was alarmed when the Premier initially said she was unaware of a \$267,000 taxpayer funded grant to a company that is part owned by her own chief of staff. I would expect the Premier to be across the business dealings of her most senior adviser. The Advance Queensland Business Development Fund is administered by a government owned corporation that is under the Premier's control. The Business Development Fund is meant to create jobs for Queenslanders. It is not meant to create profits for the Premier's most trusted adviser. I became even more concerned when the Premier during estimates refused to table the pecuniary interests register of her chief of staff—so much for open and transparent government.

I was not reassured by the Premier's answers to questions about compliance with the ministerial code of conduct, and that remains the case. Under this Premier, ministers are not required to have face-to-face annual meetings with the Integrity Commissioner, and the Premier delegates all her interaction with the Integrity Commissioner to her own director-general. It is clear that integrity is no longer a priority for the Palaszczuk Labor government.

Fortunately, there was some good news from Trade and Investment Queensland. TIQ was very positive about the outlook for demand for Queensland's thermal coal. I hope the Treasurer was watching that estimates, but there are areas of concern at TIQ. The acting CEO was unable to advise why a \$187,000 deed of settlement was paid to the former TIQ CEO. It was confirmed through the estimates process that \$5 million was spent on external contractors and consultants and that the TIQ hospitality bill rose by a huge 43 per cent. There was no justification for such a jump in spending. It is yet another example of the Palaszczuk Labor government having the wrong priorities for Queensland. The estimates process showed us that integrity, accountability and transparency are simply a thing of the past for Annastacia Palaszczuk and her incompetent government.