



Speech By  
**Brent Mickelberg**


**MEMBER FOR BUDERIM**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 July 2020

**MOTION**

**Coronavirus, JobKeeper**

 **Mr MICKELBERG** (Buderim—LNP) (4.49 pm): I rise to speak to Labor's latest pathetic attempt at political pointscoring with its motion here today. Extra spending is required to support Queenslanders during this crisis. All levels of government have an obligation to step up and support the heartbroken restaurant owners, the selfless charities that are battling to stay afloat and our parents and seniors. The Morrison federal government has stepped up with around \$260 billion worth of support, which equates to about 7.3 per cent of Australia's annual GDP. Let us contrast that with the Palaszczuk Labor government's support of \$4.8 billion, or 1.3 per cent of annual gross state product, and it is pretty clear to see who is doing the heavy lifting in the coronavirus response. It is time for the Palaszczuk Labor government to step up and do more in the economic response that is required to support our communities through these most challenging of times. It is not a time to be playing petty politics and shifting responsibility.

The Reserve Bank Governor has said that Queensland should use its balance sheet to support the economic recovery. Of course Queensland should do more, just as the federal government has done. The question is why are the Premier and the Treasurer unwilling to do more? Perhaps it is because the state budget was straining under the weight of a colossal nearly \$90 billion debt long before this pandemic hit. As the Queensland Audit Office stated in its report to parliament—

The financial performance of the Queensland government has reduced over the last two financial years, with expenses incurred increasing at a greater rate than revenue.

The Audit Office also said government needs to maintain a strong balance sheet to provide it with stability, flexibility and capacity to deal with emerging financial and economic pressures and a strong foundation for providing services to the community—emerging financial pressures, emerging economic pressures just like the coronavirus pandemic that we are experiencing now. The Queensland economy was on its knees long before this pandemic hit. In January the CommSec State of the States report showed construction in Queensland at 26 per cent below the decade average. Queensland had the highest unemployment rate in the country, youth unemployment of 14.3 per cent, higher than any other state or territory, and Queensland had the lowest business confidence on record—all before the coronavirus hit. Put simply, Queensland is not in a position to do more because of the Palaszczuk Labor government's financial mismanagement over the last five years.

Sound financial management may not be as sexy as a Cross River Rail funding announcement, but if the government paid more attention to managing the state budget in a responsible and conservative manner then we would all be able to do more to help the desperate small businesses, the families and the charities just as the Morrison LNP government is doing now.