




Speech By
Bart Mellish

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

Record of Proceedings, 18 June 2021

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Mr MELLISH** (Aspley—ALP) (3.41 pm): I congratulate the Treasurer on a fantastic Labor budget. It is a budget with a laser-sharp focus on recovering from COVID-19. The economic policies of this government are helping our great state power forward. We have nation-leading interstate migration, nation-leading economic growth, nation-leading housing starts and nation-leading retail spending.

I was pleased to see this week our unemployment rate dropping to 5.4 per cent, which is especially good considering the participation rate is higher than the national average. We are the first of the major economies in Australia with a path back to surplus.

As I see it, there are three reasons for the economic success that our state is experiencing: firstly, we entered the pandemic in a strong economic position; secondly, the Premier made the right calls at the right times during the heat of the pandemic; and thirdly, we have a strong economic recovery plan to drive forward Queensland.

This budget recognises the importance of social and community support. Queenslanders know the government will deliver for, and always protect, those most vulnerable.

I was really pleased to see our \$1.9 billion investment in social housing over four years and the new \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund to support housing supply and increase housing and homelessness support across Queensland. I congratulate the Treasurer and the minister on that. This will mean thousands of new builds over the next four years.

This financial year our economy will grow by 3.25 per cent, more than double the national growth rate. This is even more impressive given our economy contracted less than the national average over the last year. By the end of the forward estimates our economy will still be growing faster than the national average.

Of course, because of COVID-19 the economic recovery has not been able to benefit all industries equally. Live music has taken a big hit since COVID hit, particularly indoor venues. While it has been difficult for many across pubs, clubs and nightclubs, those whose main business is putting on gigs have been particularly affected. That is why I was very pleased to see the Premier, Treasurer and Minister Enoch announce \$7 million in support to be delivered by Arts Queensland this coming financial year for live music venues. I thank Angela Samut and John Collins from the live music sector in particular for working with us on this package. Now we just need the federal government to hurry up and sort out their vaccine supply so that these venues can fully get back to normal.

More broadly, pre-COVID, Queensland Labor governments were delivering surplus after surplus and we are on track to get there again. Federally, the LNP have not delivered a surplus since four Liberal prime ministers ago. Morrison—nope; Turnbull—nope; Abbott as pm with sloppy Joe Hockey—nope. In Queensland, of course, the Newman government never delivered a budget surplus, despite promising to do so.

Earlier this week on Sky News, the Leader of the Opposition, when asked if he would rule out cuts, said, 'I'm ruling out being savage.' So those opposite are happy to do cuts, just not savage cuts. When you think of the Leader of the Opposition, the word 'savage' does not come to mind—more Savage Garden than savage, I think.

I was very shocked to hear the Leader of the Opposition yesterday in his budget reply talk about a lack of housing options in Aspley. I have a couple of points to make about that. Firstly, if the LNP care about housing affordability in Aspley, they really should talk to the person directly responsible for town planning and housing developments for the better part of the last decade in Aspley and indeed across all of Brisbane, and that is their last candidate for Aspley. The LNP imply that planning is broken in Brisbane and then they run the person who ran planning in Brisbane as a candidate in their most marginal seat in Brisbane. The mind boggles. Secondly and perhaps even more shamelessly—

Mr Power interjected.

Mr Watts: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. There was unparliamentary language just a moment ago from behind me.

Mr Power: I am happy to withdraw.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush): Thank you.

Mr MELLISH: I do not know what is going on over there. Perhaps more shamelessly, if the LNP think there is a lack of housing options in Aspley, then why have they been opposing the Carseldine Village in the heart of Aspley? This is a project that will provide a range of affordable housing products directly linked to public transport and adjacent to sporting and transport infrastructure that we are building. They say in here that they support public housing, they say in here that they support affordable housing, but then they do not have the courage to say they support it in the suburbs.

This budget has plenty of great funding for local Aspley roads with continued funding for the Beams Road overpass, the Bald Hills Diverging Diamond—a fantastic project; I turned the sod with the member for Sandgate recently—jointly funded with the federal government. We have Linkfield Road Overpass funding. We have funding for the Albany Creek Road-Bangalow Street intersection—some really great projects.

I am particularly happy about some local education funding. Aspley Special School and Geebung Special School are great local schools which work really well together and they service not just my electorate but the broader north side. I was really pleased to see \$5 million this year as part of a total commitment of \$11.4 million for additional classrooms for Aspley Special School. That is a really great commitment. Also in this budget we saw \$4 million this year for Geebung Special School out of a total commitment of \$7.9 million for additional classrooms. I have spoken to the schools this week and they are really pleased with those commitments.

The Speaker has reviewed and approved my budget speech for incorporation. As such, I ask that the remainder of my speech is incorporated into the *Record of Proceedings*.

The speech read as follows—

This budget hits the mark on many fronts:

- A \$3.34 billion Queensland Jobs Fund – including a new \$2 billion Queensland Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund.
- A record \$22.2 billion health investment, plus a \$2 billion Hospital Building Fund to help meet growth pressures across the health system. Prince Charles hospital on the northside doesn't miss out.
- An infrastructure spend of \$14.688 billion in 2021-22. Over \$50 billion over the forward estimates.
- And once Cross River Rail opens, pending our successful Olympics bid of course, we will be rebuilding the Gabba on the surface, creating a fantastic new area which will be very very well connected.
- Homebush is nice, but it's on a spur line more than half an hour from the city. You could not be closer to the heart of the city at the Gabba, and importantly you could not be better connected to public transport, with the labor built busway network and the labor built cross river rail right there.
- \$16.8 billion to improve education outcomes for students and teachers

And this is a Budget that invests in growth. Growth in jobs. Growth in services, including health. Growth in vital infrastructure. Growth across Queensland

Because we have got this economy moving again

A strong health response has directly led to a strong economic response.