




Speech By
Ann Leahy

MEMBER FOR WARREGO

Record of Proceedings, 18 June 2021

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (3.47 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the appropriation bills. This is a typical Labor budget—cuts to infrastructure spending of \$4 billion, black holes, blank lines and dodgy asset sales to themselves.

I wish to commend the opposition leader David Crisafulli and the Deputy Leader David Janetzki on their budget reply speeches. They have the attention of my former constituents with the independent Parliamentary Budget Office to bring Queensland into line with the Commonwealth and other state jurisdictions.

One of my constituents, Louise Travers, has made comment about the budget. She wants a bit of truth about the finances and the promises that have not happened, for example, the Toowoomba Hospital. It is a fair question, too.

This government has been saved by Queenslanders—Queenslanders who have been working hard during COVID, Queenslanders who have been innovative and Queenslanders who are paying taxes to the state government. These same Queenslanders are paying the waste tax, the waging tax, the land tax, the property investor tax and the car stamp duty tax, and all of these taxes were introduced by the Palaszczuk Labor government.

It looks as though there is another tax on the way for Queenslanders, and the government's own budget documents point to this. It is the rubbish bin tax, and it is coming to households across the state in 2022-23. I will elaborate more on this shortly.

Mr Watts: Rubbish.

Ms LEAHY: It is a tax on rubbish.

I firstly want to deal with the sham in this budget—the sham sale of the titles office. The dodgy part of this sale is the value on the titles office of \$7.8 billion. Two weeks ago in parliament the Treasurer said the titles office was valued at \$4.2 billion. What happened in the past two weeks? I wish I could get a revaluation that quickly. Using this dodgy figure, the Queensland government has sold the titles office at an overinflated price to itself to wipe debt from the books. The sale was made from the Queensland government to Treasury but no money changed hands. It sounds dodgy, and that is because it is.

Through this sham sale, the Queensland government just reduced its debt figure without reducing the level of debt it must repay. It moved the debt sideways, not down.

Mr Tantari interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Pause the clock. Member for Hervey Bay, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms LEAHY: Thank you for your protection, Madam Deputy Speaker. Through this sham sale, the Queensland government just reduced its debt figure without reducing the level of debt it must repay. It moved the debt sideways, not down. It is phoney accounting while the state still careens towards record debt. It is Labornomics as per usual, and it just does not add up.

This state Labor government has failed to answer one simple question: where is the money in this budget to pay for the billions of dollars of promises? The Treasurer made nearly \$6 billion in announcements that cannot be delivered in this term of parliament. If it is not in the budget, it does not exist. For the benefit of the House, let me list which funds we have from those opposite without funding. There is the Hospital Building Fund. There is nothing in the budget. It did not even rate a mention as a line item. There is the Housing Investment Fund. There is nothing in the budget for that. The Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund is missing \$1 billion in the budget. The Path to Treaty Fund has nothing in the budget. The carbon reduction investment fund has nothing in the budget. It truly beggars belief. Where is the money?

There is a need for real truth about the finances and the promises of this government. I table for the information of the House a media release published by the Minister for the Environment who was quoting figures of nine years of funding as one year's expenditure in this year's budget.

Tabled paper: Media release, undated, by the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs, Hon. Meaghan Scanlon, titled 'Review to strengthen Queensland's war on waste' [919](#).

The minister said that the funding for councils in this year's budget for Works for Queensland is \$900 million—wrong; it is \$100 million. She says COVID Works for Queensland is \$200 million—wrong; this program finishes in 2020-21. She says Building our Regions in this budget is \$418 million—wrong; this year it is \$70 million. She says local government grants and subsidies are \$286 million—wrong; this year it is \$25 million. But wait, it gets better. I am pleased to see the Minister for Transport is in the House. She said that the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme, TIDS, is \$700 million in this year's budget—wrong; it has not increased since 2015 and in this budget it is \$70 million. If the government's own ministers get it wrong and do not know how to read a budget, how are the public supposed to get the full facts on the state of the finances?

When it comes to the Works for Queensland program, the government would have us believe the rivers are flowing with gold to local governments across Queensland. That is not so. What the budget documents tell us is that Works for Queensland drops to \$70 million in 2022-23. It is further cut to \$30 million in 2023-24. There is a similar story for the South East Queensland Community Stimulus Program. That package drops back to \$40 million in 2022-23 and is further cut to \$10 million in 2023-24.

There is no way that councils will be able to support 26,000 jobs in the future across Queensland with less than half the funding. This budget tells us the Labor government have cut back local government's sacred cow—Works for Queensland. Queensland's local governments have been short-changed. They will not be able to keep up with the demands of population growth for local infrastructure like parks, footpaths, kerbing and channelling or security lighting.

Mr Power interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Pause the clock. Member for Logan, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms LEAHY: Whilst I am on local government issues, what an appalling attack we had this morning from the Treasurer on the Brisbane City Council mayor and councils in receipt of the waste levy advance payment. The Treasurer said—

Councils should be so lucky—taking credit for a rebate that the Labor government is giving to households via them.

