




Speech By
Dr Christian Rowan

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Record of Proceedings, 22 February 2022

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 2)

APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2)

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (3.18 pm): I rise to address the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) 2021 and the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2021. Introduced by the Treasurer on 15 September 2021, the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2021 and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) 2021 provide for the supplementary appropriation for various state government departments for unforeseen expenditure and for the supplementary appropriation for the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service for unforeseen expenditure respectively that occurred in the 2020-2021 financial year.

Specifically with respect to the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2021, this legislation authorises the Labor Treasurer to pay \$447.456 million—or nearly half a billion dollars—from the consolidated fund for six Queensland state government departments.

It is incredible, but perhaps not surprising, that the Labor Treasurer—who only had to prepare a budget for seven months due to the commencement of the 57th Parliament—was still unable to control the spending of the Palaszczuk state Labor government. The Palaszczuk state Labor government has a history of prolific spending of Queensland taxpayers' dollars. Time and again, Labor seeks to mask such spending through its own smoke-and-mirrors tactics and state budget trickery. We have seen that over many state budgets, with debt loaded onto government owned corporations and also the raiding of the defined benefits schemes of public servants.

What Queenslanders have seen over consecutive years is a Labor state government that continues to get its priorities wrong and fails to focus on restoring and rebuilding Queensland's economy. This is backed up by hard facts, where in the latest CommSec State of the States report Queensland is ranked fifth of eight jurisdictions, and fifth of six states for overall economic performance. In the same report, Queensland also had the worst state score for economic growth, the worst score for infrastructure investment and the worst state score for unemployment.

Queensland businesses, especially our small and family businesses, are suffering. The December Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland Pulse survey has business confidence in Queensland plunging by 16.9 per cent, with 63 per cent of businesses also reporting mental health challenges. That is certainly being shown through the conversations I have with small businesses not only in the electorate of Moggill but also across the western suburbs of Brisbane and also when I travel in my various shadow portfolio responsibilities.

The Palaszczuk state Labor government has all but given up on delivering for small and family businesses and building our economy. I recently visited the Redlands region and met with the Redlands Coast Chamber of Commerce, where, as the Liberal National Party's shadow minister for education, I discussed a range of job-training opportunities and education requirements for our young Queenslanders. While I was there, I also heard firsthand from many local businesses—similar to what I have heard from small businesses in the electorate of Moggill—who told me how they have felt

absolutely abandoned by the state Labor government during some of the toughest economic circumstances they have experienced due to the COVID-19 pandemic over the last two years. There is simply no attention given by Labor to the genuine needs and economic support that Queensland businesses are crying out for—not only in the electorate of Moggill but also right across Queensland.

We know why that is. It is because the attention of the state Labor government is solely on governing for themselves and not for everyday Queenslanders. They are certainly facing a myriad of integrity and accountability scandals and also significant allegations of corruption which have been raised by not only public servants but also senior statutory office holders.

We know that the Palaszczuk state Labor government has significant issues with integrity and accountability. It is a cornerstone of democracy that governments be held to account on their budgeted appropriation and additional expenditure. In our democracy in Queensland, this is done through the annual budget committee hearings process—a process which, sadly, the Palaszczuk state Labor government has all but trashed. It is a fact that under the Palaszczuk state Labor government there is a complete lack of transparency around the budget estimates process, with Labor ministers routinely seeking to avoid any form of accountability. We have seen that over the last few years in the way estimates are conducted and the way various committee chairs conduct themselves in the parliament.

Transparency and accountability must be restored when it comes to Queenslanders knowing the true state of Queensland's finances. That is why the Liberal National Party has announced its policy of implementing a parliamentary budget office so that transparency and honesty are brought back to the forefront of all state government operations. Such wasteful and inefficient spending by the state Labor government has consequences, and these consequences are felt in communities right across Queensland. In my own electorate of Moggill, the failure of the state Labor government to sufficiently plan, appropriate and deliver state government funding for our local area is having lasting consequences on small businesses, community groups and school communities.

State government funding is needed—and needed right now—within the electorate of Moggill so that the electorate's only high school, Kenmore State High School, can get a new library and student services administration hub and so that additional modern, dedicated purpose-built environments including a sports centre, performing arts auditorium and a new school hall facility can finally be delivered for students, teachers, staff and parents of the school. In view of past Labor state government budgets—where time and again local families of the electorate of Moggill are overlooked—I would like to take this opportunity to say to the Labor state government that it must also prioritise a new high school to service families in the suburbs of Bellbowrie, Moggill, Anstead, Mount Crosby, Karana Downs and surrounding areas. The Labor member for Ipswich West has also called on the state Labor government to look at that infrastructure with respect to the Karalee area. It is one of those areas where additional high school infrastructure is needed to service two adjacent electorates—not only the electorate of Moggill but also the electorate of Ipswich West. There is certainly no excuse as to why this was not allocated within this year's budget.

Labor's wrong priorities and a lack of infrastructure investment have consequences. Local residents in the electorate of Moggill have every right to ask how Labor is still unable to fund adequately and deliver a comprehensive integrated road and public transport plan and infrastructure to bust traffic congestion and improve pedestrian and public transport for the western suburbs of Brisbane.

There is still no transparency when it comes to what the Labor state government intends to do with the community feedback it received in relation to the Kenmore roundabout. Flawed designs were released by the Labor government. Significant community feedback was provided to the Department of Transport and Main Roads, and still there is no infrastructure—despite dollars sitting within the Department of Transport and Main Roads and funding being allocated by the federal Morrison coalition government. The state Labor government is responsible for delivering that infrastructure, yet we still have no transparency as to when it will provide feedback to the community and get on with delivering that. That is the same with myriad other proposed transport infrastructure. When it comes to roads and public transport infrastructure in Queensland, there are myriad other issues that still exist across Queensland where there is no transparency as to when they are going to be delivered, let alone what is happening with planning and appropriate designs.

Queensland state governments are entrusted to be the custodian of taxpayers' dollars and to ensure that all state government expenditure is spent with care and sound budgeting principles. The failure of the state Labor government to do this and to properly manage the Queensland economy will have devastating impacts—not only in the short term but in the long term as well. In consideration of these appropriation bills and previous state Labor government budget appropriations, it is imperative that the state Labor government finally starts to govern for all Queenslanders and, in particular, delivers the vital health, education, road and transport infrastructure that is so desperately needed across Queensland.

In relation to the Palaszczuk state Labor government, we can absolutely say that Labor is failing on openness, integrity and accountability. It is failing on service delivery. Labor is certainly failing on delivering a sustainable economy for Queensland—let alone providing much needed infrastructure, particularly across the western suburbs of Brisbane. I constantly hear the Labor government try to sheet blame on to former LNP governments here in Queensland or the federal Morrison coalition government. Could members imagine if Anthony Albanese were elected Prime Minister of Australia? He is a leader of the hard left. He has had links to the Communist Party here. If you look at his tax agenda in relation to channeling Bill Shorten, he is trying to channel the hard left. He is always talking to the Chinese Communist Party and he is probably talking to Vladimir Putin as well. Could members imagine if federal Labor were to run this country? We can only thank goodness we have had the federal Morrison coalition government that has provided the economic leadership for this nation. What is needed here in Queensland is an LNP state government.