




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (4.29 pm): It took me by surprise. I thought we would see a little bit more from the Treasurer.

Mrs D'Ath: He only speaks once.

Mr MANDER: I apologise.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms McMillan): Member for Everton, it took us both by surprise. My apologies. You have the floor.

Mr MANDER: I withdraw and apologise. I rise to address the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2020 and Appropriation Bill 2020 in this cognate debate. Yesterday the Treasurer declared both these bills urgent under standing order 137 and both have bypassed every consideration from the committee. The Treasurer is seeking an extra \$29.6 billion of Queensland taxpayers' money without going through the normal committee process.

Since becoming Treasurer—this may surprise members—the member for Woodridge has introduced four bills, all of which have been declared urgent. The Treasurer is so concerned, so anxious and so afraid of due process that he takes every possible measure to hide from scrutiny. There is no better example of this than the financial statement he released on Monday, the worst set of financial statements ever delivered by any government in Queensland's history. He said that he provided two years of forecast where the reality is he has only provided nine months to the end of this financial year.

He also said yesterday in the bill's first reading that the measures contained in the appropriation bills and the way in which they were introduced were necessary due to this time of crisis. Like his interview on 4BC yesterday, this statement is misleading. Even though he would not admit it on 4BC radio, the fact is that he was in cabinet in the so-called economic team of ministers when the Palaszczuk Labor government announced it would deliver a budget this year in April before the federal government and he was in cabinet when the Palaszczuk Labor government scrapped the budget for this year.

The reason that these appropriation bills are required to provide interim supply is because Labor has refused to deliver a 2020-21 budget before the state election and in time to ensure that there was adequate supply in the second half of this financial year. Instead of a 1,000-page budget, all Labor could deliver was a 41-page glossy brochure. Now the Palaszczuk Labor government is forcing parliament to legislate an extra \$28.6 billion of interim supply on the fly.

These appropriation bills also contain another admission of failure by the Treasurer. This, of course, is the \$1.114 billion he is seeking for unforeseen expenditure in the financial year 2019-20. There was \$1.114 billion worth of department budget blowouts he was incapable of managing, significantly more than any unforeseen expenditure amount under the prior LNP government. Before the Treasurer attempts to use coronavirus as an excuse we should all remember that it was only in April

that his predecessor appropriated an extra \$3.181 billion for the coronavirus response and, notably, the Department of Health, which is the major department dealing with the coronavirus response, is not one of the 13 department budget blowouts, neither is the Department of Transport and Main Roads, confirming Labor's \$1.3 billion cut in infrastructure last financial year. So hopeless is the Palaszczuk Labor government that even with the nine new or increased taxes it has introduced on Queensland families it still cannot keep the forecasted budgets.

Since being elected the Palaszczuk Labor government has racked up more than \$5 billion worth of unforeseen expenditure: \$2.27 billion in the 2016-17 financial year; half a billion in the 2017-18 financial year; \$1.39 billion in the 2018-19 financial year; and now \$1.114 billion in the 2019-20 financial year. On average the amount is over seven times higher than the unforeseen expenditure under the previous LNP government, a clear indicator of Labor's consistent fiscal management failures.

In six years Labor has racked up a record \$102 billion of debt because it has lost control of spending. Every dollar that Labor wastes is a dollar that cannot be spent on the infrastructure a growing state desperately needs to stimulate the economy and create much needed jobs. That means that there is less money to get our hospitals working again, less money to build new and better roads, less money to spend on additional police resources and less money for our schools. We know from history that when Labor runs out of money it comes after yours with higher taxes and there is no better example of this than the 2019-20 budget which has resulted in this \$1.114 billion in unforeseen expenditure.

The Palaszczuk Labor government's 2019-20 budget was a bad budget for Queenslanders. It was a budget of higher taxes, more debt, less jobs and less infrastructure. The budget showed that Labor cut infrastructure spending before COVID-19 at a time when Queensland had the worst unemployment rate in the nation. In the 2019-20 budget the Palaszczuk Labor government was not borrowing to build, Labor was borrowing to cover its wasteful spending. It was also a budget of new taxes not announced at the last state election—another breach of trust for the people of Queensland. It was a budget that introduced new taxes, ripping \$1.25 billion from the state's economy. It plunged Queensland into more than \$90 billion of debt at the time and revealed almost 26,000 less jobs than forecast. Only the member for Woodridge could make these figures appear to look good.

The Treasurer's financial statement on Monday showed that Queensland has become, since that MYFER, \$18 million more in debt. We had Queensland's record worst \$8 billion deficit in this coming financial year and another record \$102 billion debt locked in, which will lead to 72,000 job losses over this financial year. The member for Woodridge has well and truly beaten the member for South Brisbane as Queensland's worst Treasurer on record. There is another record looming for the member for Woodridge: to potentially be the only Treasurer in Queensland's history not to deliver a budget. The \$1.2 billion in new taxes introduced in the 2019-20 financial year took Labor's new taxes to \$4 billion over nine new and increased taxes, all of which were not announced in the last election. Of concern, on Monday the ever evasive and defensive Treasurer failed to rule out even more taxes and tax hikes into the future—or was that just another mistake?

The 2019 estimates for the 2019-20 budget Appropriation Bill were dominated by the Palaszczuk Labor government's ongoing integrity crises. In the 30th year since the Fitzgerald inquiry report was published the Palaszczuk Labor government's integrity scandals raised serious questions about the government's openness, transparency, accountability and integrity that have engulfed the leadership of this government. This was, of course, the estimates where the member for South Brisbane's investment property scandal was uncovered, but also the fact that a \$267,500 taxpayer funded grant was given to a company in which the Premier's former chief of staff was a director and a major shareholder. I wonder how many Labor Party bosses are already in line to take a slice of the \$500 million taxpayer fund that the Treasurer announced on Monday. The accumulation of this budget and those Palaszczuk Labor government budgets before it drove Queensland to have the nation's highest unemployment, most bankruptcies and lowest business confidence before coronavirus.

