Speech By

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mr JANETZKI (Toowoomba South—LNP) (12.26 pm): On Tuesday the Treasurer delivered the budget—the Palaszczuk government's ninth. The budget proves that Queenslanders cannot trust the Labor government to solve the long-term challenges facing Queenslanders in their daily lives. The government has called it the cost-of-living budget, the budget needed to address the cost-of-living crisis.

Queensland is ground zero for the national cost-of-living crisis. Recent ABS data highlights that Queensland families and businesses face power bills 32 per cent higher, healthcare costs 5.4 per cent higher and housing expenses 3.4 per cent higher in just 12 weeks. To be absolutely clear, they are quarterly numbers and the worst in the nation by some distance. Equally clear is that Queenslanders are the poorer for it. Queenslanders need cost-of-living relief now and that is why we support the government's measures, but the more salient question is: why has the Palaszczuk government not fixed the long-term underlying service delivery failures that are driving down Queensland living standards?

The Queensland crime crisis is driving up home and car insurance premiums. That is a long-term service delivery failure that is not solved by this budget. An inability to deliver residential housing lots to the market, infrastructure, and social housing is worsening housing affordability and availability. That is a long-term service delivery failure that is not solved by this budget. The Palaszczuk government promised 150 times that power would be cheaper. It is not. That is a long-term service delivery failure that is not solved by this budget.

I want to spend a few moments now on power prices. Quite simply, the Palaszczuk government has deceived the Queensland people. Power prices are getting worse, not more affordable, which is what the latest pastel social media tiles have recently suggested. Last week it was the turn of regional Queensland to bear the brunt of this deception. The Queensland Competition Authority advised that regional prices would be increasing 28.7 per cent for households and 26.8 per cent for small businesses across regional Queensland. Taken together with last year's Queensland Competition Authority determination, regional Queenslanders now face a 38 per cent power price increase in just two years.

Why have Queensland power prices increased so dramatically? The Auditor-General and the Queensland Competition Authority say why. It is Callide. Members will recall that Minister de Brenni had initially said Callide C4 would return to service by the end of 2022 but it was pushed back to February 2023, then April 2023 and then October 2023. Just a fortnight ago it was announced that Callide C4 would not be fully operational until July 2024, more than three years after it went offline in 2021. Members will recall that in August 2021, in response to a question asked during parliamentary estimates, Minister de Brenni said that the Callide incident 'would have no net impact on consumer electricity prices'. Wrong again.

It is not me who is saying this. The Auditor-General said 'a lack of supply, from unplanned maintenance in power plants like Callide, is a primary factor in driving up electricity prices'. The Queensland Competition Authority has also called into question the minister's comments on the impact of Callide C's explosion, noting that unplanned outages were a factor in price rises. It is obvious that the Palaszczuk government's failure to properly maintain Queensland's power plants over the long term is costing Queenslanders now. Again, it not me saying that. In 2022 the MEU called into question maintenance issues at Callide, calling on 'the Queensland Government to step in and ensure that Callide is being responsibly managed and maintenance and repair is prioritised.' No announcement can get the government off the hook—not the mysterious departure of their old mate Jim Soorley as CS Energy chair, not their silence on the future of Genuity and not even their hiding of the Brady report, which would explain what happened at Callide and why.

When we look across nearly a decade of the Palaszczuk government, a pattern of economic decline is apparent. In 2015, when assuming office, total state debt had been stabilised at $72 billion. It went to $102 billion before the world had ever heard of COVID and has grown to $110 billion now. It will be $147 billion by the end of the forward estimates. That growth is a reminder that in just four years, between 2006 and 2010—someone such as the Premier might remember those years—Labor nearly tripled state debt and they threw away our AAA credit rating as the bitter icing on the cake. That would be something that the Treasurer remembers well.

The history of Labor treasurers during the Palaszczuk government reveals a different story of sleights of hand, mismanagement and broken promises. Labor raided over $12 billion from public servants' superannuation and government owned corporation balance sheets; $3.4 billion was raided from the government employee long service leave scheme in the 2015-16 budget; $2 billion came from suspending the government's contribution to the defined benefit scheme in 2015-16; $2 billion was raided from the defined benefit scheme surplus in Labor's 2016-17 budget; and over $5 billion was raided from government owned corporations in the 2015-16 and 2016-17 budgets. We had the Trad years of raids on property taxes but at least she had the fortitude to remain predictably ideological.

Today, despite revenue rivers of gold, Queensland families are paying a high price for the deceit of the member for Woodridge and the chaos and crisis of the Palaszczuk government. If $60 billion more than what the Treasurer expected in his first budget just three years ago is not enough for the Palaszczuk government to fix services then how much will be enough? What is that figure? The truth is that no amount of funding will ever be enough for them. A similar revenue windfall, albeit of a smaller nature, was recently enjoyed by the new federal government. The federal Treasurer decided to pocket 80 per cent of his revenue windfall with the aim of protecting the integrity of the federal balance sheet going forward. But what has the Treasurer banked of what is left of those rivers of gold? He has certainly barely retired any debt. In light of our Treasurer's record, is it any wonder that federal Labor do not trust the Palaszczuk Labor government? Olympic contributions have been capped, key water projects have been scrapped, Bruce Highway funding has been delayed until beyond the next federal election and $15 billion of state building projects are at risk of being wiped.

