




Speech By
Joan Pease

MEMBER FOR LYTTON

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APPROPRIATION (COVID-19) BILL

 **Ms PEASE** (Lytton—ALP) (4.45 pm): I rise to speak to the Appropriation (COVID-19) Bill 2020. COVID-19 is causing unprecedented economic challenges all over the world. Queensland has had to respond to this insidious and potentially deadly disease and we have responded just like Queenslanders do. We have stood up—stood up to protect the health of Queenslanders and stood up for our Queensland economy. Together we have done this and together we will survive this because together we are stronger. The Palaszczuk Labor government was the first government to call a health emergency. We were the first government to provide financial support and we have continued with our support of individuals, businesses and industry.

I would like to firstly take an opportunity to thank our frontline workers—our health workers, paramedics and other health workers, and our police officers, teachers, cleaners, food services, local business owners and industry. Thank you for all that you are doing each and every day. I acknowledge the great work of those people in protecting, educating, serving and growing Queenslanders.

I am proud that the Palaszczuk government has responded so quickly to support businesses and families across Queensland, with over 20,000 businesses with an estimated 130,000 workers impacted directly by the pandemic. The Palaszczuk government has responded to manage the economic fallout of the pandemic by announcing a \$4 billion economic relief package. This package does the right thing for all Queenslanders, with \$300 million in cost-of-living relief for households, including a \$200 credit for all 2.1 million households to offset the cost of water and electricity. A \$400 million land tax relief for rental property owners, ensured to be passed on to tenants, will assist those tenants who have been impacted by COVID-19. As of this morning, 852 landowners have received relief worth \$9.17 million.

We are delivering a further \$2.5 billion in measures, including payroll tax relief. As of this morning our program of payroll tax refunds, holidays and deferrals has seen almost 11,400 Queensland businesses receiving a payroll tax refund or payment holiday, with more than \$311 million being put back into the accounts of Queensland businesses and back into the pockets of Queensland workers. We are providing relief for businesses renting government owned properties and electricity rebates for all Queensland small and medium sized businesses that consume less than 100,000 kilowatt hours of power. We have a liquor licensing fee waiver, assistance to support large businesses to scale up when economic activity improves and \$27.25 million to assist local governments, businesses and industry with resilience and recovery strategies.

We have a \$24.7 million housing and homelessness plan to deliver accommodation for vulnerable Queenslanders who may need to self-isolate, for homelessness providers and for enhancements to the Home Assist Secure program. We have a \$500 million loan facility with loans of up to \$250,000 available to encourage businesses to keep Queenslanders in work, and these loans are interest free for the first 12 months. As of today, the Jobs Support Loan program has helped 1,390 businesses to support nearly 19,000 jobs in our economy. These initiatives have been so well received across my electorate. I have heard firsthand what the Palaszczuk government's economic response means to locals.

Tom Tindall, founder and owner of Orientique Australia, a local fashion business, told me how impressed he was with the Queensland government's support for businesses. He said he felt that the Queensland government has his back. Tom told me that he had worked hard to build his business, and he also spoke so very highly of his team. He also spoke incredibly highly of the government.

I met Tom while I was out walking one morning. He was in quarantine on his verandah. He called out to me across the fence—he is a neighbour of mine—to tell me how proud he was to be a Queenslander and how proud he was to know that the Queensland Palaszczuk government had his back. He also told me that he has the best team in the world and that they are the best at what they do. He told me that from an income point of view he feels that his business is protected and that brings more relief than we could ever imagine. 'When we come back,' he said, 'they are going to have so much energy and commitment to get things back to normal and we will come back bigger, better and stronger. I encourage anyone in the House who is looking for some new female clothing to check out Orientique; they have a beautiful range of clothes.

These comments from Tom are true across my entire electorate. Employers are wanting to protect their staff. Locals are all working hard to follow the guidelines to ensure that Queensland recovers. This bill provides a lifeline to support those in our state who have been impacted to ensure that our economy recovers. May I say again that our government has responded to support all Queenslanders, because that is what good governments do. We have stood up to protect the health of Queenslanders and we have stood up for the Queensland economy. Together we are stronger and together we will survive this. I commend the Appropriation (COVID-19) Bill to the House. Stay well, Queenslanders, and stay safe.