




Speech By
Lance McCallum

MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

Record of Proceedings, 9 September 2020

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (6.44 pm): I rise to speak in support of both the Appropriation Bill 2020 and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2020. However, I will focus my contribution solely on the Appropriation Bill 2020.

Prior to COVID-19, the Palaszczuk government was on track to deliver its fifth consecutive budget surplus. We had seen record exports above \$80 billion per year, continuously outpacing New South Wales and Victoria combined. Government debt was lower than both New South Wales and Victoria in absolute terms and as a proportion of revenue.

Then in March this year everything changed and was turned on its head. As we learnt last week from the federal Treasurer, COVID has plunged Australia into our first recession in nearly three decades. It is in times of crisis that government must step up and do the heavy lifting. The bill before the House does exactly that by seeking supplementary appropriation for 2019-20 for unforeseen expenditure of \$1.114 billion incurred by 13 departments and also appropriates the amount of \$28.635 billion additional interim supply for 2020-21.

In the midst of coronavirus Queenslanders continue to be resilient, determined and optimistic. Our strong health response means our state's expected economic recovery from COVID-19 will be almost twice as strong as the national average. To date, our government has committed more than \$7 billion in initiatives to support Queenslanders' health, jobs and businesses, including: \$1½ billion to support workers and large and regionally significant businesses; \$1.2 billion in health measures; \$950 million in payroll tax relief, including refunds, payment holidays and deferrals; \$400 million for land tax relief; \$360 million to exempt JobKeeper payments from payroll tax; \$249 million to extend payroll and land tax measures; \$54.5 million in support for essential public transport; \$50 million to defer gaming machine taxes to support pubs and clubs; \$50 million in support for tourism businesses; and \$25 million in housing and homelessness support.

This week we committed a further \$4 billion in recovery measures, taking our total direct COVID stimulus to \$11 billion. We are backing Queensland businesses and supporting local jobs with ongoing investments and new program funding, including: \$249 billion for tax relief for small and medium businesses across the state; a two-month payroll waiver for businesses with annual Australian taxable wages of up to \$6.5 million; continuing to exempt JobKeeper subsidy payments from payroll tax, despite the federal government making these payments liable for income tax; and for business owners renting state government premises and incurring a demonstrable COVID impact we are extending existing rent relief to the end of this year. These measures are in addition to the previously announced payroll and land tax relief and tax exemption for JobKeeper payments.

We will also support our regional councils to help them refinance existing debt, allowing them to redirect funding for job-creating capital works programs. As we continue to support Queensland communities, we are investing in world-class education, with \$235 million to upgrade education

infrastructure across the state, delivering 44 projects, including works at schools in Riverview, Bundamba, Redbank Plains, Goodna and Collingwood Park. Our \$477 million Cooler Cleaner Schools Program will put air conditioning in every classroom, library and staffroom in every state school in Queensland, and we will put 190,000 solar panels on school rooftops to help offset the cost.

Nearly two million households in Queensland will see another \$50 taken off their electricity bills from this month thanks to Queensland's publicly owned power assets. This is in addition to our COVID household relief package, which provided Queensland households with \$200 off their utility bills and \$500 for small business. We have also locked in another annual \$50 dividend payment to go to Queensland households next year in 2021. We can do this because we still own our energy assets—assets that those opposite would have sold had they had the chance, assets that include Swanbank Power Station in my electorate.

Unlike other states, the dividends from our publicly owned companies flow not to multinational shareholders overseas but to Queensland families across the state. Queensland's publicly owned electricity companies will invest more than \$1.76 billion on capital works in 2020-21, supporting up to 3,920 jobs. Through the measures contained in this bill we will invest \$500 million in a Renewable Energy Fund that will mean our publicly owned energy corporations can increase public ownership of commercial renewable energy projects and supporting infrastructure. The Renewable Energy Fund will complement our recent \$145 million commitment to establish three renewable energy zones.

We are backing Queensland jobs with more than \$150 million for our small business adaptation grants which locally in Bundamba have seen over 27 businesses benefit from accountants and barbers to landscapers and gyms. We are establishing the \$500 million Backing Queensland Business Investment Fund. Small and medium enterprises with a proven product and defined market but that require capital to aggressively grow can access this fund. By putting our money on the table, we can get more projects through the vital investment decision phase, construction underway and people employed as soon as possible.

As we deliver our plan to unite and recover for Queensland jobs, we have moved to protect our public assets while getting them to work hard for Queensland's future through the establishment of the Queensland Future Fund, which has been seeded with over \$5 billion in locked down protected public assets as part of our well-considered and prudent fiscal strategy.

Queenslanders are working together to contain COVID-19, and that is why we have been able to take steps to reopen our economy. We have a solid economic plan to create jobs by investing in infrastructure, buying locally, kickstarting Queensland manufacturing and supporting our small business. Our strong health response to coronavirus has been recognised around the world, and it is being balanced with unprecedented levels of infrastructure and economic investment. I commend both bills to the House.