



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR LOGAN

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 3)

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BETTING TAX AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (2.13 pm): He is an angry man and he is angry because Queensland's unemployment is at record lows, and that is not what the shadow Treasurer wants to see. He does not want to see the record jobs and he does not want to see the record surplus—the largest since accrual accounting was put in place. This is what makes the member for Toowoomba South so angry. He says that there is no mention of coal, and I thought that that was unusual because I remembered the Treasurer in his speech speaking multiple times about coal, and I did a quick Ctrl-F and found it multiple times. I went to the 'hidden' coal page. On the page for budget.qld.gov.au what is the first link on the left? Coal! If it is hidden, it is hidden only from those who are blind. What do we know the member for Toowoomba South closes his eyes to? He closes his eyes to the record surplus that we are delivering. He closes his eyes to the strong investment that we are seeing, including in the coal industry. He closes his eyes to the record low unemployment rate because he does not want to see it and he does not want to talk about it.

I want to talk about the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 3) because it is an important part of our budgetary process to ensure that we deal with unforeseen expenditure. I note the deputy chair is in the chamber and together we looked at the unforeseen expenditure, and in some ways it is very normal. It happens every year and it is very boring. Every member of this House knows that this bill is a requirement presented every year and on some level it is so standard and so boring and accepted that our committee received no submissions on it—none—and the statement of reservation was possibly the shortest on record.

We heard Treasury give a very professional report on the need to respond as good prudent governments do to expend funds in response to new and emergent policy, changing costs of supplies and of course emergency contingencies relating to floods and to COVID-19 in the case of the 2021-22 budget. We understand that this is a normal part of government, but after reading the breathless and excited media and especially the breathless and excited LNP press releases they made some claims that simply do not stack up to the briefest amount of examination or scrutiny—very much like that reference to coal which did not stack up for 30 seconds after looking at the budget website. I hate to repeat the statements they have made, but it is worth taking a quick look. Today we have an appropriation separate from the past budget of \$2.8 billion after the passage of the 2021 budget. I noticed in press releases it was called 'staggering', and the deputy chair might agree with those words—I hope he would not, but he might. However, when we compare it to other years—and the deputy chair would know this—since 2008 there have been four years that have had larger unforeseen expenditure as a percentage of the overall budget. Members here know that and none would be so silly as to claim that it was in any way out of the ordinary—well, I hope!

What is extraordinary though is what our state and our nation faced in 2021. I said I hoped they would not do it, but of course we have already heard the shadow Treasurer call it a record blowout when the very briefest examination of the documents since 2008 shows that it is the fifth largest, and those budgets did not face the crisis that we faced in our state and our nation in 2021-22. COVID-19 cases, especially hospitalisations, peaked in Queensland during this period. The state, like most good Queensland businesses, had to adjust. It had to be agile and adjust to keep Queensland strong, to keep creating jobs and to keep Queenslanders safe. That meant new expenditure and to not have done this would have hurt Queensland. That is obviously what the LNP and especially the shadow Treasurer would do. He wanted to hurt Queensland.

We also faced floods during this period, but to put a standing budget in place for an event that is predicted to perhaps happen once in 100 years is obviously not the way budgets should work. Just like thousands of flood-affected home and business owners, the state faced this unforeseen expenditure. What is extraordinary is that these floods were the third most costly disaster event in Australia's history. That is what we faced in that budgetary year. We did not hear the shadow Treasurer talk about any of that. These were truly extraordinary twin events and truly unforeseen. A newspaper editorial claimed that businesses that were affected by COVID and floods and changed their budgets should have their leadership sacked, and possibly the shadow Treasurer put out a press release that agreed with this. The newspaper stated—

Can you imagine a company that did the same?

It is referring to unforeseen expenditure. It continues—

No. Chief executives either stick to their budget or they are asked to look for another job.

Does the shadow Treasurer agree? The newspaper seems to be claiming that businesses such as Qantas which faced extreme budget changes should sack their CEOs. The TWU actually agrees with that but not because Qantas was unable to adjust to the ravages of COVID; rather, it has other problems with the CEO. Businesses everywhere in the last three years have had to be agile and have had to make large changes to their budgets and as unusual challenges arose they needed to adapt.

This agility should be applauded, not attacked as the LNP has done and not, by proxy, attack those very businesses that have grown jobs in Queensland, which is part of the reason we have strong growth and record unemployment.

Mrs Frecklington: \$2.8 billion!

Mr POWER: Sorry, I missed that?

Mrs Frecklington: \$2.8 billion.

Mr POWER: It is almost like a Dorothy Dixer! The member says \$2.8 billion. Perhaps we should examine, as the member has called out, other states because we know other states had to be agile and react to these changes. We note that in New South Wales the LNP's favourite Treasurer, Matt Kean—I know those opposite all love him—announced an unforeseen expenditure of—and the member for Nanango might chip in here—\$17.8 billion in 2021-22. Maybe someone on that side could get out a calculator and tell the member for Nanango how many more times that is than our budget. I can see their blank faces so I will do the calculation for them. It is 6.3 times more. That is truly staggering.

I recognise that New South Wales faces a challenge. I would not be as silly as the shadow Treasurer would be. He would say let New South Wales burn; do not spend that \$17.8 billion. That is the kind of wastage that goes on in New South Wales where LNP governments expend 6.3 times as much as Queensland. I am not really making a criticism of the New South Wales Treasurer. They had to react to that deep need and expend that money. What I am critical of is the New South Wales government's response to COVID-19. They adopted the LNP's suggestions. The member for Nanango's suggestion was to open the border—those opposite said it 64 times; let it rip. There was only one result: \$17.8 billion in extra expenditure. That resulted from the member for Nanango's policies, the policies the member for Broadwater supported. They ended up costing New South Wales \$17.8 billion. This is the extra deficit. This is on top of the huge deficit they were already running. They knew going into that budget they were in a disaster.

Mr STEVENS: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member for Logan has talked for the last 3½ minutes about the New South Wales appropriation bill. Could you bring him back to the title of this bill?

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): Resume your seat. There is no point of order.

Mr POWER: They do not want to talk about the New South Wales comparative budget because nothing will save them from the embarrassment of wanting to run a budget that would have had these deficits and debts. Our government was focused on strong action to keep Queenslanders safe. It had the agility that meant we have had the opposite situation to New South Wales. This expenditure,

appropriately applied to the right areas, has paid off. This morning the Treasurer spoke of our economic recovery and highlighted two things: we have the lowest unemployment since records began and, simultaneously, the largest budget surplus since accrual accounting began. These are things that LNP governments, which we know stand for deficit, deficit, deficit, can only dream of.