



Speech By  
**Patrick Weir**

**MEMBER FOR CONDAMINE**


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### **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 3)**

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#### **BETTING TAX AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (4.55 pm): I rise to speak to the appropriation bills and the Betting Tax and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The Hon. Cameron Dick introduced the appropriation bills into the House on 12 October. The bills were referred to the Economics and Governance Committee for joint consideration, along with the Betting Tax and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. The committee was to report back on 4 November 2022. The bills were considered urgent through the committee process, as was the Coal Mining Safety and Health and Other Legislation Amendment Bill that we finished earlier today, so there was very little time for the committee to receive submissions or feedback from the community, organisations and business.


We all know that this Palaszczuk government has an appalling record when it comes to spending and service delivery, with cost blowouts and overruns. This appropriation bill puts that beyond any doubt. The appropriation bill is requesting the House to authorise an unforeseen expenditure for 2021-22 of \$2.823 billion. This is a staggering overspend by this government and shows that this Treasurer has no control of the spending of his cabinet colleagues. Where has this money gone? Which department cannot balance their budget? It is almost all of them. Let's have a look.

The government departments and agencies are: the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, \$2.225 million; the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs, \$175.791 million; the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training, \$138.224 million; the Department of Energy and Public Works, \$57.098 million; the Department of Environment and Science—this is a good one—\$623.215 million; the Department of Justice and Attorney-General, \$4.444 million; the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning—it has done fairly well!—\$573.696 million; the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport, \$85.222 million; the Department of Transport and Main Roads, \$330.326 million; the Office of the Governor, \$76,000; the Office of the Inspector-General of Emergency Management, \$62,000; Queensland Fire and Emergency Services, \$224.315 million; the Queensland Police Service, \$56.917 million; and Queensland Treasury, \$551.513 million.

That is staggering. That is the number of departments that could not control their budgets. The majority of this total unforeseen expenditure—62 per cent—arose from, as you have heard, just three departments: the Department of Environment and Science, the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning, and Queensland Treasury.

What have we got for this? We know that we have the Wellcamp quarantine facility at a cost of \$230 million which will be handed back to the Wagner family in April. That is in the seat of Condamine, so I see this big, empty white elephant on a regular basis. I drive past it all the time. I would like to know the cost per person who has stayed at that facility. At \$230 million, there would not even have been 230 people who stayed there. This will forever be a landmark for the wasteful spending of this government.

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 **Mr WEIR** (Condamine—LNP) (6.13 pm), continuing: Every project this government touches results in huge overruns such as we see with Cross River Rail. What will this project eventually cost Queensland? The government has announced its long-awaited renewable energy plan, which comes with a price tag of \$62 billion. How could anyone possibly believe that this Palaszczuk government will deliver that project within the announced time line and anywhere near the proposed \$62 billion budget? We have been told that the cornerstone of the plan, the proposed Pioneer hydro dam project, will come with a price tag of \$12 billion alone. That project has no business plan. It has no development approvals. It has no environmental approvals. It has no regulatory impact statement. It has no compensation arrangements with the landholders whose lands will have to be resumed because of inundation. There are no compensation arrangements with landowners impacted by easements for power line construction.

**Mrs Gilbert** interjected.

**Mr WEIR:** This is very close to the area of the member for Mackay. If I were her, I would consider the impact this will have. Those landowners may also be impacted by the solar or wind farms that will supply the green power to pump the water. That is just to name a few of the impacts. I have heard estimates that this single project could end up costing as much as \$20 billion.

The Borumba pumped hydro project will face similar challenges. Although not on the same scale as the Pioneer Dam project, there will need to be a significant road, bridge and infrastructure spend before any works can start on the actual project. Up to 3,000 wind turbines, 36 million solar panels and 7,000 batteries and associated agreements will be needed for those projects. We have been told that the funding will be split between the state, the federal government and the private sector but we have seen no breakdown of what that looks like as no such funding agreement has been reached. It does not exist. Does anyone really think that this government can deliver those projects on budget and on time?

The Condamine electorate suffered significant damage during the flooding earlier in the year. The damage to roads is considerable—so much so that some are closed except for local traffic. Members in this House would have heard me talk many times about the sad state of the Bowenville Norwin Road. About 18 months ago the minister announced that \$7 million would be spent on that road and, at the time, I said that it would only be enough for a patch job. That has proven to be so and it is now local access only. When local residents look at the waste of \$230 million at Wellcamp, they rightly ask why sufficient funding was not allocated to the rebuilding of Bowenville Norwin Road instead of the white elephant that we have at Wellcamp. We have numerous local gravel roads where, after rain, landholders have to be towed out by tractor. How many would have been able to be repaired if a grant were given to local government instead of building the Wellcamp white elephant? The soil erosion from these events is probably the worst that I can remember seeing.

Under QRIDA, funding was made available for landowners to apply for help with remediation. It is called the Special Disaster Assistance Recovery Grants scheme. The scheme will expire on 15 December this year in the Condamine area. The problem is that we have had a wet winter and also a wet spring, which has meant that most landholders have not been able to get machinery onto their paddocks because they are so wet. Those who have only recently been able to get onto their ground have had to make the decision to forgo repair works and, instead, prepare the ground for planting otherwise they will miss an entire summer crop. Over a month ago my office sent an email to the Deputy Premier requesting an extension to the scheme as the landowners who have planted their ground, despite its damaged state, will not be able to do work on that ground until mid next year at the very earliest. They will have to wait until the corn and sorghum ripen. That will be their next chance to get onto that ground.

This morning the Treasurer stood in this House and spoke of the returns that come to the state from agriculture. If those returns are to continue, it is time for the state to give a bit back. At this stage my office has not received a response from the Deputy Premier. I notice the agriculture minister is in the House. I hope that he pursues this because the damage is huge and the opportunity to fix it will be lost if the time frame is not extended.