




Speech By
Bart Mellish

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

Record of Proceedings, 4 December 2020

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL

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 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (11.23 am): I am pleased to follow the member for Toohey. I do miss sitting next to him in this parliament. I had a great time last time around.

This year has been an unprecedented one. The unprecedented global pandemic will have repercussions for global trade, culture and population movements for decades to come. We have seen astronomical COVID-19 infection rates in the United States and Brazil. Sadly, I saw yesterday that there were over 2,800 deaths, their worst day ever in handling COVID-19. In Europe we are seeing countries previously held up as role models for progressive democracies making disastrous health decisions and sabotaging their economies. In the UK we are seeing terrible outcomes on a health and an economic level. However, in Queensland we are seeing our outstanding health response feeding into our nation-leading economic response. I congratulate the Treasurer, his office and Treasury on a fantastic budget which will continue our strong economic response.

Locally, in Aspley there are some great north side wins funded in this budget. We have the Beams Road overpass, the volleyball centre of excellence at Craigslea State High School and noise barriers in Bald Hills just to name three. However, our sporting clubs are not being left behind in what has been a tough year for community sport. There are some great local sporting clubs in the Aspley area, so I was really pleased to see that during the campaign we were able to commit \$100,000 to the Aspley Hornets to help in their successful bid to join the national east coast second tier AFL competition next season. In 2021 they will be competing against the Lions, the Sydney Swans and the big boys from Victoria. I cannot wait to see the action at Graham Road under the new lights. This is a project for which I was also proud to secure the funding last term.

Of course, this goes with the new sports fields at Carseldine that we delivered last term at the site of Carseldine Urban Village, now used regularly by the Aspley Devils, Bracken Ridge District Cricket Club and Bridgeman Baptist Football as well as dozens of local families who use the playgrounds every day. We cannot forget the Northside Indoor Sports Centre, opened by the Premier in October. It is being used daily by hundreds of north side kids, teenagers and adults.

Returning to the budget more broadly, there is no doubt that this is a very challenging time globally. Economic connectivity has been dealt a massive blow over the last year for obvious reasons. Many supply chains are struggling to remain intact and the cost of doing business overseas, for exporters and importers alike, has dramatically gone up in all sectors. It is clear that COVID has caused a massive rethink about what we make here and what we import. It has been fantastic to see the gearing up of local PPE manufacturers, for example, and the retooling of industries to different purposes from what they are used to.

It is great to see Queensland building on our strong health response into a really strong economic response. This is a budget that has billions in infrastructure funding to boost jobs. Along with Western Australia, we are the only state to project positive economic growth this financial year, an indication that our outstanding economic recovery plan is working. I congratulate the Premier on her strong leadership and response to the pandemic and for putting Queenslanders first throughout this health crisis.

This budget, as the Treasurer has stated, is a budget that is about delivering on our election commitments. Of course, our biggest local commitment of 2020 is the Beams Road rail overpass. This transformational project will deliver long overdue relief for north side motorists. It has been spoken about for 20 years but has not been delivered until now. In 2012 we saw a Deloitte study from the former Newman government ranked it as the No. 1 priority level crossing in South-East Queensland on a cost-benefit analysis and yet nothing happened. It was only in 2017 when we committed to a feasibility study on the level crossing that things started moving. Following this, I secured funding for a full business case in the 2019 budget. Because of the initial work of this business case, earlier this year we were able to fully commit the funding to get it done. In conjunction with the federal and local council funds committed, it is now fully funded, with construction starting in late 2021.

Other big road projects also funded in the budget include \$5 million for noise barriers in Bald Hills. I am really pleased that this election commitment will be rolled out. Bald Hills locals raise it as the No. 1 issue, although sometimes mosquitoes are the No. 1 issue, but that is a whole other story. Most have gotten so used to the noise they say it is like 'living next to the ocean without the sea breeze'. I am really happy to see the \$5 million fast-tracked in this budget to go towards this. This is, of course, on top of the \$4 million I secured in the 2019 budget for noise barriers further south on Gympie Road in Aspley. Preliminary work is underway there already, community consultation has been undertaken and we should see construction soon.

In the same part of town, I am really happy to see funding from the Works for Queensland initiatives going towards the extension of the North Brisbane Bikeway as well as funding to continue the construction of the Everton Park link road connecting Stafford Road and South Pine Road further south. I am really pleased to see that Bald Hills State School will be getting \$1 million to refurbish their administration building, something they have been after for some time.

