




Speech By  
**Jonty Bush**

**MEMBER FOR COOPER**

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

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (4.07 pm): I rise to speak on the Appropriation (Supplementary 2024-2024) Bill in this cognate debate. The opposition will be supporting these bills as they fulfil the legislative requirement for parliamentary approval of expenditure. As members know, amounts can only be paid from the Consolidated Fund under an act, so this process is necessary to formalise expenditure already incurred. Whilst the mechanism is routine, what sits behind it is not.

The supplementary appropriation authorises \$5.7 billion in additional expenditure across departments. That is a significant midyear adjustment. When we look at how that \$5.7 billion is structured, the largest component to that is administered items to the tune of \$2.67 billion. Administered items are payments; they are rebates, concessions and transfers. What they do is reflect the demand in the community, not a system expansion. This is a budget adjustment driven primarily by pressures on households and services, which is entirely justifiable if those concessions were targeted cost-of-living measures aimed at easing pressures on Queensland families and small businesses, but they are not.

This government has scrapped Labor's \$1,000 energy rebate, relief that so many people in my community said made a tangible difference to their lives. This rebate meant that families did not have to go without air conditioning during a hot summer in Queensland and it meant that households had more disposable income to spend in their local economy. The LNP has scrapped Labor's car registration concessions which were making it easier for people to get around to volunteer at clubs that rely on a volunteer workforce.

The government refers to its budget blowouts as unforeseen expenditure. Treasury is clear that that does not mean that spending was unexpected in an ordinary sense, it simply means expenditure above what was originally appropriated. It could include enterprise bargaining agreements, centrally held funds and, notably, election commitments. In fact, I will draw the attention of the House to a statement made by the Treasurer in his introductory speech to this bill when he said that unforeseen expenditure largely relates to costs associated with the 2024 state election.

There are Queenslanders who right now are just holding on, Queenslanders who this morning paid over \$3 a litre for diesel, Queenslanders who are paying over \$1,200 a week in rent for a modest family home, and Queenslanders who are paying over \$400 a week for basic weekly groceries. I wonder what those Queenslanders think of the Treasurer's decision that the state should accrue additional expenditure to deliver election commitments in LNP-held seats.

When we look at the broader economic context, the drivers on demand are clear. ABS data shows us that Queensland has the second highest inflation rate in the country. Electricity prices have increased by over 43 per cent, housing costs are up over seven per cent, rent is up over five per cent and insurance in Queensland is nearly double the national average. So when we see large increases in administered spending, particularly through Treasury and Transport, it does show that those costs are rising. This government is simply reacting. There is no vision, either in the budget or this bill, to

structurally reduce those pressures. There is a fairly well-understood economic distinction for budgets: relief helps people manage costs but reform reduces them. This supplementary bill is heavily weighted towards relief, some of which is understandable, but without structural changes, particularly in housing and in energy, those pressures are not going to just go away.

This government is putting ideology ahead of evidence. They are cancelling large-scale solar and wind projects in a state that could lead the way in renewable energy exports while delivering cheaper, more reliable energy. They are not investing enough in housing. The supplementary allocation is \$231 million. That includes operational funding, some capital investment and administered support, but when you set that against rising rents, increasing housing costs and constrained supply, it is difficult to categorise this as a system-level shift.

At the same time, the Crisafulli government has cancelled housing projects and scrapped affordable housing targets. Housing remains the key structural driver of cost-of-living pressures. Instead, this government's focus is on approving projects for the top end of town, including the Trump tower on the Gold Coast.

When applying a gendered lens to the government's budget and the supplementary bill, it is clear that the government has an allergic reaction to anything that would structurally support women's equity. In this bill for youth justice and victim support we see increased administrative funding to the tune of \$118 million, which again reflects increased demand, but demand does not automatically translate to access. When women cannot access safe housing, their ability to participate in the workforce is directly affected. It should be noted that this government effectively provided more financial relief to Adani through its sweetheart deal in enabling them to dodge royalty payments than it has invested in emergency housing for women escaping domestic and family violence. That is absolutely obscene. This government has the wrong priorities.

The government could use this appropriation bill to test innovative models of supported accommodation for vulnerable Queenslanders. They could invest in a dedicated centre of excellence for our para-athletes like they promised and to date still have not delivered. They could purchase empty buildings and transform them into accommodation for essential workers. They could help ease the rising cost of fuel by increasing public transport services. However, they have delivered nothing of the sort. It is a lacklustre economic strategy from a lacklustre government and a Treasurer who is entirely out of his depth.

I turn briefly to the government's fiscal strategy. The Treasurer's election costings relied heavily on savings from consultants—a \$3 billion cap in 2024-25 contributing to \$6.8 billion in savings over four years. That assumption was central to the claim that the costings were balanced, but the Queensland Audit Office has found that cap was exceeded by \$1 billion and economists have already described the commitment as 'not credible'. Queensland's credit rating has now been placed on a negative outlook and ratings agencies have been explicit. S&P noted that delivering those consultancy savings would be crucial to maintaining the AA+ rating. That has not occurred. If a downgrade follows, the impact is straightforward: higher borrowing costs and less capacity to invest in schools, hospitals and transport. Where will the funding come from for the thousands of additional police who will be required to oversee the government's incoming e-mobility reforms? Will there be additional funding for that or will police be pulled from investigating core crimes like domestic and family violence to chase around 13-year-olds on bicycles?

I want to talk about some of the needs of my electorate—real needs that I fear will not attract the investment they need while the government reprioritises its budget to pay off LNP election commitments. We have an incredible unmet demand for specialised education in the inner city. I put forward a proposal to transform a soon-to-be-vacant school in Red Hill into a dedicated school for autistic children. That would be a game changer. It would help children with high needs stay at school. It would enable parents to work longer hours, contributing not just to their own financial security but also to the local economy. To date, the education minister has refused to commit to that project. Instead, we know now that there are developers sniffing around that site. The education minister needs to clearly state that that state asset will remain in public hands and will be retained as an education facility for our local children.

There are pressures on local sporting infrastructure. Children and adults are being turned away from sport at the very time we are trying to develop a pipeline of talent leading into the 2032 Olympics. The sports minister has stated that details of this government's investment in sports will be outlined in the sports strategy, which we all know is months overdue.

Cooper is one of the electorates with no dedicated community centre or neighbourhood centre. We are just kilometres from the CBD, yet we have no integrated active transport strategy and we have an aging population that is crying out for better access. These are not isolated electorate concerns; they reflect broader system pressures felt by many across Queensland, and this bill addresses none of those issues.

The opposition supports these bills, but the supplementary appropriation provides a clear insight into the state of the budget. It shows rising demand across key services, increasing cost-of-living pressures and a reliance on administrative relief rather than structural reform. It also raises legitimate questions about fiscal assumptions, particularly around savings that have not yet materialised. Queenslanders are relying on this government to recognise the pressures they are facing and to not just react to but also reduce those pressures. There is no sign in this bill that the government is doing enough.