



Speech By  
**Patrick Weir**


**MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE**

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## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

### **APPROPRIATION BILL**

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (6.27 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the Appropriation Bill 2021. The Premier, Anastacia Palaszczuk, and the Treasurer, Cameron Dick, have stated that this is a typical Labor budget. They are right; it is a typical Labor budget full of dodgy accounting, black holes, announcements that are not funded or only exist somewhere out there in the never-never. There is no greater example of this than the announcement of the \$2 billion Queensland Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund which comes under my role as shadow minister for energy. They claim it is \$2 billion. The government has already committed a good portion of the initial \$500 million and the budget accounts for another \$500 million. That still leaves \$1 billion unaccounted for.


The minister responded to my question without notice by telling the House about the two lots of \$500 million and seemed to think that this added up to \$2 billion. I say to the minister that is not so. What we have is a \$1 billion black hole and there is still no detail on what objectives this fund will achieve. This one is well and truly out in the never-never.

I have asked the minister on a number of occasions where is the plan for the renewable energy target? There is no spending set aside for developing a plan to hit the 50 per cent renewable target by 2030. As seen in the Service Delivery Statements, the target for 2022 is 22 per cent. There is no plan on how to double renewables in eight years time whilst maintaining a stable, reliable and affordable grid. There is no plan. It does not exist.

Oddly, there is a note buried in the Service Delivery Statements which states that the 2021-22 target does not take into account all renewable energy generation projects currently committed. Why not? The minister should aim high and show Queensland he is serious about it. Why set himself a target he knows he is going to hit? He is marking his own homework and provides no basis for how he derived the 20 per cent.

It contains a mere \$5 million to spend on renewable energy zones. We know from the New South Wales experience that if you are serious about this, it takes an investment in the tens of billions of dollars from both the private and public sector. There appear to be a lot of press releases but very few dollars to deliver. As I have asked on many occasions, where is the detailed plan to transition to 50 per cent?

Sitting suspended from 6.30 pm to 7.30 pm.

 **Mr WEIR:** There is confusion and concern in the market, in all sectors. Thankfully we had base load coal and gas generators to carry us through the power shortage after the explosion at the Callide Power Station. Next time we might not be so lucky. Whilst on the subject of the Callide station, the budget papers contain no capital expenditure to repair Callide C, so how do we have confidence that

this will be rebuilt by April next year, as promised? There is also the weird case of diminishing dividends from our electricity generators, despite the fact that they are still shown to make a profit. Is this finally an admission that they have taken too much cash out in the past and they are now left vulnerable when it comes to paying for vital maintenance?

This morning we heard the minister claim that he had solved the tariff issue that has been causing great distress and uncertainty in the ag industry and the foundry sector. The minister spoke of a rebate that would resolve this situation. As is the case with many things this minister says, this statement warrants much closer scrutiny. This rebate, as I understand it, begins at 90 per cent of the expected price increase and decreases 10 per cent year on year until the end user is hit with the full increase. Prices will increase by 10 per cent next year, 20 per cent the year after and 30 per cent the year after that. This is not a resolution to this issue; this is a con job. This will slowly but surely drive industry, particularly the foundry industry, out of this state. This is incompetence on a grand scale. If members think that is bad, all of these industries have to sign an agreement with the provider by 1 July this year—in less than two weeks. The minister needs to spend less time comparing himself to astronauts such as Neil Armstrong and more time focusing on the industry and giving it some certainty and direction.

I will now move on to the other part of my shadow portfolio responsibilities: natural resources and mines. We are all aware of the tragic event that occurred at the Grosvenor mine in Central Queensland on 6 May 2020, seriously injuring five underground mineworkers. Our hearts go out to those injured, their families and their work colleagues. Anyone who has visited an underground mine will be aware of how close-knit the underground team are. The former minister, Anthony Lynham, established a board of inquiry into the incident, chaired by Terry Martin SC. The findings of this inquiry have been delivered in two reports. The second of these was tabled by Minister Scott Stewart this week.

While there were 25 recommendations in the first report and 40 in the second, and these will take a little time to enact, one is glaring. I speak of the resourcing, training and remuneration of the Mines Inspectorate. This was raised in detail in report volume 1. This was also raised as a significant issue in the industrial manslaughter legislation. So it is disappointing that there is no additional expenditure to staff the Mines Inspectorate at the appropriate level. We know that this has been recommended time and time again. This sort of investment can help prevent these tragedies in the future. I said during the debate of the industrial manslaughter legislation that the government was not looking at the real cause of the failures and the causes of these incidents. It is past time this Palaszczuk government took some meaningful action to protect mineworkers and not just look for easy headlines.