We are backing Queensland and it is clear Australians are backing Queensland. They are voting with their feet with the highest forecast interstate migration in the nation. Everyone wants to move here. It is clear that the public are backing in the economic recovery plan, and it is great to see the business community and ratings agencies are backing in this budget, too.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you have reviewed and approved my speech for incorporation. As such, I ask that the remainder of my speech be incorporated into the *Record of Proceedings*.

The speech read as follows—

(3rd party endorsements)

S and P Global Ratings, reported in the Australian on Wednesday, said Queensland was on quote "a solid path to fiscal recovery", end quote , and re-affirmed the State's AA plus rating as stable.

We are outperforming Victoria and New South Wales on every debt metric, and every economic recovery metric.

And I note that Mark Ludlow of the Australian Financial Review said this week:

"The LNP line on Qld budget—Labor said they would only borrow \$4b more—is laughable. The ALP didn't say that. The \$4b was to fund election commitments. If that's the best David Crisafulli has got it's going to be a long four years".

And the Queensland Resources Council was a big fan:

Queensland's resources sector welcomed today's budget, congratulating Treasurer Cameron Dick on mapping out Queensland's long road to recovery.

"Creating more Queensland jobs is exactly the right objective for this budget and this will be helped by the fact our resources sector is on the verge of becoming an energy and resources superpower," said Queensland Resources Council Chief Executive Ian Macfarlane.

The budget reply speech from the Leader of the Opposition sounded nice,... but it wasn't actually a budget reply speech.

The opposition are ignoring the fact that Queensland just recorded the strongest economic growth in 17 years as we rebound from COVID.

Data released just this Wednesday- the day after our budget was released- by the Australian Bureau of Statistics revealed that Queensland's economy grew by 6.8 per cent between June and September.

That means we have the fastest economic growth in the country. We are setting the pace in Australia when it comes to economic recovery.

We beat Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, the Northern Territory, the ACT and Victoria.

Not only did our economy grow one-and-a half times faster than the national average in September, Queensland is the only state with an economy larger than it was before the crisis.

And all this is the more remarkable given the circumstances, both in Australia and Internationally.

The international monetary fund predicts that the global economy is expected to contract 4.4 Percent in 2020, compared with a global contraction of only 0.1 percent at the height of the Global Financial Crisis.

When you compare Queensland's economic recovery to date with many of our international trading partners, you can see just how stark the difference is.

While Australia's GDP fell 7 percent in the June quarter, Canada and the Eurozone fell by 12 percent,

Singapore 13 percent, France 14 percent, and The United Kingdom has experienced around 20 percent fall in GDP.

Given this is how the rest of the world is faring, understandably exports have taken a beating due to COVID-19. Overall our exports of goods and services are forecast to fall by 11 per cent in 20/21 before rebounding by 9 and three quarter per cent in 21/22.

The volume of coal exports fell 3.1 percent in 19/20, and are expected to fall further in 20/21 due to lower global demand, before rebounding by 9 and three quarter percent in 21/22.

Contrastingly, our metals exports are expected to remain stable this year and in future years, which is encouraging.

And while the drought continues to affect agriculture exports, in future years, beef, sugar, cotton sugar and others are all expected to increase from 21/22 onwards.

The volume of agricultural exports fell 8 per cent in 2019-20 as dry conditions persisted across the state. Improved conditions are expected to see an improvement in coming years, with crop exports increasing in the near term, followed by beef exports returning more strongly in later years.

Similarly, from 2021-22, cotton exports are forecast to increase substantially as improved rainfall and water storage support increased production.

Reflecting improving conditions, exports of other crops are expected to SIGNIFICANTLY increase this year, driven by increased production of wheat, chickpeas and grain sorghum.

Our services exports are however taking a battering. International tourism, for obvious reasons, just isn't viable at the moment, however this will hopefully turn a corner in the near future dependent on the actions of other countries, and our own of course.

International student numbers have obviously also taken a whack. Whilst a large numbers of students were already in Australia for the 2020 university year before international borders shut, the same can obviously not be said for the coming 2021 intake.

Discussions are ongoing with the federal government on this issue and I look forward to positive resolution.

So on a local level, on a state level, and on an international comparison level, this budget is a huge win for Queensland.

I commend the bill to the house.