




Speech By  
**Hon. Tim Nicholls**

**MEMBER FOR CLAYFIELD**

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Record of Proceedings, 14 March 2025

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (SUPPLEMENTARY 2023-2024) BILL:  
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 **Hon. TJ NICHOLLS** (Clayfield—LNP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (4.59 pm): As we consider the appropriation bills—if you like, the last wash-up of the last dying days of the last gasp of the last Labor government—it is important to draw an analogy. We are also dealing with the last gasp of a destructive and damaging tropical cyclone. Just like the cyclone that disintegrated off the coast, the Labor Party disintegrated just before the last election. Just when we thought it was all over and safe to go back in the water, what happened? We had tropical cyclones and storms up and down the coast. It does not matter if we are talking about Hervey Bay or the Gold Coast because the tail end of it is still washing across Queensland and still causing damage, destruction and despair. That is the story of Labor writ large across this state.

Just like Tropical Cyclone Alfred wandered around like the unwanted guest at the party and finally disappeared into a hole of its own making so too did the Labor Party. It will be left to the LNP to clean up the mess that was left behind. Nothing exemplifies that more than this supplementary appropriation bill.

We have seen it all before. We saw it after the Bligh Labor government, to which the member for McConnell made so little contribution. Former premier Bligh kept the member for McConnell out of her cabinet for as long as she possibly could. We remember that. The member sat up there in the back and was never picked by Anna Bligh. That shows us what former premier Bligh thought about the member for McConnell. She sat there dreaming for a long time but was never rewarded. We had it in 2011 and 2012.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** They do not like it. The unforeseen budget in 2011-12—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Dr O'Shea): Just one moment, member for Clayfield, please. Could I just ask the chamber to be quiet so I can hear the member speak, particularly those on my left. Thank you.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** In 2011-12, the unforeseen expenditure in Andrew Fraser's last budget was \$2.83 billion. It was \$2.83 billion going into an election year. In 2012-13, the first year of the LNP government, the unforeseen expenditure was \$63.5 million. That is about proper budgeting. That is about proper control. In 2013-14, the unforeseen expenditure was \$447.6 million. Again, that is about proper budgeting, proper management and proper control. In 2014-15, it was \$12 million. That is about maintaining proper control. In 2015-16, the final year, if you like, where an adjustment was made to an LNP budget, the unforeseen expenditure was \$390 million. Let's look at the elections in 2016-17. What was the Labor figure? It was \$2.27 billion. In 2019-20, what was it? It was \$1.19 billion. In 2023-24, what was the total of Labor's mismanagement and inability to accurately forecast and manage their expenses? It was over \$9 billion.

Respect for money is not something that is said lazily or easily. Respect for money takes work and effort. It involves reading the budget papers, knowing what your budget submissions are and controlling the costs and expenses. It is about providing properly. Labor has no capacity to do any of that.

The member for Miller presided over the budget blowouts on Cross River Rail and could not tell people about it. We remember the false media release that he sent out last year. He said, 'It wasn't the topic of the day so I wasn't going to tell people about it.' He stood right there and said it was not the topic of the day, not the issue of the day.

**Mr Mickelberg:** Politically convenient.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Politically convenient. What was he out by, Minister for Transport? I think the cost blowout was \$400 million. In relation to the Coomera Connector, he had no idea of the costs, no idea of the time and no idea of the delays. Even his own side realised the Coomera Connector could not be left to the member for Miller. It probably would have gone east into the bay rather than south to the coast.

**Mr BAILEY:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order. As fascinating as this is, it is a long way away from the bill. We have gone back 15 years. I ask the member to come back to the bill.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Clayfield, please ensure your comments are relevant to the bill. Thank you. I remind everybody in the chamber to keep the noise down as a matter of courtesy so we can hear the member speak, please. Thank you.

**Mr NICHOLLS:** Of course, Madam Deputy Speaker. When we take the appropriation for unforeseen expenditure that this bill is proposing—just over \$1.1 billion—and add it to the previous two unforeseen expenditures that were brought into this House by the former government, we see the magnitude of the task that the member for Toowoomba South, the Treasurer, has in front of him. Given the level of unforeseen expenditure, these matters will take some considerable time to resolve. They will not be resolved this year and they may not be resolved next year. They will take a considerable amount of time and work. Given the level of unfunded expenditure that is baked into the forwards, it would not surprise me if we continued to see this type of thing occur.

This bill reminds me again of the opposition's inability to fund and budget properly when it comes to providing for the health portfolio. The single largest component and contributor to this particular supplementary appropriation is Queensland Health—an additional \$217 million is needed than was budgeted for and it is more than what was provided for in the prior two supplementary appropriations. There was the budget, supplementary appropriation 1, supplementary appropriation 2 and this is now the third supplementary appropriation for another \$217 million. Health will be determined to resolve this to make sure that they are not the laggards and always putting their hand out for more money. Proper budgeting is part of that process.

I have already highlighted the \$12 billion budget black hole in the future expenditure of Health. It is not just in the capital expenditure of \$6 billion but also in the expenditure of the centrally managed budget which funds things like wages and salaries over the next four years. That hole includes \$1.88 billion missing from enterprise bargaining agreements. That money is to pay the staff we already have—their wages, salaries and entitlements that were negotiated by those over there as part of the enterprise bargaining agreement. The money is not in the budget.

Some \$14.8 million for ambulance ramping initiatives were announced in the lead-up to the election but are unfunded. The list of these failures goes on and on. The reason for that has been set out quite clearly: the former treasurer, the member for Woodridge, did not fund a proposal that Queensland Health made in order to make sure that the minimum level of funding growth was met. The budget books show that only an average of 1.08 per cent funding growth was provided to Queensland Health. That is billions less than they were advised was the minimum amount necessary to fund the health services that Queensland needs.

As the requirement for funding grew by multiples of that number—seven, eight and nine per cent because of the inevitability of an aging population, the inevitability of increasing healthcare costs and the desire for more procedures—they were still only funding the growth at 1.08 per cent. Inflation was running at 3½ per cent. That is the failure of Labor, and that is the failure that we see writ large in the schedule to this bill—that is, the \$217 million that is necessary to catch up. That is why, together with my colleagues the Treasurer, the Deputy Premier, the Premier and others, we will focus on Queensland Health to ensure funding is provided, every cent is spent and every cent is accounted for to provide accountability and certainty to the people of Queensland so we are not faced with this ever happening again.