




Speech By  
**Linus Power**

**MEMBER FOR LOGAN**

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Record of Proceedings, 5 March 2024

### **APPROPRIATION BILL (NO. 2)**

 **Mr POWER** (Logan—ALP) (12.02 pm): That was a full half-hour in which the member who just spoke managed to desperately avoid actually talking about the appropriation bill before us. I was the chair of the then Economics and Governance Committee that examined Appropriation Bill (No. 2). I want to thank the Treasurer and especially the Deputy Under Treasurer, Mr Dennis Molloy. In his evidence he said—and I think this was directed at the member for Toowoomba South, because he seems completely confused about what we are doing in the appropriation bill—

The term 'unforeseen expenditure' does at times seem to cause some confusion ...

That was directed at the member for Toowoomba South, who seems totally confused about the entire process of the bill.

Having seen previous debates, this was a question asked for the benefit of the member for Toowoomba South. We had been told that most of the expenditure had previously been put into the budget in the first Appropriation Bill in the aggregates. I said—

... often we do foresee this expenditure but we are putting it in budget aggregates because it does not reach the standards of certainty that Treasury requires to be legislated at that point.

Mr Molloy said—

Unforeseen expenditure has a very technical meaning that relates to when you are actually making that appropriation, so it is triggered at that point. What Treasury attempts to do is, where you have expenses that have been identified—so government policy is clear but the details have not been, which you would require to roll out a payment to an agency—we will hold those funds centrally so they will be reflected in our budget aggregates.

At the point of appropriation, most of this expenditure was there for examination for the LNP; it was there for examination at estimates by the member for Toowoomba South, but he has zero understanding of the process. I want to thank the deputy chair, who now knows more about this process and understands, unlike the member for Toowoomba South, how the budgetary process works. We on our committee commented—

The committee recognises there are a variety of reasons supplementary funding is required, making the payment of unforeseen expenditure an inherent part of the appropriations process.

One important thing—and this is something that, again, the member for Toowoomba South made no mention of—is the example of funding for the new public sector wages policy and new superannuation arrangements for Queensland Health. It was flagged in the aggregates and asked about at estimates but not understood by the opposition—or do they deliberately choose not to understand it because their intention is to cut the wages that were flagged in the bill and are appropriated through Appropriation Bill (No. 2)? We know that they seek to cut ordinary wages at a time when families are under pressure in the cost-of-living crisis that we are acutely aware of. Indeed, our committee is now called the Cost of Living and Economics Committee. We are deeply aware of it. We know that the LNP would seek to cut and so would the member for Toowoomba South.

I will continue to speak purely on appropriations, but I have to respond to the member for Toowoomba South, who spoke so proudly of the former Newman government. He spoke so proudly of the cuts, the sackings and the sales.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Member for Logan, I remind you of the Speaker's ruling earlier today that we will not refer to previous government iterations. That was a ruling the Speaker made earlier today, that we should not be talking about previous leaders of government and how those governments are described—Newman and Palaszczuk. That was the ruling the Speaker gave this morning. I will stand corrected if that is not the case, but that is what I heard the Speaker say this morning. We will move on from that. Member for Toowoomba South, do you have a point of order?

**Mr JANETZKI**: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take personal offence at those remarks made by the member for Logan and I ask that he withdraw them.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Member for Logan, the member has taken personal offence. Will you withdraw?

**Mr POWER**: I withdraw.

**Mr SMITH**: Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I am just seeking clarification that it was not that you could not use two former leaders and a current, for example, Palaszczuk-Miles or Newman-Crisafulli? I am just seeking a ruling on that.

**Mr POWER**: That was my understanding, too, Mr Deputy Speaker.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: You could be right, member for Bundaberg. I will check with the Speaker later in the day. Let's take that as interpreted, that it is two different premiers, and let's stay away from that. I apologise, member for Logan.

**Mr POWER**: I do note that the government between 2012 and 2015 was one that the member for Toowoomba South is extremely proud of. He spoke of it as an asset. He is either proud of that government and what it did or he is ashamed of it. He is proud of the government that the member for Broadwater served in. We do know that that government made cuts, sackings and sales; they had asset sales. I note that the member for Toowoomba South in his speech said that they sold nothing, not a single asset. Am I quoting him correctly? I note that the AFR reported that the Newman government—sorry, the government between 2012 and 2015 of which the member for Broadwater was an active part and of which the member for Toowoomba South is so proud—made the big sell-off, over \$10.7 billion worth of assets in sales. There was over \$824 million worth of property and \$370 million more to come that they had advertised. They had Queensland Motorways that they took off government ownership, they sold down the rail operator Aurizon and there was the stake in South Australian electricity.

