




Speech By
Hon. Dr Steven Miles

MEMBER FOR MURRUMBA

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL

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 **Hon. SJ MILES** (Murrumba—ALP) (Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning) (11.56 am): There you have it. How disappointing! It was the member for Broadwater's first big chance—his premiere, his opening night, his chance to define himself and the tone of the opposition for the next four years. He had a chance to come up with a new approach, to make the headlines true, to actually consign Campbell Newman to history like he said he would. He had a chance to turn his back on the philosophy of austerity, a chance to turn his back and reject the ideology of cuts. Did he do that? He did nothing of the sort. He just doubled down on the same old LNP. I listened to his speech perhaps more intently than anyone on the other side of the chamber, and I reckon that speech was more Campbell Newman than even Campbell Newman could have been.

In the context of a global economic crisis, the opposition leader comes in here and critiques us for running deficit budgets. The logical conclusion of that is to demand the equivalent of those deficits in cuts. That is the only way it can add up. I think there was only one line in his speech that was truly honest. That was when he outlined that he would have a new approach to the Public Service. I think we all know what that means. It means that the public servants of Queensland have nothing to be concerned about. Isn't that what that means? It is almost word for word.

You could tell what everyone opposite thought of that performance. Never have I seen this opposition so quiet. In fact, never have I seen any opposition so quiet, even when we had just seven members there. He spoke for—oh, it seemed like forever. He spoke for a long time.

Mr Dick: And said nothing.

Dr MILES: He said nothing. There was barely a 'hear, hear'. There was a lot of looking down at the feet, a lot of drinking of water and a lot of playing with phones but very little interest in what the new Leader of the Opposition had to say. No wonder the LNP executive have called a meeting to talk about what they stand for! I guess the opposition leader has to wait until that meeting has happened before he can come in here and tell us something new that they stand for.

There was a lot of delusion from the Leader of the Opposition but none greater than when he reflected on his time as the local government minister. I think the member for Hervey Bay deserves an apology for how that was characterised. I spent last night with the LGAQ and mayors from right across Queensland. They had a lot of opinions, but not a single one of them was harking back to the great era of Crisafulli. None of them were talking to me about the heady days of David. Not a single one of the mayors who were there—

Mr Hinchliffe: There is an ex-mayor who speaks highly of him.

Dr MILES: This is true. Not a single mayor there wanted to return to the \$60 million of cuts that the now Leader of the Opposition delivered as local government minister.

He said that we should dream big on infrastructure. It is not good enough to dream big on infrastructure; we actually have to build it. We cannot just dream about it. They went to the election with dreams—a dream of a Bradfield; a dream of duplicating the Bruce—but no dollars and no plan. I want to turn to and take head-on the great big lie at the heart of the opposition's response to our budget.

Mr LANGBROEK: I rise to a point of order, Madam Deputy Speaker. The member is using unparliamentary language. He used the word 'lie', if I need to clarify it for you.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): Minister, I ask you to withdraw. That was unparliamentary.

Dr MILES: I withdraw. The great big untruth at the heart of the opposition's response to our budget is the claim that our budget includes a greater level of debt than we committed to in our costings and in our economic recovery plan. That might work well for them as spin, but it has no substance. We can tell it has no substance because no-one out there is picking it up and no-one out there is believing it. It is worse than poor economics; it is actually poor math.

In our economic recovery plan and our costings we outlined how we would borrow to invest in the jobs of Queenslanders over and above the baseline. That is over and above the forward estimates. If in the context of a revenue collapse we are not going to aggressively cut services and jobs, clearly those deficits will be added to the borrowings of government.

I make this point: that was not just implicit in our costings but also implicit in the costings of those opposite. Who could forget that the then deputy leader of the opposition agreed that they would run deficit budgets in years 1, 2 and 3? The then leader of the opposition said they would run deficit budgets in years 1 and 2 and then said also in year 3 when she found out that the deputy leader had said a deficit in year 3 as well. Their costings only indicated an intention to return to balance in year 4. Implicit in that is that they would have borrowed to fund those deficits—borrowed an amount greater than the borrowings they outlined for their costings.

If the Leader of the Opposition is demanding we return to balance now, he is demanding massive cuts—unheard of cuts, greater cuts than even Campbell Newman inflicted on us, and we all know what the result of that was. The Leader of the Opposition would have us believe that that deficit really just pays for pens on desks. Well, no, our public spending pays for teachers in classrooms. It pays for nurses in hospitals. We cannot achieve balance in the context of a revenue collapse unless we are willing to cut those vital public services. The Leader of the Opposition's argument is even more ignorant once we look at the budget papers and discover that our budget is only in cash deficit in year 1. The operating position in the forward years—the deficits in those years—is all on infrastructure and depreciation.

