



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BUNDAMBA

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 3)

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BETTING TAX AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr McCALLUM** (Bundamba—ALP) (7.36 pm): I rise in support of all three bills that form part of this cognate debate. I will start my contribution in relation to Appropriation Bill (No. 3), which deals with unforeseen expenditure as a part of our budget and our appropriation measures. Unforeseen expenditure is a routine part of the budget cycle, and it can be incurred for any number of reasons. Those reasons can include natural disasters; urgent, emergent and unforeseen issues; a change in timing of Commonwealth payments; or accelerated project delivery including the bringing forward of infrastructure and capital works spend.

It is certainly worth noting that as the 2021-22 financial year unfolded Queensland, the entire nation and indeed the world went through a period of unprecedented and unforeseen challenges. Not only were we still grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects but we had significant weather related events and natural disasters as well. These events are difficult, if not impossible, to anticipate, particularly in a budgetary sense. One of these unforeseen events was the floods earlier in 2022 that decimated my local community, in particular the suburbs of Goodna and Bundamba. It was a tragic event that will leave its mark forever on so many flood victims in Bundamba as well as right throughout South-East Queensland and indeed our regions.

As part of our nation-leading response to supporting these flood victims, we had the \$741 million Resilient Homes Fund. This is a fund that we had no idea we would need to budget for. This is a fund that is buying back the homes of flood victims. This is a fund that is doing flood-resistant retro fits. This is a fund that is raising the houses of flood victims out of the danger zone of future floods. It is great to see buybacks in my local community that are underway and people getting the assistance they need as part of our \$741 million fund. I pay tribute to the ongoing resilience and community spirit of the Bundamba community and all flood-affected communities across Queensland.

Many of the significant items of unforeseen expenditure are related to not only flood recovery but also COVID support and grants to support our communities and our businesses and at the time of the budget it had not been anticipated exactly what form that might take or exactly what amounts might be required for those particular grants. Queensland led the nation in managing this challenge in terms of our COVID response and the tailored support for our communities and our businesses has been absolutely critical to our success as a state in leading the nation in responding to the challenges of the pandemic.

Our record is clear. Our COVID-19 economic recovery plan provided a clear path forward and central to it was safeguarding our health and keeping our economy strong, and we are now enjoying the benefits of that strong health and economic management with record numbers of good jobs. There

have been 106,400 jobs created across our state over the last year alone. In August we recorded our lowest ever unemployment rate since the series began in 1978. The 3.2 per cent unemployment rate beat the previous record of 3.3 per cent set 14 years ago in August 2008. That is not bad when one considers that we were coming off the back or still dealing with the tail end of a pandemic. In the local Ipswich community that means that more than 4½ thousand people are in work now compared to this time last year and business confidence and industry investment continue to be incredibly strong because of the budgetary measures that this government has put in place for Queensland.

Our exports have hit a new record of \$1.27 billion—that is more than New South Wales and Victoria combined—and net intrastate migration of nearly 54,000 people over the year to March leads the country, and why would you not want to come to Queensland? It is the place to be. Our surplus last financial year of \$4.3 billion is up by \$2.4 billion compared to the budget. This is the biggest Queensland surplus on record and it is a testament to the strength of our economic management and our ongoing plan for Queensland. It is also the sixth budget surplus that we have delivered. Our strong economic management is also backing our commitment to record numbers of frontline workers, including doctors, nurses, paramedics, police, firefighters and teachers.

Our government makes no apologies for supporting the Queensland economy and Queenslanders through these unpredictable and uncertain times. The members opposite would not understand this because they brag about cutting the budget. They brag about cutting, sacking and selling. We have brought forward spending of hundreds of millions of dollars for infrastructure projects like the Bruce Highway upgrades, and that forms part of the appropriations that are the subject of this bill. If the LNP is opposing the measures in this bill, if it wants to criticise the unforeseen expenditure in this bill, it is opposing things like bringing forward the Bruce Highway upgrade. Let us be clear about what it means when the LNP criticises these measures. It means that it does not want extra funding for flood and natural disaster responses. It means that it does not think that there should be COVID support for our communities and businesses. It means that it opposes bringing forward these vital job-creating infrastructure projects. It means that it opposes more doctors, nurses, teachers, police and frontline workers.

It is crystal clear that what we have is a lazy, tired, third-term opposition with no ideas and no vision for Queensland—zero pieces of legislation brought forward in this House, nasty personal attacks and the same old tired agenda to cut, sack and sell, except now it uses terms like ‘debt reduction plans’ and ‘service delivery strategies’. It has no plan for health, no plan for education, nothing for housing, nothing for transport, nothing for infrastructure, nothing for energy, nothing for our economy, and Queenslanders know it. They knew it in 2020 and they will know it in two years from now. In contrast, our vibrant, energetic Palaszczuk government is brimming with new ideas to deliver more good jobs and better services for Queensland. We have the Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan. We have our Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan. We have a Housing Strategy and a \$2 billion housing fund. Most importantly, we have a plan for Queenslanders that will deliver strong economic management through the pandemic that has delivered record jobs and our lowest ever unemployment rate and budget surpluses.

There is only one party in this House—that is, the Labor Party and the Palaszczuk Labor government—that has a clear vision for Queensland that Queenslanders can count on. They can count on the Palaszczuk Labor government to support them into more good jobs. They can count on the Palaszczuk Labor government to put downward pressure on energy prices for their homes and businesses. They can count on the Palaszczuk Labor government to build more houses. I commend these bills to the House.