




Speech By
Jarrold Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Mr BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (3.20 pm): I reflected to the opposition office on my way down to the chamber to make my speech in the debate on the appropriation bills that this was going to be the last time I spoke in the 56th Parliament. I did not realise I would be speaking on a motion beforehand.

It gives me great pleasure to now speak in the debate on the appropriation bills that have been presented. This is of course what one does when one does not have a plan for Queensland, one does not have a plan for the finances of the state and one does not have a plan for economic recovery. One does what those opposite are doing. That is the typical Labor way—no budget and no plan.

They were going to bring down a budget in April this year under former treasurer Trad. Then we heard Treasurer Dick on the radio this week deny that that was ever going to be the case. He then apologised for that. We know that the government was going to bring down a budget in April. They then delayed the budget. All of a sudden now in Queensland we have to do everything after the federal government. Everything has to follow the federal government. Rather than leading from the front, rather than doing things as a state—as our Federation has set us up to do—we have to do everything after the federal government.

It is a Labor Party excuse for not having a plan. I can understand why the Labor Party want to wait until the federal government delivers their budget. Because they do not know what to do with their budget, they are hoping that ScoMo shows them an idea, shows them a road map for our budget in Queensland. We know that the Labor Party are out of ideas. After five years in government my goodness it is time for a change. I have to say that the feeling in the community is overwhelming. We only need to look at what happened today with senior ministers leaving the government. Someone commented to me earlier that one should bring out the old rat again, and I said no I was not going to do that. It is like rats deserting a sinking ship. I have seen this before. I saw it in 2011 and I am seeing it in 2020.

This is very serious in terms of this debate today. People across Queensland have lost their jobs. The LNP has mostly supported the government on the health response. We have to. That is our duty and our obligation. We know that governments are elected. When there are crises across the state, government is the one to make the decisions. The government is the one that holds the purse strings. It is the one that sets the budget. It is the one that can make the decisions.

Those decisions impact people's lives and livelihoods. We have seen some of the decisions in terms of the health response impact positively on the Queensland community, but some have impacted negatively on the people of Queensland. The biggest thing we should be doing now is working on an economic recovery. I do not trust the Labor Party for one minute that they will have a plan for economic recovery. When they do not deliver a full budget and only deliver more appropriations through the bills we are debating today, it is clear that they really do not have an agenda or plan.

For months now they have been relying on the coronavirus and the health response to get them through to the election. The people are waking up to that. People are certainly now saying, 'Hang on, when JobKeeper transitions out and JobSeeker transitions down how are we going to afford to put food on our tables?' That is what they are asking the state government. That is what the state government cannot answer.

In my community of Kawana there are many people on JobKeeper and JobSeeker payments. They are very thankful to the federal government for those payments. There are many businesses in Kawana that missed out on any funding through the coronavirus small business loans or allowances provided by the state government. Whereas, I see the response of the federal government. They put a bunch of money on the table and if it was oversubscribed they added more. What this state government did was put money on the table and it was a case of, 'If you get your application in before the next night you are in.' There are winners and losers. There are no winners and losers in this coronavirus battle economically, but the federal government said, 'If you need assistance, if you need a hand up we will help you.' The state government have played winners and losers.

Why is it that a business in Kawana that put their application in an hour before a business across the road got a \$10,000 grant and yet the business across the road, which may be struggling just as much or even more, was told, 'Oh, no, your application did not get approved because we were oversubscribed'? There was no more money on the table. These are the double standards in the economic response.

In the last few months during the coronavirus I have seen the very best of people and I have seen the very worst of people. I have seen how our communities bind together. I love living on the Sunshine Coast in my electorate of Kawana. To see our community reach out and help each other during the coronavirus makes me enormously proud to be their member of parliament.

Then I see the cruelty that this Premier has bestowed upon people with her double standards. She is allowing celebrities into the state to quarantine in luxury hotels. The Premier is allowing AFL footballers to come in and quarantine in luxury hotels on the Gold Coast. Some 400 AFL executives and their families can come in, sunbake by the pool, enjoy a drink, stand up by the bar at the pool, but ordinary Australians, everyday Queenslanders are denied that right. That is cruel. I will support the government as much as I can on the health response, but when it starts pitting people against each other, that is wrong, that is cruel and it has to stop.

The opposition asked questions in question time this morning about Sarah who wanted to see her father before he passed away. She did not get that opportunity. She was granted an exemption after he passed away. We hear just now that she has been granted approval to go and see her father's body but not attend the funeral. This is the Queensland we live in now where we are denying people like Sarah their wish. She is a Queenslander who recently moved to the ACT for a job opportunity and we are treating her like this. We have fly-in fly-out workers who cannot see their children because they have to go into hotel quarantine for two weeks and yet Tom Hanks can fly back on a private jet, land his private jet at the airport and go into a hotel that is not a Queensland government quarantine hotel but a hotel for the rich and famous. Is this the Queensland we live in?

