




Speech By  
**Hon. Mark Furner**

**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 March 2025

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

 **Hon. ML FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (12.38 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the appropriation bills, which have now been made cognate for this debate. Firstly, I want to touch on some of the comments that have been made by the LNP government, but I also want to commend the comments made by Labor members of this parliament that have succinctly put a timeframe around this and given us an understanding of what unforeseen expenses really mean. We merely need to look at the definition of 'unforeseen' to find out what that word means. It is about the unknown. It is about the unprepared. It is about the unanticipated things that may occur into the future.

Let's look at the history of Labor governments, not only in this state but also in the nation, and how they have dealt with unforeseen matters—whether they be natural disasters; COVID, which is the worst pandemic that this state has seen in a century; or cost-of-living pressures, for which we quite rightly funded initiatives, such as the \$1,000 energy rebate, to make sure families and communities were taken care of. I know that the communities of many members, whether they are in government or opposition, would have been very appreciative of those funds. That is why there is a need for governments of the day to predict as far as possible when doing budgets but, beyond that, through appropriation bills, there will be unforeseen circumstances that require funding.

I want to reflect on the COVID pandemic. At the time when we were in government we dealt with an influx of people to our state—and we are still dealing with that now. The current LNP government is having to deal with population growth. That is why those sorts of measures and those unforeseen circumstances cannot be predicted into the future. That is why we need to bring forward funding in appropriation bills such as this to fund the roads, the new schools and the new infrastructure that is required to meet the demand of people moving to this state. You cannot blame them for wanting to move to Queensland. What a great state we have! That is why we have population growth and that is why we have to address the need for expenditure from unforeseen circumstances. That is what we are debating here today.

I also want to reflect and remind members of this House how Labor governments deal with unforeseen circumstances. I was privileged enough to be in the Australian government when we dealt with the global financial crisis. We had the Building the Education Revolution, where \$16.9 billion was put into education. These are hallmark reforms that you only see from a Labor government. These sorts of reforms and outstanding contributions will never be seen from a coalition or LNP government. These reforms protected our communities, protected the livelihoods of people, protected the tradies and protected our economy. We were the only country in the world that dealt with the global financial crisis and protected our constituents and our economy. As a Labor government we supported those people.

You only need to go to some of those federal seats—whether it be the seats of Dickson, Ryan, Wright, Forde or Maranoa—and you will see the plaques. My name is on those plaques. There are some 130 plaques where we opened school buildings as part of the Building the Education Revolution. We supported new halls and new science centres. I will never forget the then Queensland senator of

the day Barnaby Joyce reflecting on those buildings saying they were 'rusty tin sheds'. That was the opposition in federal politics referring to good initiatives to make sure the economy was protected—to make sure we had funding for unforeseen circumstances to ensure that people in their neighbourhoods and communities were protected from the global financial crisis.

I want to focus on one particular part of the committee report. I commend the committee members on their report on these appropriation bills. Paragraph 2.2.6 of the report indicates that the former department of agriculture and fisheries, now the Department of Primary Industries, be authorised supplementary funding from the Consolidated Fund of \$58.3 million. I note that the Minister for Primary Industries is in the chamber.

**A government member:** He's the farmers' friend.

**Mr FURNER:** No. He will never be the farmers' friend.

**A government member:** He's a real farmer!

**Mr FURNER:** That is debatable. He is a farmer but I do not know whether he is a real farmer. That \$58.3 million was in respect of future fisheries reforms. I acknowledge the appropriation funding, but I want to ask certain questions with regard to how that \$58.3 million will be distributed. Will that funding go to the future sustainability of the sector itself, whether it is commercial, recreational or other forms of scientific research? I think answers need to be provided by the minister and the government as to how that \$58.3 million will be distributed.

On most occasions we hear support from the government and, in particular, the minister only for the commercial fishing sector. I want to hear from the minister or the government how the funding is to be used, whether it is going to be used for paying out Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol officers. Are they going to be terminated like they were when the LNP were last in government? Are they going to slash the scientific working groups that make sure they provide the science and evidence and stock assessments? When we were in government we made sure the science was good and sound and readily available to ensure that we protected the Great Barrier Reef. We made sure that the reef would not be in danger in the future.

The federal government committed \$160 million in assistance before the future fisheries policy, the Sustainable Fisheries Strategy. I want to know whether the minister is able to stand up here in the House today and give a commitment to the House that there will not be any terminations of Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol officers or hundreds of fisheries staff like they did when they were last in government. This is in their DNA, and we saw that when they were last in government. This is how they deal with meeting the requirements of costs associated with their budget. If you recall, Madam Deputy Speaker Marr, and I know you were not in government at the time, but 14,000 public servants were terminated by the Liberal National Party as a result of bringing in Peter Costello to make sure the books were sorted out.

**Government members** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Marr): Order, members to my right!

**Mr FURNER:** This is how they deal with meeting unforeseen circumstances. That is not the case on behalf of the Labor Party, as I have demonstrated previously, when it comes to meeting the demands of unforeseen circumstances, whether it be COVID or the global financial crisis. This is the legacy that Labor will leave to make sure that our constituents—the people in our state and in our nation—will be protected when it comes to unforeseen circumstances such as natural disasters.

I take on board the comments made by the member for Morayfield earlier. After the severe weather we have had, including the severe weather in your area, Deputy Speaker Marr, let's see what the expenditure will be next year to make sure that infrastructure is taken care of. We have heard from the government that they are going to build better roads and better bridges. Let's see how they are going to build them. Let's see what the unforeseen circumstances will be in any appropriation bills into the future to make sure those things are covered off.

In conclusion, I want to make sure that we have an appreciation of how this funding will be spent. It is clearly addressed in the report and in the bill as to which areas in the department those funds are to be spent. Notwithstanding that, I think that this is an opportunity for the government to outline today that there will be no terminations of public servants—our hardworking men and women who take care of all of those areas in departments and who look after Queenslanders—as a whole into the future. I thank the House and I commend the bills to the House.