




Speech By
Melissa McMahon

MEMBER FOR MACALISTER

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 2)

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 **Mrs McMAHON** (Macalister—ALP) (12.52 pm): I rise to speak to the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill (No. 2) 2021 and Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 2021. Can I say how thrilled I am to be delivering my first ever second Appropriation Bill speech. As a new member of the Economics and Governance Committee, this is the first time I have had the chance to be briefed by Treasury officials about the Consolidated Fund Financial Report. Who knew that delivering a budget and a budget speech would not be the end of it? I would like to place on record my apologies to my university economics professors for a teenage Mel telling them some 30-odd years ago, 'I'll never need to know this.'

I had to educate myself on how this tail end of the budget in terms of economics works. Obviously we all passed a budget last year. We all sat around till late in the night. We gave our speeches, the parliament approved it and allocated funds. However, obviously as events throughout the year play out, there are unforeseen expenses and the government provided in-principle approval for the release of money from the Consolidated Fund. However, as a matter of transparency and accountability, we sit here to formally approve this unforeseen expenditure.

Let me tell honourable members about the Consolidated Fund Financial Report. This is the good stuff. For the purposes of this bill, the Consolidated Fund Financial Report provides an explanation from each government department about the variations to the original Appropriation Bill. This amount may be more; it may be more depending on the range of circumstances. Where the amount is more than has been allocated by the Appropriation Bill, it is considered unforeseen expenditure. Where the amount is less than allocated, it is considered a lapsed appropriation. I hope my 16-year-old self is following.

The briefing from Queensland Treasury outlined that the lapsed appropriations relevant to this bill across 17 government departments are approximately \$1.432 billion. This may seem like a large amount, but it is not that the money was not wanted or needed by the departments. Treasury explained to the committee during the hearing process that often it is because the money for whatever reason cannot go out the door in the relevant financial year, so it is held over to the next financial year. It is not that it is not spent, just that it could not be spent by 30 June.

One would assume the reasons for such delays during a pandemic, as anyone who has tried to get any work done would know, are fairly self-explanatory. I would point out to the assembled members that that amount is the second lowest lapsed amount in the past decade and it actually represents only about 2.35 per cent of the total budget. I congratulate all departments on the successful budgeting and foreshadowing of their expenses. As the Consolidated Fund Financial Report refers to unforeseen expenditure, I will briefly explain to the House where some of the overspends were in the past year as they were reported in principle to the committee.

The department with the largest unforeseen expenditure was the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. We were advised that the majority of this amount was to meet the state's role and involvement in the Queensland floods class action settlement during the 2021 period. The Queensland

government takes its responsibilities to Queenslanders in this instance seriously. The next largest was in relation to the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, and its unforeseen expenditure was due to increased demand for out-of-home care services in the child protection system. This government is committed to ensuring that our most vulnerable young Queenslanders are taken care of, particularly during this pandemic.

It should be no surprise to members assembled that the next highest overspend was in relation to COVID costs incurred by the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services and the Queensland Police Service. As the lead administering agency in disaster management, QFES incurred most of the cost of quarantine services. We would like to have been on the other side of the pandemic by this time, but obviously no-one here has a crystal ball. These quarantine costs have continued and the Queensland government has had to pick up the chalice where our federal government has failed us. The Queensland Police Service had to continue to deliver COVID compliance measures during this time when we really thought we would be on the other side of this pandemic.

I would like to thank all those members of the Queensland Police Service who stood on the front line, whether it was at the borders, at our airports or going around ensuring compliance because that really was ensuring the safety of Queenslanders during this pandemic. It was a lot of their work, whether they were on the border, in the airports or working in hotel quarantine, that did incur costs, but it did so to make sure that Queenslanders were safe.

Most of the rest of the unforeseen expenditure outlined to the committee pertained to machinery-of-government costs incurred during the changeover of portfolios. The appropriations total as at the end of June 2021 for the Parliamentary Service was an unforeseen expenditure of \$1.795 million. It was outlined to the committee that the reason for this overspend related in part to the costs of running the 2020 state election during the pandemic. It is noted that the committee found that the bill contained no breaches of fundamental legislative principles and there is no statement of reservation for this bill.

Mr Power: That's because it's great.

Mrs McMAHON: I take that interjection. It is a fantastic bill. I thank the committee members and the secretariat for their work. The committee recommended that this bill be passed. I commend the bill to the House.