



Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 1 September 2021


APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)

Appropriation Bill

Community Support and Services Committee, Report

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (2.25 pm): As the Liberal National Party's shadow minister for the arts, I rise to address the Appropriation Bill 2021 and the budget estimates hearings that were held on the proposed expenditure by the Palaszczuk state Labor government as examined by the Community Support and Services Committee. I begin by acknowledging Queensland's artists and performers as well as businesses such as performance venues and artistic institutions that have had to endure immense disruption and significant impacts throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Our state's rich and diverse arts and cultural sector has been impacted like no other in Queensland. From the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Palaszczuk state Labor government has consistently failed to provide comprehensive and timely support to Queenslanders as well as Queensland businesses and organisations that are impacted by the mandated lockdowns, restrictions and public health directives. This failure by Labor well and truly extends to our arts sector, with the Palaszczuk state Labor government seemingly unable and often unwilling to respond and provide meaningful and prompt support when it is certainly needed the most. Despite the rhetoric of the Palaszczuk state Labor government, those in the industry know the truth, which is that when they needed support from their state Labor government it was not there and whatever support eventually did come was merely the Palaszczuk state Labor government playing catch-up.

Before the estimates hearings, the Palaszczuk state Labor government went to South Bank to provide an update on the new performing arts theatre at the Queensland Performing Arts Centre. What Labor failed to announce on that day and in their press release is that the project will cost \$25 million more than what was first announced in 2018 and, in fact, it may not be delivered until 2023. In 2018 the Premier, the then deputy premier and Labor's Minister for the Arts declared that the Palaszczuk state Labor government would deliver a new \$150 million arts theatre at QPAC. In the same statement the Premier also said that the new performing arts theatre would be fully operational from 2022. In Labor's update made last month and the subsequent press release that was issued, this has become a \$175 million infrastructure project that the Premier now tells Queensland will be open in 2023.

Labor simply cannot be trusted to deliver vital infrastructure projects on time and on budget. That is particularly evident for residents in my own electorate of Moggill where infrastructure projects are set to be delayed, not delivered on time and not delivered on budget. At the last state election held on 31 October 2020, the then Labor candidate for Moggill promised residents that Labor had identified suitable

solutions and potential locations for a new community and neighbourhood centre. Nothing has been progressed by the Palaszczuk state Labor government. Even worse, after the 2020 state election this Labor state government indicated to residents of Kenmore and more broadly the electorate of Moggill that they have a low level of need for a new community and neighbourhood centre. The Palaszczuk state Labor government should have the courage to come and tell that to the leaders of the many community organisations with which I regularly meet. They continue to tell me how desperate they are for a dedicated and properly funded community and neighbourhood centre.

Finally in relation to infrastructure in the electorate of Moggill and the Kenmore roundabout in particular, we know that flawed designs have been released by the Labor government that would actually make traffic congestion worse. Labor's Minister for Transport and Main Roads needs to consult with the community and get this right. He should have consulted with the community before releasing the designs, because the consultation has been tokenistic at best and locals have very serious concerns about delays with the project, which is why the Labor Party always blocks the Kenmore roundabout. Similarly, without comprehensive and integrated planning and meaningful consultation, the same outcomes await potential upgrades to the Centenary Highway and the Western Freeway under this state Labor government.

Again, when considering the detail of the Appropriation Bill 2021, local residents in the electorate of Moggill do not see an investment in a new school hall at Kenmore State High School. I encourage the Minister for Education to certainly look at this infrastructure.

In relation to community infrastructure that is vitally needed across Queensland, there certainly is not adequate investment. Support still needs to be provided to seniors and those in our disability services. Again, in the current Labor state budget there is still not enough support being provided to seniors and those in disability services right across Queensland.

In conclusion, this is a state budget that does not sufficiently invest in the arts sector here in Queensland and does not provide the vital ongoing support that is needed for community organisations, for seniors and for those in the disability sector right across Queensland.