



Speech By  
**Daniel Purdie**


**MEMBER FOR NINDERRY**

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

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 **Mr PURDIE** (Ninderry—LNP) (3.00 pm): I rise this afternoon to make a contribution to the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) 2021 and the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2021. I would like to thank my colleagues and other members on the Economics and Governance Committee, particularly the deputy chair. I know the chair got a special call-out by the Treasurer earlier today, so I would like to acknowledge the deputy chair. It does help having a qualified accountant on the Economics and Governance Committee.

These bills authorise the Treasurer to pay a combined total of \$449.25 million from the Consolidated Fund for unforeseen expenditure. By department, this expenditure amounts to \$188.9 million for the Department of Justice and Attorney General; \$114.2 million for the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs; \$91.1 million for Queensland Fire and Emergency Services; \$28.9 million for the Department of Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water; \$52.845 for the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning; and \$9.8 million for the Queensland Police Service.

It begs the obvious question: how did the Treasurer get it so wrong when this budget was released five months into the financial year? As usual, debate on this bill will be accompanied by a long list of excuses from members on the other side. They will roll out their carefully scripted lines about the wonderful job they have done keeping us all safe and, after all the back patting and narcissism, the members opposite will start the finger pointing and blame games. They will even resort to making references to a previous government that has not been in power for nearly a decade in order to shield themselves from the reality they have created for Queenslanders.

Debt and economic mismanagement are part of Labor's DNA. When they run out of money, they come after yours. As we have seen over the past week, they will try the subtle art of subterfuge to cover their tracks. That is when the Premier, her 2IC, the Treasurer, and the health minister hit the repeat button on their favourite phrase 'commercial-in-confidence'. If you are the Premier, or part of the inner sanctum, it is only commercial-in-confidence until it is not. Then it is game on: it is time to take off the gloves and try to shift blame on to the feds. If the unthinkable happens and our nation wakes up to a Labor-Greens minority government in May, it will send the Premier's spin team into a frenzy. Who will they blame then for their budget blowouts and the state's bleak economic outlook?

The Wellcamp fiasco is just another example of the lengths this crisis ridden government will go to in order to avoid scrutiny and hoodwink Queensland taxpayers. While the Premier thought she could sell Queenslanders a lemon, it turns out that we are all a bit smarter than that. Queenslanders have had enough. Not only are they sick of a Labor government that cannot manage the state's finances; they are also sick of the lack of accountability and transparency. They are sick of the deceit, the lies and the blame games. While other state governments have made the tough decisions and taken

responsibility, the Palaszczuk Labor government ducks and weaves and tries to buy its way out of trouble at the expense of hardworking mums and dads, cash-strapped families and young people, and seniors who have dutifully paid taxes their whole lives.

Labor's obsession with how things look rather than how things are will have a generational impact on this state. The signs are clear, and they are growing. According to the Treasurer, some Queensland businesses are doing it tough due to supply chain issues and staffing shortages, but not according to the CCIQ's latest survey data, which reveals the true state of our economic crisis. Business confidence is down 16.9 per cent—the lowest since September 2020. Sales and revenue are down 6.9 per cent on the last quarter and still falling. Employment levels are down 4.5 per cent and 63 per cent of businesses and staff have revealed they are impacted by mental health.

Some of the reasons given by business owners for their current struggles include increased uncertainty, staff shortages, supply chain disruptions, discontent with political leadership, absence of financial support, lagging impact of border restriction changes and restrictions on the unvaccinated. It paints a very grim outlook for small businesses which make up around 97 per cent of business activity in this state.

The LNP understand the intrinsic value of small businesses. That is why we are focused on three fundamental policies when it comes to supporting the backbone of our state's economy. We believe in an economy for everyone. Unlike the Palaszczuk Labor government, who only govern for their union mates and big business, we believe in economic settings that properly support small and family business, encourage private investment and create a regulatory environment where business can thrive.

If you currently operate a small business in this state, you are ignored by this government. While competitors in other states such as New South Wales, Victoria or South Australia are provided with financial support from their governments, in Queensland small business operators are left to die and wither in the aftermath of COVID. Our repeated calls for a support package on behalf of small businesses during the Omicron wave have been ignored and dismissed by the Treasurer.

Across the border in New South Wales, businesses with a turnover between \$75,000 and \$50 million which have suffered a downturn of 40 per cent or more are eligible for payments up to 20 per cent of their payroll as well as other special assistance grants. In Victoria and South Australia, it is a similar story—but not in Queensland.

Unlike Labor, the second fundamental principle which the opposition believes should be underlying our economy is service delivery. A strong economy allows us to invest more in health, education and better support the most vulnerable in our community. Unfortunately, Queenslanders have seen firsthand the devastating outcomes that happen when governments cannot get the basics right—ambulance ramping, cancelled surgeries and lengthy wait lists just to get the health services they rightly deserve and expect.

We need to fast-track infrastructure projects to get our economy moving and growing. Instead, this government is bogged down by debt and mounting integrity issues. Our state debt continues to grow under this Labor government and will reach almost \$130 billion over the forward estimates. Close to \$30 billion of this debt is simply to keep the lights on.

This is particularly concerning given that Queensland leads the nation for relative population growth. Perhaps that is why the Treasurer has introduced 10 new taxes, ripping more than \$4 billion from the pockets of hardworking Queenslanders. Payroll tax, GST and stamp duty all performed above budgeted expectations to deliver the government a \$4 billion windfall in 2020-21, and the total government taxation revenue is expected to increase by 27.58 per cent to \$18.6 billion. But these are the figures the government does not want us to see.

What has been exposed in recent weeks is much more than a 'vibe'. It has been growing like a cancer through the highest levels of governance long before COVID—a government that has given up on integrity, on accountability and on transparency; a government that has given up on governing, instead they govern for their mates and only care about how things look and not how things are; a government that has a long history of financial mismanagement and no apparent desire or ability to pay down debt. I will not be opposing the bill.