




Speech By  
**Peter Russo**  
**MEMBER FOR TOOHEY**

---

Record of Proceedings, 13 March 2025

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

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (5.26 pm): I rise to speak to the Appropriation (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill 2024 and the Appropriation (Parliament) (Supplementary 2023-2024) Bill 2024, which are cognate bills. All payments from the Consolidated Fund must be formally authorised by an act of parliament, in accordance with the Constitution. These bills seek approval of unforeseen expenditure incurred during the 2023-24 financial year. The Labor opposition endorses the passage of these bills as they complete the appropriation for the 2023-24 financial year which marks the final full financial year of a Labor government. The *Report on state finances* shows that net debt in the 2023-24 financial year has more than halved. This year delivered a net debt that was lower than the last Newman LNP budget.

It is important to highlight that the previous supplementary appropriations for 2023-24 included funding for the cheaper power act, which provided an electricity rebate to Queensland households. The Labor government believed it was essential to legislate for these rebates as we recognised the need to protect Queenslanders from the LNP cutting this vital cost-of-living relief. Our stance was proven correct, as the LNP have failed to deliver any meaningful cost-of-living relief in their recent budget updates. It seems to me that the only thing cheaper in Queensland after that budget update is the LNP's politics.

I note that S&P Global gave Queensland a AA+ rating in September 2024, but since the Treasurer had juiced the figures, and because of the reckless pursuit of cheap political pointscore by the Premier and the Treasurer, S&P Global have now put Queensland's credit rating on a negative outlook due to concerns about the state's financial management. This is very bad news for Queensland's future borrowing cost. It is time for the Premier and Treasurer to stop playing political games and start governing with the responsibility Queenslanders expect and deserve.

Take, for example, the Treasurer's introductory speech for this bill in which he highlighted unforeseen expenditures totalling \$2.2 billion from the Department of Women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships and Multiculturalism, as well as temporary electricity rebates. While addressing these expenses, he went on to claim—

This bill is a stark demonstration of the poor fiscal discipline of the former Labor government and their complete failure to plan over so many years.

However, the Treasurer's own approach must be scrutinised as well. Queenslanders expect and deserve better leadership, particularly when it comes to managing our financial future. It is time to move beyond political pointscore and focus on what truly matters: effective, forward-thinking governance that safeguards the prosperity of our state.

The bills outline unforeseen expenditure that was incurred by 13 government departments. Unforeseen expenditure is expenditure from the Consolidated Fund in excess of the amount approved by the annual appropriation.



**Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (7.35 pm), continuing: I will try to pick up from where I left off. It is important to note that the unforeseen expenditure does not necessarily equate to departmental overspending as the LNP have mistakenly claimed. I was dismayed to see in the media the LNP labelling this expenditure as blowouts, even though the Acting Under Treasurer clarified in correspondence to the Governance, Energy and Finance Committee that the unforeseen expenditure is typically due to emergent issues, policy implications, changes in Australian government payments or new decisions impacting the year's budget. It is not the result of overspending by departments. As an example, \$2 billion of the unforeseen expenditure in 2023-24 went towards delivering vital cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders. Does the Treasurer consider that a blowout? I can assure him that my constituents who are struggling with the rise in the cost of living do not see that as a blowout.

My main concern, however, is that the Crisafulli government might use these figures as an excuse to cut vital services. Queensland Health had the highest unforeseen expenditure, which is not unexpected as Queensland Health is the largest Queensland government department. It required additional funding for things like depreciation and a new 10-year service agreement with LifeFlight, the emergency helicopter.

I am very concerned by the Crisafulli government's recent cuts to our health services, which are already coming to light. On 25 February, the Crisafulli government slashed funding for an eight-bed perinatal unit in Townsville that supported new mothers. This is a promise that the Crisafulli government has walked back on. They promised to not cut health services. Just 111 days into their leadership, we see this critical service being cut. This was a slap in the face for very vulnerable women, especially when it was announced during the community's recovery from the recent floods in North Queensland. It was cold and heartless.

On top of this, the government has reduced operating hours for the nurse-led clinics in Gladstone, Brisbane City and Mount Gravatt—limiting them to regular business hours. It took a whistleblower to raise the alarm that the seven-day Brisbane City clinic, which opened in September, would have staffing reduced and opening hours dramatically cut to remove evening and weekend work. Under changes proposed by the Crisafulli government, the same has occurred, from my understanding, in Gladstone and now in Mount Gravatt. This will force people to attend emergency departments for non-life threatening conditions such as infections and sprains—the very issues that these clinics were designed to address.

I also worry that this is just the beginning. If the government continues to undermine these services, we could see nurse-led clinics closed altogether, all because the government made them less accessible to those who need them most. I guess we have to wonder what is going to happen to the previously named satellite hospitals, which are now called healthcare centres. If members want to talk about waste, changing the name is a significant waste.

The Department of Families, Seniors, Disability Services and Child Safety saw unforeseen expenditure, particularly to cover increased funding for out-of-home care services in response to the ongoing pressures in the child protection system. Given the unprecedented nature of these services, this funding was necessary.

Queensland Corrective Services also received additional funding, primarily to cover the recruitment of operational staff for the 1,536-bed Lockyer Valley Correctional Centre, which is set to open later this year. This Labor built facility will be Queensland's largest correctional facility, with rehabilitation at the core of its operations.

Similarly, the Department of State Development, Infrastructure and Planning received funding to support priority racing infrastructure for Racing Queensland and minor venue programs for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The Queensland Fire Department received supplementary funding for the recruitment of additional firefighters. The now abolished department of energy and climate received funding for the Queensland building plan.

The Legislative Assembly and Parliamentary Service also received funding for rectification works to level 7 of the Parliamentary Annexe and for enterprise bargaining outcomes. Those additional details about unforeseen expenditure in certain departments, like the Queensland Police Service and Treasury, were fully provided and the explanatory notes for the Consolidated Fund Financial Report 2023-24 provide further insights into these issues.