




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (SUPPLEMENTARY 2023-2024) BILL;
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 **Ms MORTON** (Caloundra—LNP) (4.23 pm): I rise today to talk about this bill and to point out how sad Queenslanders are. As a former business owner, I know how important it is when managing a large business to fully understand a profit and loss statement. I am sure all members who sit in this chamber are very invested in being there for their communities; however, this should be done in a responsible way, which is by understanding how money comes in and goes out. Today I am here to expose, in the clearest possible terms, the absolute financial destruction left behind by the previous Labor government. I would like to thank our hardworking Treasurer, who has the arduous task of undoing the mess.

These bills, which seek formal authorisation for the unforeseen expenditure incurred during the 2023-24 financial year, are nothing short of a final indictment on the economic recklessness and incompetence of the former administration. It was this exact economic recklessness that inspired many of us to be here in the first place. Queenslanders deserve to know the truth. Labor spent with reckless abandon—no accountability, no strategy and no regard for the future. They threw billions into bottomless pits of mismanagement and failure, all while patting themselves on the back for a job well done. Well, the numbers do not lie. It will be my children and grandchildren who continue to pay the price. It is a betrayal of every hardworking Queenslanders who entrusted them with responsible governance.

The numbers we are looking at today are beyond staggering: a total of over \$1 billion in unforeseen expenditure. It is just another addition to Labor's record \$9 billion overspend in 2023-24 alone. This is not a budgeting error, this is not an oversight; this is a government that simply did not care about their fiscal responsibility. Labor's approach to public finances was nothing short of vandalism. They spent money they did not have, they borrowed beyond their means and they plunged Queensland into a fiscal mess that will take years to repair. For what? Are our hospitals the best in the country? Are our roads the safest in the country? Are our communities thriving? No! Instead, we are left with crumbling infrastructure—particularly in Caloundra—broken promises and an economy weighed down by Labor's reckless spending spree.

Let us break down the scale of the disaster: over \$2 billion under the Cheaper Power (Supplementary Appropriation) Act 2024; over \$6 billion squandered under the Appropriation Act 2024; and now an additional billion in unforeseen expenditure that they expect this House to simply rubber stamp. This is not fiscal management; it is fiscal malpractice. The *Financial Review* rightly called Labor's final budget a 'clown show'.

Let us not just talk numbers, let us talk about the real-world consequences of this economic incompetence. What does all this waste mean for an everyday Queenslanders? It means surging debt that will cripple future generations, structural deficits that threaten essential services and a skyrocketing interest bill that will soon cost Queenslanders almost \$10 billion per year—money that should be going

back into hospitals, schools and roads. If the waste was not bad enough, let us talk about the outright lies. The former treasurer stood in this chamber and promised, on 26 separate occasions, that there would be no new or increased taxes. That was a lie.

Mr McCALLUM: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I believe there was unparliamentary language.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McDonald): I am sorry, I did not hear anything. Can you draw our attention to what that was?

Mr McCALLUM: I believe the speaker on her feet used the word 'lie'.

Ms MORTON: I withdraw. They raked in an extra \$70 billion in revenue over four years yet still left Queensland with record debt, record deficits and a record interest bill. Meanwhile, our hospitals were packed with patients, our ambulances had to ramp, our housing crisis deepened and crime spiralled out of control. This was not just mismanagement; it was wilful neglect.

Let us remind Queenslanders of some of Labor's most disgraceful financial decisions: the infamous Wellcamp quarantine facility—\$223 million turned into an empty abandoned site; private jets for ministers—racking up a \$170,000 taxpayer bill just so they could arrive at the same event separately; and Cross River Rail, which started as a \$5.4 billion project and is now set to exceed \$17 billion—three times the original budget.

These are not isolated incidents; this is a pattern of failure. This is what happens when you have a government that treats taxpayer money like Monopoly money. The Crisafulli government refuses to allow this recklessness to continue. We have already taken swift action. We have scrapped Labor's \$36.8 billion Pioneer-Burdekin hydro fantasy; we have paused BPIC, saving the budget \$17 billion by 2030; we have stopped over \$1 billion in wasteful spending on speculative projects; and we have established the Queensland Productivity Commission to ensure this level of financial abuse never happens again. Unlike Labor, we respect taxpayers' money. We understand responsibility around future generations and we understand that every dollar wasted is a dollar that could have gone to a struggling family, a local business or a vital public service.

Labor want us to forget their failures. They want Queenslanders to believe that their decade of mismanagement was just an unfortunate series of events. We will not let that happen. Day after day, we will remind Queenslanders how this state was left in financial ruin. Every minister in this government can point to a disaster left behind by their Labor predecessor. Underfunded hospitals, stalled infrastructure projects, crime rates through the roof—it all stems from a government that spent 10 years prioritising politics over people. The truth is that Labor betrayed Queenslanders, and we will not forget it.

This appropriation bill is not just about approving spending; it is about ensuring accountability. It is about making sure that those responsible for this financial disaster are exposed for what they are: reckless and unfit to govern. Queenslanders deserve a government that is honest, responsible and focused on their future. The Crisafulli government will restore fiscal sanity. We will clean up the mess left behind and we will ensure that this state never again falls into the hands of those who treat public money as their personal slush fund. It is time to put an end to the Labor era of waste and mismanagement. Queenslanders deserve better. Queenslanders are asking: where did all the money go? Queenslanders have had enough. Under this government and under this Treasurer, whom I thank again, things will get better.