The health and economic response in Queensland is working. Our plan is working. It was roundly endorsed by the people of Queensland at the election. It is now being roundly endorsed in the economic data. As the Treasurer outlined for us this morning, the Queensland economy is dragging the Australian economy out of recession. Our economy grew 6.8 per cent between June and September according to the ABS. We beat every other state. Our economy grew 1½ times faster than the national average in September. While Australia's domestic demand might have gone backwards by 3½ per cent over the past year, in Queensland our economy expanded over the past year by 0.7 per cent, making up all of those COVID caused losses. Private investment is up by 3.5 per cent in the quarter as our economy picks up speed.

Elections and budgets are all about choices. This year the choice was clear for Queenslanders. We went with a clear plan to borrow more money to create jobs and borrow more money to keep our services running. We cannot build all of the initiatives that we have outlined—some of which the Leader of the Opposition demanded we build faster—without those borrowings unless we are willing to cut and cut deep. The whole world is suffering financially due to this economic crisis. Europe has gone into lockdown and the US is facing a bleak and dangerous winter. There are no jobs in lockdown. They cannot be on a path to economic recovery when they are experiencing a second and third wave. That is why we have consistently said that our health response is the foundation of our economic response.

Not only are the results clear in the economic data, but our plan was solidly endorsed by Queenslanders. We went to them with a clear and honest vision and an ambitious plan to deliver more public services and more opportunities and create more jobs. Queenslanders, some of whom have never voted Labor before, put their trust in us, and we will not let them down. This budget delivers on those promises. It is a budget focused on one thing, and that is Queensland's economic recovery.

With the great news that the borders are now open to New South Wales and Victoria, our economic recovery will be even a bit easier. We have a long road ahead of us and we need to invest in our people, in our communities and in job-creating projects. In my previous role as minister for health and ambulance services I had the humbling opportunity to help lead Queensland's health response. I

always said that our health response would be the first stage of our economic response. I did not know at that time how closely I would get to work on both. I now have the equally humbling opportunity to help lead Queensland's economic recovery as Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning. As I have said, when times are tough it is critical that government invests to support its people. That is exactly what we are doing and what we will be doing with this budget.

Allow me to briefly turn to what this budget means to my own part of the world, the electorate of Murrumba. I am pleased to see that this budget delivers on all of our election commitments and will allow my local community—the people I have the honour of representing—to continue to get back to work. There is new money for road upgrades, making our communities safer and delivering more jobs. Works continue at the Redcliffe Hospital thanks to this budget, with more money to deliver the MRI machine that the member for Redcliffe and I have been working on and money to begin planning for a larger hospital expansion. We have secured funding for the Mango Hill station park-and-ride to allow us to get on with the job of delivering more car parks and generating more jobs for locals.

Our schools are the real winners in this budget. As a local MP, working with our schools has always been what I enjoy the most. Kallangur State School is getting more classrooms as well as a bigger and much deserved new hall. Mango Hill State School will continue to get even more new classrooms and a brand new hall. That school keeps on growing, as does Griffin State School. All of that is funded in this budget. Undurba State School and Dakabin State School will receive upgrades as well, allowing us to improve facilities for our students, delivering more local jobs in construction as well as, in those cases, new facilities to run out-of-school-hours care. This is very welcome.

This budget is all about one thing: jobs. In Murrumba this investment will continue to build our community while delivering more jobs for Queenslanders. In my portfolio responsibilities, this budget delivers funding to programs like COVID-19 Works for Queensland, which has done just that—invested in regional communities to create jobs. In July, we announced that the \$200 million program would support 520 projects, which councils report will support or create more than 4,600 jobs.

South-East Queensland councils are also benefiting through the \$50 million Unite and Recover Community Stimulus Package, \$45 million of which is expected to be paid out in this financial year, fast-tracking shovel-ready projects. These projects are ready to deliver jobs. Now they will have government backing to get started. More than 1,500 jobs are expected to be created or supported by this program across the 12 South-East Queensland councils.

This is a very strong Labor budget that delivers precisely what we went to the election saying we would do: borrow money to get the Queensland economy back working, to get people back into jobs, to keep businesses open, to allow businesses to create more and more jobs. The most dangerous thing that we could do is rush to a balanced budget, as the Leader of the Opposition outlined we should do. That would deliver billions of dollars worth of cuts. It would have a devastating effect on our state and local economies, just like it did the last time they tried that when they did it without an economic crisis facing us. To have those cuts in the face of an economic crisis really would be devastating.