Interest payments are now costing Queenslanders over $3 billion a year and will soon cost $5.7 billion per year. Since 2015, tax per Queenslander has increased by over 50 per cent. Queensland's share of Australian GDP remains stagnant at around 18½ per cent, with a troubling downward trend since 2015.

The Palaszczuk government has a deep philosophical aversion to private business investment in this state, made obvious in its introduction of 15 new taxes since it was elected. Private business investment is down more than 40 per cent in real terms. That is after a period of record low interest rates and the instant asset write-off. Moreover, the solemn 'no new or increased tax' promise, given 26 times by the Treasurer and broken last year, was done without any respect to the industry that sustains the Queensland budget. A Crisafulli government will always treat investors, stakeholders and our international trade partners with respect. When we make a commitment we will stick to it. Queensland cannot be a state where the government could turn on you at any moment with a hit-and-run cash grab. Queensland cannot be a state where policy is made up on the fly by a government addicted to announcements and one that mistakes talking for action.

After nearly nine budgets and a decade in power, time has run out for the Palaszczuk government. It has announced untold billions of dollars for the best part of a decade and it is not possible to say that anything has improved on any measure. The billions of dollars put into the Housing Investment Fund have not delivered a single house. As is customary, the Treasurer appears oblivious to the struggles of those facing housing affordability or availability challenges. QCOSS has said that 300,000 people are under critical housing stress and the rate of homelessness has increased by 22 per cent since 2017. For the Treasurer to say that this fund will never stop giving is offensive. Far better he be truthful and admit that the fund has not yet even started giving.

The billions of dollars put into the Health and Hospitals Plan has not delivered a new bed, ward or hospital. This budget unveils the deceptive nature of their glossy brochure from last year's budget as 95 per cent of the promised funding will only be delivered after the next election. The billions of dollars tied up in infrastructure project delays and overruns have Queenslanders stuck in congestion as they wait for projects to be finished years late. Tens of billions of dollars put into record health and policing budgets have delivered the worst ramping in the country, 38 closed maternity wards and fewer police than before the last election. Of course, Queenslanders are still waiting for the billions of dollars that the government has announced for the second Bruce, the cornerstone Pioneer-Burdekin hydro hoax in the Jobs and Energy Plan and CopperString to actually even appear in capital statements in the budget.

Two years ago I announced our proposal for a loan scheme to invest $20 million every year to empower social entrepreneurs and community organisations to change the lives of Queenslanders who need it most. Today I announce our next step. A Crisafulli government will establish Queensland's first-ever office of social impact in Treasury. The OSI will work alongside impact investors, community organisations, faith groups, philanthropic groups, corporates and social impact businesses to co-design a road map for social enterprise and social impact in Queensland. Basing the OSI in the engine room of Treasury means that ministers and their departments can unlock the information needed. In a world of infinite need but limited by scarce resources, the potential for collaboration between government, socially-minded investors and the impacting business community to identify opportunities to access finance is vast.

No social impact investment model should be off the table, whether they be social benefit bonds, outcomes focused grants, payment-by-results contracts, incentive payments and layered investments. Social impact businesses, not-for-profits and community organisations are grassroots, connected, on the ground and ready to help tackle our most difficult challenges, whether that be youth offending, homelessness or foster care. Social Enterprise Australia estimates there is 12,000 of them around Australia employing some 200,000 people—organisations like Orange Sky, the Big Issue and 'Who Gives …' come quickly to mind. They have the knowledge, heart and personal drive to change the world around them in their own city, in their own towns and on their own streets.

I strongly support our leader's commitments today that will support service delivery and put downward pressure on the cost of living. We will provide world-class, professional development and training to improve the skills and leadership of our Public Service, because we need Australia's best public service to pull Queensland out of the deepening chaos and crisis of this government. With Australia's best public service to provide fearless advice, we will restore world-class services to every Queenslander, no matter where they live. It is a mountain that we are ready to climb with the member for Broadwater leading us, because Queensland cannot wait any longer for a government that cares—

Mr Whiting interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Pause the clock. Sorry to interrupt, member for Toowoomba South. The member for Bancroft knows very well not to interject from a seat other than his own. He is warned under the standing orders.

Mr JANETZKI: Queensland cannot wait any longer for a government that cares, delivers and keeps its promises. Queensland has never been in this much debt. Never have Queenslanders paid more tax nor the Queensland government collected such rivers of revenue gold. Never have we seen the wasteful spending of the magnitude that we see every day. As each year of the Palaszczuk government passes, Queenslanders not only have less and less to show for it, they have lost trust in the Palaszczuk government to solve any of the challenges that they face in their daily lives.