Mineworkers have every right to doubt the sincerity of this government, given the way it has treated the workers at the New Hope Acland mine—350 mineworkers just thrown on the scrap heap. That says it all. Despite this, the mining industry continues to deliver for this state and this nation. Whilst royalties took a hit during COVID and through trade issues with China, they have regained much of that loss, with coal alone contributing \$1.75 billion in 2020-21 and increasing 17.4 per cent in 2021-22. Despite this, the Treasurer mentioned the word ‘mining’ only once during his entire address. That shows the value this government places on this industry.

I will now turn to what this budget has delivered for the electorate of Condamine. Frankly, this will not take very long. It will take much longer to address the things that were not delivered. There is a \$3.5 million contribution to the Toowoomba Wellcamp trade distribution centre out of a total bill of \$10 million. This facility is already built. Construction is complete. There is another announcement, if you would call it that, relating to Wellcamp. The budget papers state—

The Government continues to work with proponents on the Wellcamp Entertainment Precinct proposal, subject to Australian Government funding and other conditions.

**Mr Power** interjected.

**Mr WEIR:** I am serious. That is what it says. With those two announcements we are already halfway through the total commitments for the electorate of Condamine. Going by that, the state government must think 50 per cent of the population resides in the confines of the Wellcamp airport.

Let us look at the remaining two commitments. There is \$2.1 million to complete the refurbishment of the Yarranlea substation and a reannouncement of the funding for the Clifton school training facilities and to upgrade the hall. That is it: one reannouncement, one station upgrade, one project already finished and one with no funding. As I said it would, that did not take long.

Let’s talk about some announcements that the residents of Condamine would have welcomed. There are no major road projects listed for the Condamine in the budget papers—in fact, no road projects full stop. There are many roads that are in desperate need of attention. I have repeatedly sought funding for Clifton Leyburn Road. When I wrote to the minister about the dangerous state of this road, all that resulted was a reduction to the speed limit and a ‘rough road’ sign. They are still there some two years later.

Law and order remains a serious issue that has missed out again. The manning and the sad state of the Cambooya Police Station remains, despite repeated requests and a petition delivered to this House on behalf of residents. Rural crime is on the rise: property and stock theft, break and enter and trespass. This is putting an increased workload on the rural crime squad, formerly known as the stock squad. Despite this, there is no mention in the budget papers of any increase in resourcing for this branch of the police force. We know that this minister does not support the rural crime squad and was caught out last year when I asked a question without notice as to whether there were plans to move it into the CIB. The minister—

**Mr RYAN:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence. The statement is misleading and I ask the member to withdraw.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Bush):** Member, the minister has taken offence. I ask that you withdraw.

**Mr WEIR:** I withdraw. The minister needs to recognise the important role these officers play and give them the staff and resources they need. It was also disappointing to not see some funding for Oakey Hospital. This hospital is well overdue for a significant upgrade, both for patients and for staff.

I note that the Palaszczuk government continues to pursue the quarantine facility at the Wellcamp airport. We heard this morning from the Deputy Premier that the state government has upgraded its detailed plan for this facility from three pages to 95 pages. You would have to ask why it has taken six months for the Premier to realise that five glossy pages do not pass for a detailed management and business plan.

The Premier has still not provided me as the local member with this plan nor the members of the general public of Toowoomba. They have not seen any detail. The Premier should table this document in this parliament so we can all have access to it. The community has every reason to be concerned by this proposal, and the fear and concerns are only enhanced by the ongoing lack of detail. The Premier has deliberately sought to create division in the community on this issue by constantly blaming the federal government for not approving the facility despite the complete lack of detail. This whole process has been nothing short of disgraceful by all involved in this stunt by the Palaszczuk government.

Last week one of the largest agricultural field days in this country was held at Charlton in the electorate of Condamine. There were good sales across the three days by exhibitors and record crowds, with 20,000 through the gates on the first day. This event was attended by the opposition leader, David Crisafulli; deputy leader, David Janetzki; and about 10 LNP state members—

**Mr Millar:** Including the member for Gregory.

**Mr WEIR:**—including the member for Gregory—along with federal—

**Mr Boyce** interjected.

**Mr WEIR:**—and the member for Callide—LNP members and senators, demonstrating their commitment to this important industry. In comparison, it was a no-show by the Labor Party—state or federal—demonstrating the value that they have for the industry. It was also evidenced by the fact that the Treasurer mentioned ‘agriculture’ only once in his budget speech. If that was not bad enough, today we saw the agriculture minister incorporate his speech after just a few minutes in this budget debate. That is appalling. The minister could not even be bothered to speak to the very important ministry that he holds.

This is a budget of spin, trickery and deception, inflated value of assets such as the titles office, funds promised that do not appear in the budget papers and projects that have no funding committed. This is indeed a typical Labor budget. In the words of a former leader of this party, it is full of jiggery-pokery. Before I finish, I also want to pass on my condolences to the family of Duncan Pegg. He and I served on a number of committees together and I regarded him as a friend. I am very sad for his loss.