




Speech By
James Lister

MEMBER FOR SOUTHERN DOWNS

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (SUPPLEMENTARY 2024-2025) BILL;
APPROPRIATION (SUPPLEMENTARY 2024-2025) BILL**

 **Mr LISTER** (Southern Downs—LNP) (4.39 pm): I rise on behalf of my electorate of Southern Downs to contribute to the cognate debate on the Appropriation (Parliament) (Supplementary 2024-2025) Bill 2025 and the Appropriation (Supplementary 2024-2025) Bill 2025.

Mr Ryan interjected.

Mr LISTER: I take the interjection about Emu Swamp Dam. I am going to respond to that interjection, but I will get to that, member for Morayfield.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr J Kelly): The member for Morayfield will cease his quarrelling across the chamber.

Mr O'Connor interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: That goes for you too, member for Bonney.

Mr LISTER: I heard the member who spoke before me, the honourable member for Ferny Grove, talk about fuel. I suspect that those on the other side of this House have very little understanding about what country electorates such as mine have faced with this fuel crisis that we are suffering at the moment. It was not just a question of high prices or the odd service station going without or having to ration fuel. The big 4 oil importers—Mobil, BP, Caltex/Ampol and Viva—through the Australian Institute of Petroleum colluded to say unilaterally that they will not be supplying the mum-and-dad small businesses who work as fuel distributors in electorates like mine, which is Southern Downs, and in electorates like Callide. My honourable friend the member for Callide, I know, has talked about these things. There are other members here whose electorates have suffered that same fuel shortage.

We had farmers who had no fuel at all and they were told, 'You will not be getting any more fuel.' I take exception to what the member for Ferny Grove said, because it was the persistent and vociferous advocacy by the Treasurer, Minister for Energy and Minister for Home Ownership and the Premier and Minister for Veterans in this state which saw fuel supplies restored in my electorate. If farmers are in the middle of harvesting tomatoes or capsicums, they wait for no-one. They have to be harvested, they have to be watered and you need diesel to do those things. Thousands of jobs were going to end if somebody did not put some pepper on their gloves and embarrass the big 4 into doing something about that.

I am very proud to have played my part in that in writing an excoriating letter to the CEO of the Australian Institute of Petroleum, pointing out that their actions were an unmitigated violation of their social licence and an attack on rural Australia. I would say to the honourable member for Ferny Grove that we do have an understanding of these things on our side of the House. I particularly wanted to talk about the one which faces my electorate of Southern Downs.

I thought about how I would construct my contribution today and it was simply to look through the list of departments that had unforeseen expenditures. Some of them immediately stood out to me as glaring examples of Labor departing office having left prawns in the curtain rails and having left no money in the budget to keep the wheels of government turning. I remember talking with the Minister for Child Safety, the Hon. Amanda Camm, shortly after we came to government. She was aghast that she had to go and seek an additional appropriation of hundreds of millions of dollars just to keep children in residential care. It strains credulity that the former government were unaware that the day after election there needed to be funds there to continue the operations of those services. Perhaps they thought a budget only goes for six months after an election. They were wrong and we had to do something about that.

There is a dire housing shortage in Southern Downs. There is \$231 million for the Department of Housing and Public Works. I bet a penny to a pound that some of that money was to deal with the dire housing shortage in my electorate of Southern Downs. I want to acknowledge the minister and the Q-CHIP program, the Queensland Community Housing Investment Pipeline, which is enabling small independent organisations such as churches, RSLs or benevolent societies to create housing that meets the needs of the community as they understand it. I am extremely pleased to see their participation in my electorate in applying for that scheme.

I see the allocation to the Department of Natural Resources and Mines, Manufacturing and Regional and Rural Development. The Hon. Dale Last is in the chamber here. I wonder what additional costs flowed from having to suddenly deal with that backlog. How many was it, Minister? Was it about 200 or a thousand mining licence renewals that were sitting on your desk because the former minister could not face the nail-biting responsibility of renewing those licences? We got back on the case and we put mining back in business in this state. I think that is a wonderful thing.

