



Speech By  
**Linus Power**

**MEMBER FOR LOGAN**

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL**

**APPROPRIATION (2020-2021) BILL**

**Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

**Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill**

**Economics and Governance Committee, Report**

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (11.33 am): I rise to speak to report No. 3 of the Economics and Governance Committee titled *2020-21 Budget estimates—Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill 2020*. I spoke before about how dramatically Queensland and the world has changed since our time together in Townsville in September 2019. The pandemic has made profound changes to our whole world. Our job in this parliament is to keep Queenslanders safe and to keep Queenslanders working.

The budget, as promised at the election, was delivered after the election in 2020. We were able to have a budget process to budget for Queensland's response to COVID-19 and we were able to have a complete estimates hearing process so that all members of parliament could ask questions about that budget process. It is worth noting that the LNP made false claims that the process would not happen in 2020. LNP members went throughout Queensland—and in this House—saying that falsehood. During this debate I expect every member of the LNP will rise and apologise to the House for that falsehood. That is the only decent thing to do. They must recognise that during a pandemic false information such as that undermines our collective response. I hope they will sincerely apologise for that falsehood.

I wish to thank the many hardworking public servants, including the Premier, the Speaker, the ministers and directors-general, who came before the committee to give evidence. They came forward prepared to speak about the unique challenges that we face to keep Queensland strong and to keep Queenslanders healthy. Many members of parliament came forward—and I recognise some of the crossbenchers who are here—with careful and well thought out questions to put to ministers and public servants. However, by others I was disappointed.

As I have said, because of COVID many things changed. However, what did not change was the opposition playing political games instead of doing the hard work to really examine the economic, social and health challenges of governance and budgets during the COVID pandemic. They were there simply to chase the headlines of the next day instead of looking at the hard challenges, so some things have not changed. I could have simply read what I wrote in 2019 about how the LNP opposition let down Queenslanders by playing political games. Queenslanders expect better. They expect questions that could help improve our response to COVID-19. Queensland rejected the opposition because they cannot do the hard work to truly examine the serious challenges that Queenslanders face during COVID-19.

One of our most important challenges is to continue to create new jobs in Queensland, especially—as we have heard—as so many Australians are voting with their feet and moving from other states, especially New South Wales, to Queensland. I have spoken about our time in Townsville in September 2019. At that point the ABS tells us that there were 2,557,632 Queenslanders employed, which peaked at 2,569,000 Queenslanders before COVID-19. During COVID-19 Queenslanders lost jobs and we felt that strongly. However, the response after it hit has been just as strong. Now 2,582,190 Queenslanders are employed, which is more than before the pandemic hit Queensland. No other state can make that claim. It is Queensland that is the driving engine, creating jobs for Queenslanders.

Our unemployment rate has dropped from a peak of 8.8 per cent to seven per cent. While there is more to do, that figure is less than the 7.2 per cent experienced during the LNP's time in government. At that time there was not a COVID-19 pandemic yet still we had 7.2 per cent high unemployment. We have so much more to do because so many Queenslanders are reaching out and seeking employment in our state. Only the Palaszczuk Labor government is focused on keeping our state healthy and continuing to create jobs in our economy. I commend the report of the committee.