




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (SUPPLEMENTARY 2024-2025) BILL

APPROPRIATION (SUPPLEMENTARY 2024-2025) BILL

 **Ms MARR** (Thuringowa—LNP) (7.42 pm): I rise to speak in strong support of the Appropriation (Supplementary 2024-25) Bill and its companion parliamentary bill. This legislation is not some dry accounting exercise; nor is it simply a routine adjustment of the state's books. In reality, it is the necessary clean-up of a decade of Labor failures—a decade defined by promises made, funds allocated on paper and far too little delivered where it matters: on the ground, in our communities and in the daily lives of Queenslanders.

The former Labor government has left Queensland taxpayers with a troubling legacy. It is a legacy of cost blowouts that spiralled out of control, stalled and abandoned projects, underfunded frontline services and a mountain of unforeseen expenditure that this LNP government must now responsibly authorise and fix. These are not abstract figures in a ledger; they are real consequences that have impacted real people. Nowhere is this record of non-delivery more glaring, more frustrating and more deeply felt than in my electorate of Thuringowa. Thuringowa families have waited long enough. For 10 long years they were asked to be patient. They were told help was coming. They were promised improvements to health, safety and infrastructure, yet year after year they watched as Labor talked big but delivered little. While glossy announcements and ribbon cuttings seemed concentrated in South-East Queensland, North Queensland, especially communities like mine, were left with excuses, delays and too often silence.

Well, the excuses have run out. This supplementary appropriation represents the bill that must now be paid because of Labor's mismanagement and incompetence. More importantly, it represents a down payment on real delivery—delivery that the people of Thuringowa are finally beginning to see under this LNP government. Let me begin with the issue that weighs most heavily on the minds of local families: health.

Townsville University Hospital sits at the heart of our region. It is a critical piece of infrastructure not just for Thuringowa but for all of North Queensland. Under Labor, however, it became a symbol of neglect and mismanagement. Expansion projects that were promised with great fanfare sat idle for years. Waiting lists grew longer and longer, patients faced unacceptable delays and frontline healthcare workers were pushed to their limits. Lives were put at risk due to poor planning and chronic underfunding. Doctors, nurses and allied health professionals were left to shoulder an unsustainable burden, often without the support they desperately needed. Labor's own health workforce reports made the situation clear. They had no credible plan to recruit or retain the thousands of healthcare workers required to meet the growing demand in North Queensland. The pipeline of skilled professionals was left on life support. That is not poor governance; it is a fundamental failure of responsibility. This supplementary funding is a crucial step in fixing that mess. It allows us to progress the hospital

expansion that was stalled for far too long. It enables the recruitment and retention of a healthcare workforce that Labor failed to secure. Most importantly, it helps deliver the level of care that the people of Thuringowa and greater Townsville both expect and deserve.

Health is only one part of the story. Community safety is another issue that strikes at the core of daily life in Thuringowa. It is an issue I hear about constantly from families in Kirwan, residents in Upper Ross and business owners in Heatley. For a decade Labor's approach to youth crime failed these communities. Under their watch Townsville and Thuringowa became known as youth crime hotspots. Residents lived with growing fear and frustration. Families were reluctant to let their children play outside. Cars were stolen and homes were broken into. Small businesses bore the financial and emotional toll of repeated offences. Steven Miles eventually admitted what the community had known for years: they had got it wrong and dropped the ball. By the time those admissions came, the damage had already been done. Labor failed to act decisively. They failed to properly back our police. They failed to implement measures that would keep repeat offenders off our streets. Instead, what we saw was more bureaucracy, more delays and three local Labor MPs unwilling to stand up for North Queensland and our region of Townsville. It is no surprise that the people of Thuringowa decided enough was enough.

This LNP government is taking a different approach—one that prioritises victims, supports law enforcement and demands accountability. We are delivering tougher laws, investing in monitoring technologies and ensuring that frontline resources are properly funded. At the same time, we recognise that prevention matters. That is why investment in early intervention and rehabilitation are part of our solution to break cycles of offending before they take hold. Our investment of \$560 million in early intervention and rehabilitation has been well received by all Queenslanders. The supplementary appropriation before the House today helps cover the cost of addressing the consequences of that crime wave. It is about moving from inaction to action, from excuses to outcomes. There is still more to do, but we do not shy away from that. We are committed to restoring safety and confidence in our communities.

Beyond health and safety, there is the matter of basic infrastructure—the everyday facilities and services that communities rely on. For too long, North Queensland saw projects announced with great enthusiasm only for them to be quietly shelved or indefinitely delayed. Meanwhile, billions were directed towards projects elsewhere, usually in the south-east, leaving our region feeling overlooked and undervalued.

What a difference a change of government makes. Take Jabiru Park as an example. For eight long years the local community advocated with Labor for upgrades—basic improvements like proper facilities and female dressing rooms. Their calls were ignored. It was only during the election campaign in 2024, when I committed \$1.25 million to the project, that there was a sudden shift in attention. We know the pattern under Labor: big announcements followed by little or no delivery. Under the LNP, that pattern ends. The funding for Jabiru Park has been delivered.

The same can be said for Thuringowa State High School. Labor promised a modern, multipurpose, air-conditioned hall, but after mismanaging the budget they quietly walked back that commitment, deciding the hall would not be air-conditioned after all—once again, a promise broken. The LNP stepped in, committed \$2 million and set a clear expectation: delivery within 18 months. We delivered well before that time and on budget. That is the difference. It is a difference not just in words but in action, not just in intention but in results.

We are also supporting families in other practical ways. The expansion of Play On! vouchers means more children can participate in sport more often. By making the program available for a wider range of activities and offering it twice a year, we are reducing barriers and supporting stronger, healthier communities. We understand that community strength is built not only through major infrastructure but also through opportunities, inclusion and participation.

The supplementary bill before us in many ways is a direct consequence of the previous government's failures. They underbudgeted, overpromised and underdelivered. They left behind hidden gaps in funding across health, justice and infrastructure—gaps that must now be addressed with honesty and urgency. This government is doing exactly that. We are not turning away from the challenges; we are confronting them. We are fixing what was broken so communities like Thuringowa can finally move forward with confidence.

In just 18 months we have begun to turn the tide. Hospital works are progressing, action is being taken on youth crime, community groups are receiving real support and long-delayed projects are finally becoming a reality. We are under no illusion: the task is not yet complete. The depth of the issues left behind requires continued effort and responsible investment. That is why these supplementary appropriations are necessary. They authorise the expenditure required to deliver services that were promised but never delivered.

To the hardworking people of Thuringowa, the parents managing busy mornings, the tradies putting in long days, the seniors who helped build our community, I say this: you were overlooked for too long and you were treated as an afterthought. This government will not make that mistake; I will not make that mistake. We will continue to deliver better health services, safer streets, improved infrastructure and real opportunities for the future—because that is what the people of Thuringowa voted for in 2024 and that is exactly what we are committed to delivering. I commend the bill to the House.