



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR LOGAN

Record of Proceedings, 23 June 2022

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (6.08 pm): That was an extraordinary speech where we saw the combination of somewhere between Venezuela and Sri Lanka, a plan for hyperinflation and for destruction. Of course, they can comfortably put out those wish lists because they know their well-heeled suburbs can vote for them comfortably knowing that their plans would never be enacted. We have more difficult challenges in front of us. We do not get to do these type of indulgences. I did think it was interesting that even their fantasy plan appeared to be run completely on massive taxes on coalmining and a Queensland economy entirely dependent on coalmining, it would seem. Also on that, there was strangely a massive increase on the new energy economy minerals that we need to do a transition to a renewable energy target. These are the sort of short-sighted and frankly delusional policies that would not only hurt the economy of Queensland but also hurt the transition to renewable energy. We need to examine that for what it was.

I rise to address the Appropriation Bill 2022. This budget keeps our economy strong. It continues the strong jobs growth and job creation. Importantly, it delivers for growing areas of Queensland and it especially invests in the health of Queenslanders. I want to draw the attention of the House to particular graphs—

Mr Watts: Rivers of black gold.

Mr POWER:—and the member for Toowoomba North should note this. On page 37 of Budget Paper No. 2 there is a very important graph that I think is illustrative of what we are going through. The Treasurer said it best when he led with this comment—

Queensland's nation-leading response to the COVID-19 pandemic continues to underpin an economic recovery that is recharging our state.

It is not just the words he said; the facts on page 37, graph 2.2, bear them out. This chart 2.2 on page 37 of this government document shows that when COVID came along we dipped less than other states. Victoria dipped longest; New South Wales dipped lowest. We recovered the quickest. By September 2020 we were the very first state to recover our economy to larger than it was before the COVID pandemic. That is something that New South Wales did not do until 13 months later. That is how bad New South Wales's management of COVID was. We had that springboard to continue to power on.

On one side we saw a policy of the premature opening of the economy to COVID—the LNP policy. They called for it 64 times. They put up billboards for infection to be flown in. We know that secretly they conspired with the Premier of New South Wales and the Prime Minister to attack Queensland's health response. They wrongly thought that we could have either health or a strong

economy. They chose big business over people. They chose to sacrifice a generation of older Australians. We, led by our Premier and the Treasurer, knew that this was a false choice the LNP were making. We knew that we could not have a strong economy unless we had a healthy state. If we did not look after people first—Queenslanders first—then our economy could not be strong; it could not deliver for ordinary working Queenslanders.

That brings me back to that graph. We dipped less and we recovered first. We were growing for 13 months while New South Wales had not even recovered to the point they were at prior to COVID. That is a tremendous difference. We know that Liberal policies in Queensland would have put our growth 13 months behind. Each of those dips is really important because they represent small business people, hardworking people, who would be uncertain about how they would pay for their house and how they would keep themselves healthy. It would have been the LNP that forced them out of work and increased unemployment as they did in New South Wales.

The member for Broadwater shifts and slides. However, he 100 per cent backed the economy-wrecking health risks the LNP opposition tried to put in place. The member for Broadwater 100 per cent backed the calls—64 times—to open the borders, opening them prematurely, exposing Queenslanders to risk before vaccination was available.

Mr Watts: With the Premier; the Premier opened the border. You should check your history.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr POWER: The member for Toowoomba North and the rest of the opposition bray and pretend. They rewrite history and pretend their policy was the same as the Premier's, but it was not. I want to remind the member of a TV conversation where this was revealed. Karl Stefanovic was talking to Gladys Berejiklian. He said to Gladys—

The state election is this Saturday, have you spoken to the Opposition leader ... Mrs Frecklington about the possibility of her becoming Premier and those borders coming down?

Gladys Berejiklian: Oh look, Deb and I have a great working relationship, we are in touch with each other all the time, in fact I was in touch with her yesterday and she feels very strongly about keeping jobs in her state and getting tourism back up and running, so I know that if she was elected Premier she would definitely open the border and—

this is the important bit—

she would have done it months ago because that's the way Deb and the LNP are up there.

The member for Toowoomba North needs to know 'that is the way the LNP and the member for Broadwater are up there'. If he was a serious leader, the member for Broadwater would admit he got this seriously wrong, tragically wrong, and that our Premier took the correct path, but he will not. He will continue to mislead Queenslanders.

These strong policies have led to strong dividends of economic activity, of strong exports and strong jobs growth. It is the reason we see such strong economic results and the reason the budget has a surplus, a \$1.9 billion surplus. This is in strong contrast to New South Wales where LNP-style policies have resulted in not the \$3.6 billion deficit they budgeted for last year but an \$11.3 billion deficit they are running this year. We all know of the trillion dollar debt of the federal LNP. Truly, Australians know that the LNP are the party of debt, the party of deficit and the party of short-sighted policies and weak economic growth.

Mr Weir interjected.

Mr POWER: I know that Pat agrees with me. The greatest dividend of economic growth is the ability to invest in the future health of Queenslanders. The Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan is a comprehensive plan to deliver for a healthier Queensland. We know there is pressure. We know that health workers are working hard. We know there is record demand. We listened and we are investing. We know that before vaccinations were delivered perhaps people did not look after their own small issues of health as they were keeping others safe and they were keeping themselves safe. Now Queenslanders are returning to our hospital services in droves and some of those small issues—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Pause the clock. Member for Toowoomba North and member for Theodore, you have been given a bit of latitude. You have been interjecting enthusiastically throughout the entire contribution of the member for Logan. I would ask that you cease. If there are continued interjections you will be warned under the standing orders.

Mr POWER: They are now returning in droves and some of those small issues have become complex and large health issues requiring complex care. We on this side of the House work with the community; we listen to the community. That is why the Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan is the largest investment in Queensland hospitals in Queensland's history.

We see a new cancer centre to back up the great services of the PA. We see satellite hospitals to deliver that care closer to people. We see a massive investment in mental health because we know that this is something the government needs to act on. Recently I have been speaking to the wife of a veteran who has deeply moved me with their experiences with our health system that were far from perfect. They made a great contribution to our country and they are suffering as a result. We owe it to them to deliver.

We have a record investment in ambulances and police, such as the Chambers Flat ambulance station and the new one at Yarrabilba.

An opposition member: You're going to give them all to them. That's a good idea!

Mr POWER: If I could have a moment, I want to respect our first responders. There was a terrible incident yesterday at Stockleigh Road involving four young people. Two of them died. My heart goes out to them and the family, but it also goes out to the Rural Fire Brigade and the ambulance and police officers who were first onsite. This is something that will stay with them. We back them and respect the work they do.

I want to also recognise that we are investing in education. I come from a growing area where there are new houses springing up everywhere and there are enthusiastic families who want the best for their children. That means we need Everleigh State School and Yarrabilba State School. I have spoken previously about the second Yarrabilba state school that is in the shadow of the south rock shelter, a really special place. I have spoken previously about how the LNP put cuts in place which meant that the growing areas paid the biggest price. The cuts hurt when you do not have a school in your area whatsoever and the LNP would never deliver it.

I want to talk about the roads, especially the Mount Lindesay Highway where we are doing the section from Stoney Camp Road to Chambers Flat Road and are going on to do the Jimboomba section from Johanna Street to South Street. These are vital projects. We know there was not one metre of four-laning under the LNP whereas now we are providing significant, safe, divided four-laning.

I want to talk about public transport and the investments we are making in the areas of police and safety. This is a budget that is working with community and listening to community, knowing that we are in a partnership with the people of Queensland. It is delivering for the Logan community. I endorse the budget.