



Speech By  
**Christopher Whiting**


**MEMBER FOR BANCROFT**

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

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 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (12.01 pm): The one word that comes to mind after listening to that contribution from the member for Chatsfield is mansplaining. I appreciate what the member said about what he learned in his property course. It was a good speech. You also did it at budget time, and I appreciated it then as well.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Direct your comments through the chair, please, member.

**Mr WHITING:** I rise to speak in favour of these bills. I listened carefully to what the members opposite have been saying or not saying, as the case may be. It reminds me that in 2022 there is a new truism in politics, and that is the economy will always be stronger under Labor and the best economic managers are Labor. If you want to see indifferent or incompetent economic management, 'Your Honour, I give you the LNP.'

We have heard a bit from opposition members about economic performance. I think the member for Southern Downs said we were regressive and the members for Nanango and Southern Downs criticised us for our debt level, but I do acknowledge the member for Chatsfield saying that—

**Mr Minnikin:** Chatsworth!

**Mr WHITING:** Chatsfield has a better ring to it. I do acknowledge that the member for Chatsworth has probably uttered an LNP heresy by saying 'debt is good'—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order, members! The Speaker gave a ruling this morning about people misinterpreting, misusing or using language that was not quite right. I think we can all abide by that. I have experienced that myself, so let's just move on. The member for Bancroft—Bancroft has the call. There you go!

**Mr WHITING:** Well played, sir! Can I point out to those members opposite who have been speaking against it that the federal LNP doubled the national debt before the pandemic even began. We heard the Treasurer say that Scott Morrison doubled the national debt when he was Treasurer and Prime Minister. If we are talking about economic management, remember what the LNP did at the federal level in relation to the car manufacturing industry in Australia. Everyone was screaming at them to step in—

**An opposition member:** They killed it!

**Mr WHITING:** They did kill it; I take that interjection. Everyone was screaming at them to jump in and help save this industry, but they would not act. If they were back on the treasury benches here this is what we would see for the manufacturing industry in Queensland: no trains being built in

Maryborough; no armoured vehicles being built by Rheinmetall at Redbank. We have a heavy vehicle manufacturing industry in Australia. It is centred here in Queensland. We will preserve it because we are better economic managers.

In terms of economic management, let's once again bring up the example of the renewable energy industry. Today the minister talked about what we have now in Queensland: 50 large-scale projects either completed or underway. They tried to nobble this \$11 billion industry when they were last in government and they would do the same again. Look at the case of the Kaban wind farm project. This \$373 million project can dispatch battery power but, as the minister said, the LNP tried to block it. That project would reduce electricity prices for Queensland consumers by \$461 million over the life of that project. I want to absolutely reject what the LNP has said here today in terms of them being better economic managers, because it is very clear they have lost interest in economic management in Queensland. They have abandoned the field to the party that is clearly much better at a comprehensive level, and that is Labor.

We have heard a couple of the speakers say, 'This bridge wasn't done in my area; we should have put money to that,' or 'Perhaps there could be more bus services in my area.' They pointed out that the government had to spend over \$450 million to fund new or different initiatives as part of this appropriation. When they talk about that \$400 million figure I am reminded of what they did when they were in government last time—that is, cut the QTRIP program. I think there were over \$400 million worth of projects that were cut from that program, and one of them was the Deception Bay road widening.

Ten years ago when I was a local councillor there I was briefed by Main Roads with a concept plan. 'This is what we would be doing on this project.' Then when I got into parliament I said, 'Where are we with this project?' They said, 'Sorry, that was cut from our program by the Newman LNP government.' It has taken us years to get that back onto QTRIP. We now have \$1.5 million for early preliminary investigation and design work on that project, but it could have been done by now if it had not been cut from QTRIP by the Newman LNP government all those years ago. Can I just point out that, if you want projects in as part of the appropriations, you should look at what you may have done previously. We will not forget what you have done previously to cut projects from this area.

In terms of economic management it is very clear how well we are doing. I think the appropriation and the budget papers show this. Once again we do have the fastest growth rate of any mainland state. Australia's economic output contracted by 1.9 per cent in the September quarter, but in the same quarter Queensland's economy expanded by 1.8 per cent. We are looking at an annual economic growth rate of about 3¼ per cent. We are also exporting more than ever under the Palaszczuk government. The value of our exports in 2021 was \$79.2 billion. That is an increase in value of 26 per cent from 2020, so we have had a rise in the value of our exports.

It is very clear that the confidence of Queenslanders in their state is booming under the economic management of the Palaszczuk government. We know that we are leading the nation in consumer confidence. Retail sales are up 17 per cent on pre-COVID figures, household lending is up an amazing 91 per cent over the last 12 months and dwelling approvals are up 25 per cent on pre-pandemic levels. It is very clear that Queenslanders are confident about our economy and our future under this government. The opposition has talked about consumer sentiment. Let's look at the figures. Money is being spent. Look at where the money is being spent. People are voting with their wallets. Household expenditure is up and people are buying houses. This budgetary and economic performance is no accident. It is not luck. It is due to the economic management of the Treasurer, the Premier and the Labor team on this side.

We always knew that a good health response to the pandemic builds a foundation for a good economic response. We have been saying that for two years and we have been proved right. We know now that our world-leading health response has allowed our economy to stay open until Queenslanders had that sufficient access to vaccinations. We got our health response right and our economy has soared.

Once again, those appropriation figures show the strength of our economic performance. I will just reiterate the numbers. Under this budget, revenues are higher for this year and deficit and debt are lower. Net debt is expected to be \$7.2 billion lower than was forecast in the budget. The deficit for 2021-22 is expected to be \$1.49 billion, which is less than half of the \$3.485 billion forecast at the budget. I point out that a return to surplus is still predicted in 2024-25.

**Mr Millar:** It won't happen.

**Mr WHITING:** The interjection that it will not happen is very interesting. It is going to be a long time in opposition for you people over there. Please feel free to keep throwing stones because you will never get the experience of setting a budget yourself.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Direct your comments through the chair, please, member for Bancroft.

**Mr WHITING:** What does good economic strength mean? It means ultimately at the end of the day more jobs for Queenslanders. We have heard that Queensland is leading Australia in job creation. We have heard that 48 per cent of all new jobs in this nation have happened right here in this state. We have also heard—and I love this statistic—that over 1,000 jobs each and every week have been created in Queensland since we came to power. That is a total of 376,800 new jobs that have been created under the economic management and direction of Labor.

I will also quickly thank everyone in the government who has been involved in the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. There have been 41,000 Queenslanders placed into work because of this program. That includes 2,560 people trained in my area, with 1,665 locals in my area into jobs under this program. I commend the bills to the House.