There is \$81,297,000 for the Department of Primary Industries. I know that some of that money has gone towards exclusion fencing under the Queensland Feral Pest Initiative. In an electorate like Southern Downs that is no small thing because we have wild dogs, deer, rabbits and pigs, and boxthorn, harissa cactus, mother-of-millions and Johnson grass—I could go on and on. Supporting the eradication or at least the containment of those species, not to mention fire ants of course, is very important to the economy and the society of my electorate.

I see the allocation to the Department of Trade, Employment and Training. That department is now under Minister Ros Bates. I want to thank her and the Queensland government for saving the Queensland College of Wine Tourism. When we came to government, in spite of assurances which had been made by the department prior to the election that there would be an orderly transition of the Queensland College of Wine Tourism to a new operator once the University of Southern Queensland departed the partnership after suffering many years of not being able to have that partnership renewed and renegotiated with the government, the place was about to be switched off. Twenty-two jobs were going to be lost. The Queensland College of Wine Tourism, which is a valuable icon for tourism, as a destination and for providing training and research in the things that are important to us on the Granite Belt, was going to be no more.

I want to thank the government, within weeks of coming to power, for grasping the nettle and finding the funds to say to those people, 'No. You are not going to be cut, sacked and sold by Labor. We are going to step in. We are going to keep this college going. We are going to pay your wages, and we are going to embark on the course which Labor should always have done, and that is to find a new operator for that college.' I am very pleased to say that a consortium based exclusively in the Granite Belt itself—consisting of the Stanthorpe and Granite Belt Chamber of Commerce, Granite Belt Wine and Tourism and the schools in the electorate—came together to operate that college. It is going from strength to strength. I want to thank the Crisafulli government for doing that, because it would have been an outrageous tragedy if the Queensland College of Wine Tourism had closed. It was yet another ticking time bomb that Labor knowingly left. They left those jobs to go and that was quite disgraceful.

There is \$400 million for the Department of Transport and Main Roads. Some of that is definitely going to be spent in my electorate dealing with the decade of underinvestment and neglect of the roads. I am sure that every country MP in this House—and they are all on this side—would agree with me in saying that our roads went to rack and ruin. It was costing business. It was costing families. It was a massive brake on progress and on economic prosperity for my electorate. Something is being done about that. Contracts are being done properly. All the nonsense has been screened out. Contractors are happy. The department is happy because they are actually getting some ownership and getting to run things properly for a change. Now we are seeing roadworks which have been long needed in my electorate of Southern Downs.

What about the Queensland Fire Department? I want to thank the minister, Ann Leahy, and the Queensland government for finally delivering the Whetstone Rural Fire Brigade. That building cost \$1 million and took three years to build. Even at today's inflated prices I have seen rural fire brigades get together over a few working weekends at mates rates and with working bees to put together a two- or three-bay shed for under \$200,000. This took three years to deliver. It was managed as though it was the world's tallest building project. It was typical of Labor focusing exclusively on process and never on outcomes.

While the Whetstone Rural Fire Brigade did not have a shed, they had nowhere to keep their trucks. In fact, they had to suffer the indignity of having the most recent trucks delivered to them at an oval in Inglewood because they did not have a shed to put them in. That was not lost on any of us there. I want to thank the Crisafulli government for stamping out that kind of waste and incompetence that we saw. Presumably the Fire Department was acting on instructions from Labor that was about everything other than delivering the project. We all know what I am talking about.

We have seen a number of extremely important improvements in my electorate of Southern Downs. The Crisafulli government is getting on with the job in a business-like fashion. It is dispensing with extraneous considerations such as what the union bosses say. I suppose the Labor Party does not have to worry about what 'Blocker' says anymore, but there is another faceless union boss there to placate. We are getting on with the job for the good of the people of Queensland. I am very proud to support the government that actions that way.