Ms FENTIMAN: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order on relevance. We are debating the appropriation bills.

Mr BLEIJIE: Yes, I will get to that.

Ms Fentiman: You are not on it so get to it.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Pugh): We will not have any quarrelling across the chamber. Member, I will ask you to come back to the long title of the bill.

Mr BLEIJIE: When governments make decisions on appropriation bills it impacts people's lives and livelihoods. I can understand why the minister tells me get back to it. I will take the interjection she made. 'Get back to it,' she says with a smile on her face. I am talking about the double standards not only economically but also with the health response in the state of Queensland.

Mr McDonald: Inconsistencies.

Mr BLEIJIE: There have been inconsistencies. There has been no compassion and people are questioning: is this the Queensland we live in now? Where is the compassion? How is the Prime Minister, by phoning a state premier and asking for compassion, bullying and intimidating?

This Appropriation Bill that we are debating today is because of the coronavirus and not having a budget is all because of the global pandemic. Labor MPs will tell us at every opportunity that the reason we are doing all of this is the global pandemic. Yes, it is, but that does not mean that the government cannot be held to account. When we question the government on not only budget

expenditure but its health response, it should not be seen as a form of bullying and intimidation. It should be seen as a form of accountability and fighting for our constituents like I have done for 11 years in this place.

In terms of the economic reality, I talked about businesses doing it tough and I talked about fly-in fly-out workers. In my electorate I have builders who have projects over the border in New South Wales and the site inspectors cannot go to inspect the sites to sign off on the final settlement to hand over the house. This is having a detrimental economic impact on our communities, our builders and the economy in general. Yes, there has been support from government with respect to our businesses across the state, but more needs to be done and can be done.

Looking at my own electorate, I am proud that we have recently announced a stimulus package. The Liberal National Party have announced \$20 million to expand the Sunshine Coast Stadium to give it the capacity of 16,000. I thank Tim Mander for coming up to the Sunshine Coast to make that announcement. We have also announced a \$35 million new road, Bells Creek Arterial Road, to ease congestion on the Bruce Highway and Caloundra Road. We have also announced \$15 million to upgrade the Caloundra Road and Nicklin Way roundabouts to ease congestion on Nicklin Way. More needs to be done and it will be done between now and the election.

With respect to the expenditure as shadow minister for education, the Department of Education expenditure in the Appropriation Bill on page 5 is \$432 million, but there is no detail of what it is for. There is no detail of the expenditure. Nearly half a billion dollars is allocated to the Department of Education without any notes of what it is for. It cannot be salaries. It cannot just be salaries of teachers and so forth. What is it for?

Is it for the air conditioning that the state did not budget for, that they copied the LNP policy when we said two years ago that we would air-condition every state school classroom? They denied it and said how bad it was and then they copied it. With respect to the education department expenditure, is it the fact that they are going to have to now spend a lot more money on the air conditioning because what they did not account for was the power supply? They put all this air conditioning in schools without a power supply! Some schools have no electrical ability to turn on the power to run the air conditioning.

They then said to the P&Cs at schools, 'You have to cage all around the air-conditioning units.' It is not funded, so again it comes out of the school budget. Then last week they said, 'No, no cages.' So now health and safety is not a problem with small kids putting their fingers into the air-conditioning units? Is this what the \$432 million is being spent on? They announced this program of air conditioning, but it is the typical Labor way: they cannot manage projects. They always wreck it. I know that there are schools that have full air conditioning but the electrical system does not give them enough power to turn it on. Who in their right mind in the Labor Party thought that was a good idea? Wouldn't you upgrade the power first? Seriously!

This is why a full budget should have been handed down. This is why a full estimates should have been held. We have seen the double standards across the economic portfolio. I mentioned the issue about Sarah. Let us not forget Mark. Mark was asked, as part of his exemption for his children, 'Which one do you want to pick to see you and say goodbye?' I am a father. I could not think of living in a situation as we do now that I would be asked that question by some bureaucrat in Queensland Health: 'Pick a child—any child out of your three—who you will want to say goodbye to you on your dying breath.' That is what happened to Mark. He has been asked to pick a kid who will be able to say goodbye to him. It is disgraceful.

I am not going to have the Premier play the victim in this, because she is not the victim. The people of Queensland who are suffering because of these policies of the Labor government are the victims, not the Premier. I ask that she have compassion for these people. We are not saying, 'Open the borders. Flood the borders.' We are saying, 'Have consistency and compassion.'

Ms Scanlon: You were saying that.

Mr BLEIJIE: And the Labor government opened the borders. I move the following amendment—

That all words after 'bills' be omitted and insert the words 'be read a second time after the Treasurer tables the legal advice demonstrating that there is no breach of the Constitution of Queensland'.