




Speech By  
**Ann Leahy**

**MEMBER FOR WARREGO**

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

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (4.19 pm): I rise to contribute to the cognate debate on the Appropriation Bill (No.2) and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2). These bills seek the parliament's approval for the unforeseen expenditure in the 2018-19 financial year. One bill relates to a number of departments and the other to the Legislative Assembly.

Under this bill, the Labor Treasurer is authorising to pay \$1.397 billion from the consolidated fund for eight departments as stated in the financial year starting 1 July 2018. For 2018-19, three departments—Transport and Main Roads; Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs; and Environment and Science—accounted for almost 90 per cent of the total unforeseen expenditure. The Treasurer stated the unforeseen expenditure was related to \$441 million worth of accelerated road and transport projects—they certainly were not in the Warrego electorate—and accelerated investment in school infrastructure and increased unforeseen expenditure related to natural disasters which we saw in the north-west of the state.

According to Queensland Treasury, the unforeseen expenditure for the Department of Local Government, Racing and Multicultural Affairs of some \$257 million primarily relates to the Commonwealth government's decision to prepay the 2019-20 financial assistance grants for on-passing this money to local governments in 2018-19. Queensland local governments rely on the financial assistance grants for many of their day-to-day operations and activities. The state government is a conduit for these grants to local government. They are paid by the Commonwealth and then passed to local governments by the state and are identified as two components—the general purpose grant and the identified road grant. They go into lots and lots of different activities to support local governments right across Queensland.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads has expended some \$699 million of unforeseen expenditure. According to Queensland Treasury, that expenditure was primarily due to additional equity adjustments resulting from the accelerated delivery of capital programs, additional departmental service expenditure and additional expenses for administrative items. It is no secret that under this state Labor government the long-term trend for road funding in the north-west district, central west and south-west has been of declining funding allocations through QTRIP. The funding allocations to these districts continue to be the lowest in the state at 2.7, 2.5 and two per cent respectively of QTRIP allocations across Queensland.

To put it into perspective, about 30 per cent of the road length in Queensland receives about seven per cent of the funding. Forecasts demonstrate that these allocations are to be reduced even further in 2021, 2022 and 2023. That is greatly concerning for local governments in these regions. They often undertake these works on the road network. Reduced funds from the state Labor government will seriously impact council workforces and the resilience of these communities during future disaster events. Many of these local government areas have already been very hard hit by the impacts of drought and are suffering from population drift. Even more concerning is the fact that road users have to put up

with substandard roads, unmaintained roads and dangerous intersections like those in my electorate at Jackson and Augathella. The Auditor-General said in his report to parliament titled *Integrated transport planning report*—

DTMR has calculated that it has a \$4 billion renewal backlog for its road network as at 30 June 2017. It estimates the renewal gap will increase to more than \$9 billion over the next 10 years. This will affect DTMR's ability to meet the minimum performance targets; it will compromise service standards.

**Mr Minnikin:** Just hopeless!

**Ms LEAHY:** Absolutely hopeless. Absolutely the wrong priorities. The estimate has risen \$5.2 billion as at 30 June 2018. It is clear that it is not only the regional roads that have had their funding reduced by QTRIP by this state government, but also they are not being maintained to minimum targets. You only have to drive on them, like I and my constituents do—the shadow minister has driven many of those state roads with me across my electorate—to see how they are seriously deteriorating under this state Labor government.

It is disappointing that the unforeseen expenditure has not addressed the shortfalls in QTRIP funding or the Auditor-General's identified funding renewal gap that is occurring across the north, central and south-west of the state. Put simply, the state Labor government's priorities when it comes to roads are all wrong.

The Department of Agriculture and Fisheries has expended some \$52 million of unforeseen expenditure. Additional departmental services expenses were primarily due to the drawdown of funding as part of the drought assistance package and also to bring forward the funding for the fire ant eradication program and the additional Australian government funding of the On-farm Emergency Water Infrastructure Rebate Scheme and partly offset by timing adjustments for a number of programs including the biosecurity programs and the multi-year digital strategy.

The administration by this state Labor government of the drought assistance when it comes to fodder rebates is slow. Primary producers are telling me that they are very disappointed with the processing times and the wait times they are experiencing for their rebates to be returned to them. It is also disappointing that the Palaszczuk Labor government has walked away from supporting primary producers by accepting the recommendations to abolish the drought, water, fodder and transport subsidies for primary producers under the DRAS program.

**Mr Perrett:** Unbelievable!

**Ms LEAHY:** Unbelievable. I will take that interjection from the member for Gympie. It is unbelievable and absolutely disgraceful that they should behave in that way when we have seen such serious drought conditions across the state.

The Palaszczuk Labor government's 2018-19 budget showed that the only plan that the Premier and Treasurer has for Queensland is for more taxes and more debt with less infrastructure and fewer jobs. We can see that quite clearly in the regional areas. This budget introduced another five new taxes which are ripping \$2.2 billion out of Queensland's economy and also out of the pockets of mums and dads. In total, Labor has now introduced nine new or increased taxes, ripping \$3.5 billion out of the Queensland economy and the pockets of mums and dads. These job-destroying taxes are smashing business confidence and scaring off investment. We can see that in the resources industry across Queensland, particularly in my region. No wonder Queensland has had the highest unemployment rate in the nation over the last term of government.

Labor's budget blowouts are out of control. Over the life of the Palaszczuk government, more than \$1.4 billion has been appropriated to cover unforeseen expenditure due to Labor's consistent fiscal management failures. That is \$1.1 billion of taxpayers' money. It is not Labor's money; it is Queensland taxpayers' money. On average, this amount is nearly eight times higher than the unforeseen expenditure under the previous LNP government. In just five years, Labor has racked up a record amount of debt because it has lost control of spending. Every dollar that Labor wastes is a dollar it cannot spend on infrastructure, it cannot spend on roads and it cannot spend on renewing hospitals and dealing with the ageing infrastructure that so desperately needs to be addressed. It means there is less money to ensure our hospitals are working again, less money to build and repair roads, less money to spend on additional police resources which North Queensland is calling out for, and less money to air-condition every state school classroom in Queensland.