Why is it that Labor governments hate councils so much? What we have learned from this budget is that waste levy advance payments for councils are only confirmed for 2021-22. There is no commitment to continue these payments beyond 2022 to 39 local governments. In future councils will be forced to hike rates to meet the forward revenue estimates for Labor's waste tax. Councils will become the tax collectors for the state government in the future.

Mr Perrett interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. Member for Gympie, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms LEAHY: Councils will be forced to collect approximately \$1 billion for the state government waste tax over the forward estimates. The rubbish bin tax will be the sixth tax from this Labor government. This waste tax has already shovelled millions of dollars into the Labor government coffers,

and Labor has failed to drive the investment into recycling and resource recovery. Local governments are once again faced with doing the heavy lifting on tax collection in the future for the failures of the state Labor government.

What we know is that this Labor government has misled Queensland local governments and every Queenslanders who has a wheelie bin. They are treating local governments like a poor cousin once more, and they are treating honest Queenslanders as fools. Aged-care homes and the not-for-profits will have to pay for the rubbish bin tax in the future.

We already know the member for Gaven is not good with figures—that is clear to see—so how will she now explain to her Gold Coast constituents that they will now have to pay another \$88 per year for the rubbish bin tax? I look forward to how the Premier will explain to her constituents why they are going to pay \$88 per year for their rubbish bins, when she was the one who gave the commitment that Queensland families will not face the cost of this levy. The budget papers tell us this is a broken promise.

How will the member for Bundaberg explain to his constituents that in future they may have to pay more than \$88 per year for their rubbish bins? That is not the only explaining the member for Bundaberg will have to do. I table a copy of last year's budget where the Bundaberg flood levee was clearly articulated as a budget line item.

Tabled paper: Extract from 2020-21 Queensland State Budget—Service Delivery Statements, titled 'Table 1.1 Expense measures', p. 1-5 [920](#).

The Bundaberg flood levee has vanished as a line item from this year's budget. That is right; there is no line item for the Bundaberg flood levee. Here we have the member for Bundaberg who made great promises at the state election, but he has lost the money for the Bundaberg flood levee from this budget. Let us not forget that he lost his level 5 hospital as well.

We have heard a lot in this parliament about the Roma Hospital. Just for the record, this hospital redevelopment started under former minister for health, Lawrence Springborg. This was a hospital where people could put their hands through the walls to the daylight on the outside. It was riddled with concrete cancer. It would have started to collapse if it were not for the redevelopment that started under the LNP. Successive Labor governments drove the infrastructure into the ground, literally. I want to place on record my thanks for a person who was not at the opening, however was pivotal in guiding the hospital through the funding gates. Former CEO Glynis Schultz was tireless in her drive to achieve a new hospital for Roma. Without her, this hospital would not have happened. Thank you Glynis.

We heard the Premier say this week that no matter where across our state families live, they should have a good quality health system. Premier, there needs to be some more support for local health professionals in Roma to deliver that good quality health system. Just ask William Titmarsh of Roma, whose original referral for a hip replacement was to the Roma Hospital in September 2019. Finally, after my representations, he has made it onto the waiting list for the Brisbane Mater Hospital for elective surgery. He may well have to wait another 365 days for his surgery. That is about three years since his first appointment before he even looks to get his surgery. I do not agree that this is a good quality health system, nor does Mr Titmarsh who has had that long wait. Whilst I am on health, the Tara Hospital is crying out for more support from the government. More nurses are desperately needed due to an increase in population across that region.

In the time I have remaining, I have some constituent budget requests that I wish to address. Councillor Robyn Fuhrmeister wants a guaranteed advance waste levy payment to councils for more than a year. Well, Robyn, this budget clearly shows that in 2022 the rubbish bin tax will start.

Lesley Cook wants the lack of affordable medical assistance and lack of birthing services at the Chinchilla Hospital addressed. Lesley, I too am passionate about returning the birthing services to Chinchilla; however, this government does not seem to share our passion.

Angie Hockaday wants more dollars or subsidy to transport recycling from the south-west to the east for processing. Angie, that is a great suggestion. The government have had three years to pick up this initiative for recycling; however, they have done nothing.

Sally Hemming wants to talk about the poor condition of regional roads, especially for heavy vehicles that use these roads. Sally, unfortunately, there is a \$6 billion maintenance backlog on the state controlled roads system. This budget falls short of addressing that backlog.

Mr Krause: How much will it go up this year?

Ms LEAHY: I take that interjection. How much will that maintenance backlog on state controlled roads go up this year?

Andrew and Wendy Henning said it would be wonderful if rural and remote education in Queensland could be considered in the budget. Andrew and Wendy, the budget has a record spend on education. However, some of the more immediate issues, like water supply for schools, have not rated a mention, nor has accommodation for school camps for distance education students.

Liz Hill wants affordable housing for small rural towns. Liz, there is a Housing Investment Fund promised. However, there are no funds in this budget for that fund. I think Liz will have some real difficulty trying to get that Housing Investment Fund out in the regional areas.

This is truly is a typical Labor budget—a typical Labor budget that disappoints.