




Speech By  
**Sean Dillon**

**MEMBER FOR GREGORY**

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

 **Mr DILLON** (Gregory—LNP) (3.38 pm): I rise this afternoon to speak on the cognate appropriation bills 2023-24. Although I enjoyed the member for Lockyer's fantastic contribution, as I listened with interest I was startled by the contrast in the quality of the contributions to the debate between the two sides of the House; however, they have strangely fallen silent, member for Lockyer. In this case, I think we have seen the bottom of their defence of their track record of irresponsible fiscal management. I am reminded that, despite their protestations to the contrary, Labor members might be better off recalling the Judy Garland song *Somewhere Over the Rainbow*, because somewhere on the other side of the rainbow there may be a fictitious pot of gold with the billions of dollars we need to find every time we come into this place to cover up for their oversight, their lack of planning or their naked attempt to hang onto office by simply spending money they have not thought about.

Whether you are a household with a single, double or part income, whether you are a small business or whether you are a multi-national corporation, the principles of budgeting are to expect the unexpected to the best of your ability. For sure there are things that will arise from time to time, but not core business—not funding maternity services in the Biloela Hospital, not funding the road maintenance backlog. When I was first elected mayor of the Barcaldine Regional Council I was advised by the then director-general Neil Scales that it had a backlog of maintenance exceeding \$6 billion. That has only gone up since.

These appropriation bills do not cover historical things that were overlooked: they were overlooked during the budget planning process by people who were not looking beyond the next media grab or the next press conference. Mums and dads cannot run budgets where three or four times a year they go to a household lender or bank manager and ask for another 10 or 15 per cent of their turnover simply because they did not think about what might come down the road.

**Mr McDonald:** Live within your means.

**Mr DILLON:** I take that interjection from the member for Lockyer: we have to live within our means. Where there is an extraordinary event or something that legitimately could not have been foreseen, as we have seen in recent times, you had credibility with the bank to ask for that.

The other thing that people outside of the bubble of the Queensland parliament struggle to understand is the manner with which 'billions' now rolls off our tongue like 'thousands' used to only a few decades ago. Billions is a figure that is incomprehensible to mum-and-dad operators, people who are legitimately struggling, and people who would have desperately loved to receive an energy rebate. Despite claims by members opposite, not every member in the state of Queensland received a household rebate for their energy. If you are a grazier or primary producer in Western Queensland and you live on your cattle station, you did not qualify.

When those opposite claim they delivered all of these things to everyone in Queensland, what didn't they deliver? They did not deliver safer roads. They did not maintain the road network to the standard we should expect. The transport minister and member for Buderim and I met with a local government recently and a councillor said, 'They would deliver a safer road if we took the bitumen away and put gravel back.' That is the depth of despair that people are seeing in this state because of a lack of fiscal accountability and looking after what you already have before you promise and deliver something which may or may not be needed, so we have seen billions added. As I said, that is a figure that mums and dads and people leaving school today cannot comprehend—and most likely never will—yet it just rolls off our tongues like 'thousands' used to.

Not only are we spending billions more or asking the Queensland people to approve billions more in spending; we are giving away billions more—the same incomprehensible figure—in interest. We are foregoing the opportunity to do the things those opposite think are integral programs and critical to future success. Well, we are limited in our capacity to deliver them for one reason: the debt we are paying interest on on a daily basis cuts out thousands of government programs—thousands of cost-of-living measures—that cannot be considered because of the dollars we need to put back into a financier or lender, the people who give us the money, because those opposite spent more money than they earned for the last decade. For the people of Gregory to ask their representative to come down here and approve an appropriation bill that did not have a sound fiscal management or responsible delivery plan behind it is hypocrisy of the highest order from those opposite.

**Mr McDonald:** It's Labornomics.

**Mr DILLON:** That is Labornomics; I take the interjection. That is a decade of Labornomics, and we will see it at a federal level unless we get the right result very shortly. It is one thing to stand here and criticise those opposite; however we have a plan to turn that around. During the election we took to the Queensland people a very clear principle: to have respect for their money and to value every dollar they raise for us. Whether they be a wage earner, whether they pay \$16,000 a year to register a road train or whether they are paying their contributions as an individual or a business, we will value that money. We will respect the work they put in and not just move an appropriation bill every time we think it will be convenient to help us get re-elected.

We have a Treasurer who has the understanding and comprehension and cabinet ministers who are businessmen and experienced people in terms of managing money and with respect for their own money—something they have worked diligently in their lives to protect, defend and raise. They are the people who, for the next four years, will make the decisions that will protect Queenslanders' money. We will plan appropriately. We will ensure that where possible we do contingency plan. We will enact programs that are responsible and affordable and, in a transparent manner, communicate those decisions to the people of Queensland.

One thing we will also do is go back and fix those roads. We cannot do it overnight, but we will fix them. We will build new roads. We will improve the quality of substandard highways such as the Bruce Highway, the Peak Downs Highway, the Gregory Developmental Road and the Kennedy Highway. I could go on, but I would sound like Judy Garland with a really strange voice. Somewhere over the rainbow is where we are now. We just have to try and manipulate the limited financial resources that have been left to us with an overcommitment on repaying borrowings or just meeting our interest repayments on a daily basis.

With the quality of cabinet members we now have, in future years these appropriation discussions will take a different slant. We will get better outcomes through the budget because we will live like Queenslanders expect us to: within our means. We will deliver quality outcomes, whether it be through infrastructure delivery, service delivery or simply putting away money and restoring the financial credibility of this state.

**Mr McDonald:** What about the hydro hoax?

**Mr DILLON:** Thank goodness we got rid of that, member for Lockyer. I take that interjection. Not only was that going to be a serious impost on the financial security of this state; it was going to deliver extremely poor environmental and social outcomes in the areas represented by the member for Mirani and the member for Mackay. They stood strongly on this and were rewarded because they were standing on a position backed in principle and responsible financial discussions around what we need to do to safeguard the energy needs of this state. This is what we come back to: responsible, practical men and women on this side of the House who will be informing cabinet ministers, who will be informing the Treasurer, who will inform the Treasury of what is required, the volume in which it is required, and how long it will take us to deliver. I could speak for hours, but I know the rules of this place will not let me. I will summarise very quickly.

**Mr Lister:** I'll move for extra time.

**Mr DILLON:** You will move for extra time. The only thing is, I know the member for Buderim's contribution and his experience in this place will surpass anything I could dream of. He is waiting with baited breath.

Responsible, calm, collected and informed government now sits in the state of Queensland. We will respect your money, people of Queensland, and I, as the member for Gregory, once again reaffirm that. We will scrutinise these decisions and this is the last time we will ask you, through the most humble of means, Queensland, to once more cover up Labor's poor budget planning.