




Speech By
Hermann Vorster

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

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

 **Mr VORSTER** (Burleigh—LNP) (8.49 pm): This parliament is a custodian of Queensland's hopes and aspirations. Through its appropriation powers it is also the custodian of the hard-earned contribution of taxpayers. I have always felt that the word 'taxpayer' is a dangerous one. It can tempt weak governments to dehumanise real people. Taxpayers are working mums and dads providing for their children, taxpayers are young people saving for their first home and taxpayers are the small business owners creating new jobs. When we ask them to pay taxes they incur opportunity costs—that is to say, when governments raise revenue, Queenslanders have less capacity to fulfil their own dreams. It is money out of their pockets and taken out of their hands. We ask that they do contribute to lifting up the next generation, to take care of the sick and to deliver the infrastructure that sustains jobs. Given these costs, making spending decisions is a burden that should weigh heavily on the shoulders of those charged with governing the state.

Yet what we have learned in these bills is that the former Palaszczuk-Miles Labor government felt no burden. It is arguable they felt nothing at all for the plight of hardworking Queenslanders because with reckless abandon they smashed the piggy bank, went on a manic debt binge and broke promise after promise not to introduce new taxes. In short, rather than carrying the burden of governing well, they burdened Queensland with debt and deficit and they did it because it was easy, even though it would make life hard for ordinary Queenslanders. To put it another way, because the former Palaszczuk-Miles Labor government could not manage their own budget, they put pressure on household budgets instead. They did so at the worst possible time: while households were already suffering through Labor's cost-of-living crisis. With productivity languishing under their watch, eroding purchasing power and suppressing wages, living costs were rising because Labor's youth crime crisis pushed up insurance costs, because Labor pushed up power prices by failing to maintain state owned power generators, and because of Labor's obsession with regulation and control that destroyed construction capacity and pushed more families into housing poverty. When struggling Queenslanders deserved compassion and competence they were treated with contempt.

Given Labor does not believe in balancing the budget, I am grateful that our democracy has its own checks and balances. So it was in October 2024 electorates across Queensland punished an incompetent and profligate government and voted for a fresh start. They voted for the Liberal National Party to stop hardworking families, aspirational young people and seniors paying for Labor's failures. The tragedy, of course, is that the punishment should have been more severe than was doled out at the ballot box, but voters were never given a full picture of the dire state of our finances in Labor's last budget. If only voters knew. If only voters knew.

These bills do what Labor refused to do and lay bare Labor's failures. It tells the story of a conceited and dying government. At best it exposes the former Palaszczuk-Miles Labor government as an incoherent rabble with no capacity to understand the consequences of its decisions. I worry the truth

is that the former Palaszczuk-Miles government was more malevolent: wilfully and deliberately trashing the state's finances for the sake of holding onto power. Far be it from me to judge; Queensland has already passed judgement.

I do want to place on record once again what others have said. In the dying days of that government Standard & Poor's called them out, warning of Labor's waning fiscal discipline. Who could forget the *Financial Review* calling Labor's last budget a 'clown show'. Unsurprising perhaps, because Labor had turned governing into a five-ring circus. Let us consider what Labor's last budget update told us. Were the credit rating agencies and the analysts correct? It showed that debt would total \$218 billion, up from \$172 billion in the 2023-24 budget, and it showed debt per capita would be the highest of any state in the nation at \$40,000 for every man, woman and child. Perhaps worst of all, it showed the state's interest bill would climb from \$3.9 billion in 2014-15 to a forecast \$9.9 billion at the end of financial year 2028. Because of their unfunded commitments and cost blowouts, Queensland was last month placed on a negative outlook. This risk increases to borrowing costs which will add insult to the injuries already caused by Labor's bad decisions. We have heard those opposite attempt to rewrite history during the course of this debate, claiming that they were victims of circumstance, but that is not the full story and much of the pressure on Labor's last budget was entirely self-inflicted. I think, for example, of that dreadful CFMEU tax.

Now that I have got that off my chest, let me say I am optimistic about Queensland and ambitious about its future, but we cannot move forward without drawing a line under the sorry mess that was the former Palaszczuk-Miles Labor government. I am proud to be part of a Crisafulli LNP government that will work harder for Queensland by respecting taxpayers. That means making better decisions for the long term, delivering projects on time and on budget and lifting productivity. We will achieve more for those who need help, who are dreaming big or who are right now building a better future for Queensland. My message to the Burleigh electorate is simple: the Crisafulli LNP government respects the sacrifices you make for the welfare of Queensland. We will honour the trust you have placed in us and never, ever take it for granted. We will stretch your dollar further so you can get further ahead.