That former government sold off assets of \$10.7 billion, but let's not forget that the government that the member for Toowoomba South was so proud of also had its plan. What was the plan called? The Deputy Speaker can tell us.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Hart): Pause the clock. Member for Buderim, you will cease your interjections. Member for Mudgeeraba, you will cease your interjections. Members, this has been a wideranging debate. I am going to let the member for Logan go on this particular point.

**Mr POWER**: It is important that we do a comparison with this appropriation and previous appropriations, especially under the government between 2012 and 2015, of which the member for Broadwater was a big part, with huge asset sales but more importantly with the Strong Choices plan. Strong Choices was the greatest asset sales plan ever put forward in Queensland and the LNP is the party of asset sales. The other thing we learned from the member for Toowoomba South was not just that those opposite have a plan for asset sales and they have a plan for cuts and they have a plan for sackings, because they are so involved in—

**Mr STEVENS**: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I ask that you bring the member back to relevance in terms of the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) that we are dealing with here today.

**Mr JANETZKI**: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Hang on, member for Toowoomba South; I will rule on that one first. Member for Logan, I have let you go a fair way to respond to the member for Toowoomba South, but I draw you back to the bill. Member for Toowoomba South, you have a point of order?

**Mr JANETZKI**: Mr Deputy Speaker, I take personal offence—my entire contribution was about the assets the Labor Party sold—and I ask that he withdraw.

**Mr POWER**: I withdraw, but it is important that we recognise—

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Sorry, member for Logan, no 'buts' in a withdrawal, just an unconditional withdrawal.

**Mr POWER:** I withdraw, Mr Deputy Speaker. It is essential that when members of the LNP have spoken about asset sales we recognise that the greatest asset sales plan ever put before this parliament was the Strong Choices plan. It is also important that we recognise the \$10 billion in assets that they sold during their time in government. I expect the member for Toowoomba South to withdraw the fact that he said in this parliament—he misled this parliament—that they sold nothing, not a single asset, because that is simply not true. It was \$10 billion worth of assets sold during that period of government and it is important that we recognise that.

We also need to recognise that the Appropriation Bill (No. 2) is importantly funding those Queenslanders who are on the front line—people who deserve a decent pay to take home, especially given the cost-of-living pressures that we recognise. This is a government that is proud of the fact that we give public servants a fair day's pay for their hard work. That is not something that we are ashamed of. That is something that we are proud of. This government recognises that this was part of the appropriations recognised for future expenditure, so in that way any of those on the other side who seek to mislead about the nature of unforeseen expenditure are misleading this House. We have seen an entire speech where they have failed to recognise the enormous asset sales that happened during the 2012 to 2015 government. Those opposite have refused to see that their appropriations at that point—and it is important that we compare this appropriation with past appropriations—added to the sacking of Queensland public servants, reduced the wages of public servants and involved the selling off of assets.

Importantly, under that government we also saw cuts to one of the vital services that Queenslanders depend on, and that is justice and youth justice. During that period those opposite cut more than \$170 million from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General—money that we in this appropriation, as a comparison, have put forward again as well as an extra investment. As part of the savage cuts, the LNP ripped \$70 million further during that time from courts and court services. This is something that the member for Toowoomba South seemed extraordinarily proud of as a part of the 2012 to 2015 government—the one where the member for Broadwater was so integral to these cuts. There were cuts of \$9 million from the planned funding for the court diversion program.

**Mrs Frecklington** interjected.

**Mr POWER:** The member for Nanango is also proud of that government and proud of the cuts that were made to the court diversion program and the 20 jobs.

**Mrs FRECKLINGTON:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The speaker on his feet is obviously misleading the House. I take personal offence to his contribution and I ask that he withdraw.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Logan, the member has taken personal offence. Will you withdraw?

**Mr POWER:** I withdraw. No doubt the abolishment of the Murri Court during that period and the abolishment of the Special Circumstances Court and the Drug Court were all cuts made by the LNP during this time that hurt justice in this state. One of the worst things was the ability to take youth offenders away from the circumstances that they were in given that there was another cut of \$26.5 million for youth court diversionary programs. I am proud that in raising these issues we can shine a light on the type of budget that cuts our services to justice and that cuts diversionary programs that make a difference and know that that is what would happen if the LNP were involved. The opposition member did not speak about the bill but mislead the parliament by saying that when in government they had sold nothing, not a single asset. I have put on the record that there were over \$10 billion in asset sales as documented by the *Australian Financial Review* and that they have the greatest plan of which they are extraordinarily proud—

*(Time expired)*