




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (SUPPLEMENTARY 2023-2024) BILL;
APPROPRIATION (SUPPLEMENTARY 2023-2024) BILL**

 **Dr ROWAN** (Moggill—LNP) (8.00 pm): I rise to address the debate on the Appropriation (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill and the Appropriation (Parliament) (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill. I first wish to briefly address the Appropriation (Parliament) (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill and the approval being sought for the amount of approximately \$4.2 million in unforeseen expenditure incurred by the Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service. I acknowledge, as advised by Treasury, that the additional amounts being sought for the 2023-24 financial year were primarily due to funding for the Parliamentary Annexe level 7 podium rectification works.

In turning to the Appropriation (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill, it is this legislation which is necessary in order to finalise the fiscal wreckage that was left behind by the previous state Labor government—a Labor government that spent a decade engaged in what can only be described as financial vandalism, leaving Queenslanders with a debt-ridden, mismanaged budget and a state of economic uncertainty. The objective of this legislation is clear. It is seeking this parliament's formal authorisation for the reckless cost blowouts overseen by the former treasurer, the member for Woodridge, and to rectify that. Incredibly, this is now the third time that the Queensland parliament has been asked to approve unforeseen expenditure by Labor for the 2023-24 year. This fact alone highlights the sheer economic incompetence and total disregard for taxpayer dollars of the previous Labor state government.

The unforeseen expenditure contained in this legislation is across 13 departments and totals a staggering \$1.128 billion. This legislation ultimately underscores Labor's true legacy of fiscal failure—a legacy of unfunded promises, cost blowouts and irresponsible economic management. Over the last decade, Labor lost control of the Queensland state budget and the consequences have been there for all Queenslanders to see. As Standard & Poor's reported in June last year, Labor's fiscal discipline was 'waning' and 'eroding' Queensland's financial credibility. Embarrassingly for the member for Woodridge, the *Australian Financial Review*, following the release of Labor's last state budget, wrote—

Queensland budget a populist clown show

The budget further trashes Queensland's traditional reputation as a low debt, lower taxing, business-friendly jurisdiction as Labor tries to spend its way back into power.

The article went on to label the member for Woodridge's budget as 'politically shameless' and 'fiscally irresponsible'.

When considering the topics of revenue collected and unforeseen expenditure by a state government, it is important to remember that the former Labor treasurer collected \$70 billion more revenue than he had forecasted in his first budget just four years earlier. What did Queenslanders get in return for this substantial revenue windfall? Under Labor, Queenslanders received record debt, record deficits, a record interest bill, more Queenslanders waiting for medical treatment, more families sleeping

in their cars due to the housing crisis, and more victims suffering from Queensland's crime epidemic. That is the legacy of the member for Woodridge and the legacy of Labor in Queensland. This legislation certainly cements the member for Woodridge as the worst treasurer in Queensland's history.

Upon coming to government following the 2024 October state election, the Queensland Treasury's incoming brief to the Crisafulli Liberal National Party government laid bare the dire state of Queensland's finances, including that structural deficits were now a certainty, that debt levels were surging with no stabilisation in sight and that the risk of a credit rating downgrade was heightened. As the Treasurer warned as early as November last year, the Liberal National Party state government had likely inherited not just a negative outlook but a full credit downgrade, an entirely avoidable disaster caused solely by Labor's reckless spending.

As Queenslanders know, under Labor Queenslanders were burdened with a growing mountain of debt. The 2023-24 budget had forecast debt at \$172 billion, but by the time Labor left office that figure had ballooned to \$218 billion, as revealed in Labor's last budget update. Every single Queensland was left carrying a debt burden of \$40,000 each, the highest in the nation. The interest payments alone have been projected to skyrocket from \$3.9 billion in 2014-15 to \$9.9 billion by 2028.

Since the 2024 state election, the Crisafulli LNP state government has worked calmly and methodically to uncover the full extent of Labor's capital project blowouts, including Cross River Rail, where the former Labor state government originally promised a \$5.4 billion budget but which is now expected to exceed \$17 billion. In relation to the hospital capacity expansion program, we have uncovered exorbitant cost increases, from \$9.78 billion to now \$16 billion. On top of this, Labor left behind unfunded operating expenses, including a \$461 million funding black hole in Child Safety, leaving the sector facing a financial cliff, not to mention \$12 billion in underfunded or unfunded Queensland Health services and programs.

The Liberal National Party promised Queenslanders a fresh start and that is what we are delivering. The Crisafulli LNP state government is already taking decisive steps to clean up Labor's mess and restore financial integrity. This includes measures such as: cancelling the \$36.8 billion Pioneer-Burdekin hydro hoax; pausing BPIC and saving taxpayers \$17 billion to 2030; halting over \$1 billion in equity and grants for speculative infrastructure projects; and just this week passing legislation to establish the Queensland Productivity Commission to drive improved economic activity and productivity for all Queenslanders.

This is what responsible government is all about—commitment to sound fiscal principles and financial management. This is what it looks like when you have a good, competent government here in Queensland. The Labor opposition may not recognise it, but this is what respect for taxpayers' money looks like.

In concluding my contribution today, I want to again reassure Queenslanders that this appropriation bill marks the final dark chapter of a decade of Labor mismanagement and incompetence. The Appropriation (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill is a reminder of what happens when a government loses control of its budget and when the expenditure of taxpayers' dollars is dictated by political expediency rather than fiscal responsibility. The Crisafulli Liberal National Party state government is committed to restoring trust, rebuilding Queensland's finances and ensuring that the reckless waste and deceit of the past under Labor never happens again. Queenslanders voted for a fresh start and, when it comes to the management of our state's finances and budget, that is exactly what we are delivering.