For the second time this year Labor is forcing urgent appropriation bills through the Legislative Assembly. In April former treasurer Jackie Trad appropriated an extra \$3.181 billion to the 2019-20 financial year and a further \$1.615 billion for the 2020-21 financial year. The Palaszczuk Labor government is now seeking a blank cheque for another \$28 billion of Queensland taxpayers' money to spend with no economic plan. Labor's failure to produce a full budget before the election shows that they do not have an economic plan and they are hiding from scrutiny. This reckless fiscal management of taxpayers' money is a continuation of Labor's decision to spend \$200 million to buy a shareholding in Virgin Australia, which has not ruled out sacking thousands of Queensland workers.

Queenslanders do not know how much of the \$28 billion will be spent on buying back a coal terminal for four times the price that the former Beattie Labor government sold it for. That is 'Labornomics' if ever we have ever seen it. They do not know how much of the \$28 billion will be spent on Labor's election slush fund that the Treasurer announced on Monday. The government knows, but

the Queensland taxpayers do not know. They do not know how much of that \$28 billion will be spent on apps for fat dogs, changing hospital names and ongoing IT bungles at the expense of funding new roads, rail lines and dams. Our economy is hurting like never before but Labor has no plan to drag Queensland's economy out of recession. Labor cannot be trusted to manage Queensland's economy or the state government's finances. They are incapable.

On Monday, the Treasurer broke the Palaszczuk Labor government's fiscal principles. The fiscal principle to reduce the general government debt-to-revenue ratio was broken as the debt-to-revenue ratio exploded from 63 per cent in the Mid Year Fiscal and Economic Review to 108 per cent this financial year—one fail. The fiscal principle to target net operating surpluses was broken as the Treasurer delivered a record \$5 billion operating deficit for the last financial year and forecast a record \$8 billion deficit for this financial year—the second failure of fiscal principles. The fiscal principle of a consistent capital program was broken as Labor cut over \$1.3 billion from the budgeted 2019-20 capital program, cutting infrastructure projects at the expense of Queensland jobs—the third fiscal principle to be broken. The fiscal principle to maintain competitive taxation was broken long ago when Labor introduced nine new or increased taxes, ripping \$4 billion from the Queensland economy and the Treasurer has failed to rule out introducing even more—the fourth fiscal principle to be broken. Finally, the fiscal principle to maintain the Public Service-to-population growth was shattered as population growth was forecast to increase at 1.25 per cent compared to Public Service growth at 2.2 per cent. How can we believe a word that the Labor government says when they cannot keep the fiscal principles that they have for running the economy?

Yesterday on 4BC, the Treasurer said that his misleading statement was entirely meaningless. Fundamentally, the Treasurer and the broader Palaszczuk Labor government have no issue with misleading Queenslanders and yesterday proved once again that he has no credibility. The government have broken Labor's fiscal principles and, as a result, Queensland had the worst unemployment rate, the worst state debt, the most bankruptcies and the lowest business confidence—all before coronavirus. Now the Palaszczuk Labor government is floundering at a time when Queensland needs economic leadership. Because Labor has no plan for the economy, another 72,000 Queenslanders will have lost their jobs by the end of this financial year, which is on top of a record 234,000 Queenslanders already out of work. Currently we have the highest unemployment rate in the country—higher than Victoria, which is in lockdown. It is clear that Labor is not working.

Time and time again, ministers of the Palaszczuk Labor government have shown a complete disdain for the state's finances, government integrity, accountability and transparency. Instead of apologising on 4BC yesterday for being caught out, the Treasurer should be apologising to the hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders who have lost their jobs because Labor cannot manage the economy.

Mr Power interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Stevens): Member for Everton, take your seat, please. Member for Logan, you are on a warning. I have already advised you about your interjections. Under standing order 253A, you will now withdraw from the chamber for one hour.

Whereupon the honourable member for Logan withdrew from the chamber at 4.44 pm.

Mr MANDER: As I was saying, those who deserve an apology are the hundreds of thousands of Queenslanders who have lost their jobs and who will lose their jobs over the next nine months because Labor cannot manage the economy. An LNP government will provide the economic leadership that Queensland is desperate for. The LNP has outlined a bold infrastructure plan that will provide a decade of jobs—not one or two years worth of jobs. Of course, we are talking about the new Bradfield scheme to harness the monsoonal rains of the north and making sure that we use the water for irrigation, for power supply and for creating jobs. We will build the second M1. We will create the Queensland dam company to build east of the Great Dividing Range the dams that have been talked about for years but that no-one has built. We will invest in South-East Queensland infrastructure with congestion-busting plans to make sure that we can get people and businesses moving again. We will make electricity affordable in the regions. Why should we have competition in Brisbane and the south-east corner when our friends, relatives, brothers and sisters in the regions do not? We have a bold plan and there is more to announce as we get closer to the election.

Unlike Labor, we will fund our promises and deliver on our fiscal principles. An LNP government will give Queenslanders a no-new-tax guarantee to give businesses the confidence to invest and to create jobs. The LNP will produce a full budget in the first 100 days, not Labor's constant smoke-and-mirror tricks and games that damage business certainty and hide the true state of the finances from the public. No budget before the state election means no economic plan for Queensland at a time when we have the worst unemployment rate. The LNP is the only party that has a plan to create a stronger economy and more secure jobs. We have an ambitious plan to stimulate the economy,

create a decade of secure jobs and drag Queensland out of this recession. Our vision is to make Queensland the economic powerhouse of Australia once again, the best place to get a job, to get ahead and to raise a family.