



Speech By  
**Adrian Tantari**


**MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY**

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 2)**

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 **Mr TANTARI** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (3.08 pm): I rise in support of the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) in the cognate debate before us. These bills seek parliamentary approval regarding unforeseen expenditure in 2020-21. This is an annual process under the Financial Accountability Act 2009 to reconcile departmental appropriations at the end of each financial year against the relevant budget projections—for example, the 2021 budget which was delivered in December 2020.

Let us delve into the substance of the bills and away from the realms of fantasy and fiction from those on the other side. In July this year, the Governor in Council authorised unforeseen expenditure during the financial year of just over \$449 million, comprising around \$1.8 billion for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service and about \$448 million incurred by six other departments. Parliamentary approval for the unforeseen expenditure is now being sought through this bill.

State departments incur unforeseen expenditure for many reasons. For example, a department may need additional appropriation to respond to emergent issues, implement appropriate government policy, or due to a change in the timing of Commonwealth payments or project delivery. The unforeseen expenditure in 2020-21 is less than half the amount incurred in the 2019-20 financial year. To put that into context, as a total share of the appropriations the total appropriation is around three-quarters of one per cent, which is below the average of the last decade, which was around 1.9 per cent of all appropriations.

The majority of the unforeseen expenditure arises from three departments, and this is for very good reasons, including funding for an increased demand for out-of-home care services in the child protection system—a system, by the way, this government supports rigorously from attacks by the other side. Further unforeseen expenditure arises from the need to meet the state's share of the floods class action settlement. Other costs come from QFES, which protected and kept Queenslanders safe through their response to quarantine accommodation costs and logistics and border control activities that were entirely appropriate in the circumstances during the extraordinary period set down for this appropriation. In addition to this, there was expenditure for firefighting and aerial firefighting costs associated with keeping life and property safe from unanticipated, but not surprising, bushfires across Queensland.

The difference in fiscal management between the Palaszczuk government and those opposite is quite evident. Under the Palaszczuk government the state of Queensland continues to power ahead. Following on from our strong health response, the appropriations we are debating continue to drive the government's COVID-19 economic recovery plan. The Palaszczuk government's economic recovery plan is working and delivering strong growth and recovery by ensuring our economy rebounds whilst unfortunately the rest of the world still deals with the containment of the COVID virus. This is borne out in recently released labour force data which confirms what all of the reputable national data shows; that is, Queensland's economy is leading and pushing forward Australia's economic recovery.

The strength of our Queensland economy is thanks to our world-leading health response. Our health response allowed our economy to stay open until Queenslanders had sufficient access to vaccinations. Queensland has added more jobs than any other state or territory since March 2020, with 124,300 more Queenslanders in jobs today than there were pre COVID. Let me repeat that for those opposite, who oppose the government's agenda at every turn. Queensland has created more jobs than any other state or territory and more jobs than every state and territory combined. This means that there are 124,300 more Queenslanders working in February 2022 than there were back in March 2020. That is before COVID struck and brought the world to a halt. Since the election of the Palaszczuk government in 2015 an additional 376,800 jobs have been added. That is more than 1,000 a week. That is more jobs for the people of Queensland and more jobs for the people of Hervey Bay.

When you go around my electorate the activity is palpable. There is activity everywhere. A new school hall is prepared to be built in Urangan and new classrooms in Pialba. This comes on top of the superb creative arts centre completed at the Hervey Bay High School. These appropriations are not just dry numbers; they are the new and enhanced facilities that are utilised by our school communities to enhance student and teacher outcomes as well as being great for our community in general. Works and projects are being completed regularly because of the forethought and timely response of the Palaszczuk government to assess the needs and get the job done. We have local roads being planned, local hospitals being upgraded and local school playgrounds being replaced. These facilities include: Kawungan State School's revamped administration block; canteen facilities for the Urangan State High School; recently announced additional funding to provide a further fit-out of the new STEM building at Hervey Bay High School; and the exciting renewal of the senior playground at Sandy Strait State School, which they are really looking forward to. These were all accelerated because of the growth Hervey Bay is now experiencing under a pro-active and forward-thinking government. This is a government that leaves no-one behind, lifts the community and drives positive outcomes—unlike the cut, sell and sack policy approach of those opposite.

Hervey Bay is seeing new intersection construction underway to ease congestion and improve safety. These major pieces of infrastructure will assist people to move around the Hervey Bay electorate more efficiently and a lot more safely. As I speak, we have new hospital services rising from the ground with the construction of the new mental health unit well underway. This \$34 million investment shows that the Palaszczuk government is on the mark in responding to regional needs. The Hervey Bay electorate is part of a growth region that has received massive commitments and investment from the Palaszczuk government. Billions of dollars in manufacturing industry infrastructure will have a dynamic impact on the people of the region. The volume of jobs being produced for the region is extraordinary. With the knock-on effects of supply chains, the new jobs count moves into the many thousands. This is in stark contrast to the former Newman government, which ignored our region, slashed and burned our jobs and devastated our community. At the end of their sad legacy it was left to the Palaszczuk government to rebuild shattered regional centres like Hervey Bay, but none of what has been achieved since has come about by chance. The results are a consequence of our strongly focused health response. This has led to our strong economic recovery and is driven in part by the additional appropriations we are currently debating.

The Queensland economy is now larger than it was pre COVID. The economy grew by 6.1 per cent in 2021, faster than the national average. Australia's economy grew by 3.9 per cent. This growth has ensured that our unemployment rate dropped to its lowest since December 2008. Our unemployment rate has dropped to 4.4 per cent. Let me repeat that: 4.4 per cent. All of this has made Queensland the envy of Australia. The Palaszczuk government's health and economic response has enabled our state—and in particular our regions—to stay safe and bounce back. We are now so much the envy of Australia that Queensland is attracting more interstate migrants than any other jurisdiction. More than 31,000 people moved to Queensland in 2020, and 85,000 Australians from other states are expected to come to Queensland before June 2024.

In the Hervey Bay electorate you can see this growth everywhere. Our building industry is red-hot, our businesses are active, our expenditure is up and people are seeing their hard efforts over the last two years being rewarded. The people of Hervey Bay did this because our vaccination rates are some of the highest in the state. They responded to directions given by the Chief Health Officer and worked tirelessly to keep each other safe.

As a member of the committee that reviewed this bill, I want to thank the committee for its deliberations. We were ably led by the committee chair, the member for Logan, and the committee deputy chair, the member for Mermaid Beach. I would also like to mention the magnificent work done by the committee secretariat.

Appropriation bills are the lifeblood of government. Without them, the state would not function. With this bill, the corrections are measured and required. Finally, the importance of getting vaccinated and boosted to keep Queenslanders safe and our plan for a strong economic recovery has never been

more important for our future economy. The Palaszczuk government has steered the path required to get us to this point. The government's thoughtfully considered decisions, all backed by medical evidence, has allowed our community to safely navigate the stormy waters created by the worldwide pandemic and got us to this point safely.

The focussed leadership of our Premier has been outstanding; her standards of integrity are without peer. Our government's determination to steer our state on the right path back through the most challenging times any of us have ever seen is outstanding—all under misguided and weak attacks by the state opposition and a federal government that sees everything through only one prism: their own electoral survival. This is so evident to those who watch on. Their desperation is palpable. They know the baseball bats are waiting. They know their fraud will be exposed. Well-managed appropriations are what this bill is about. I support the bills before the House.