



Speech by

Hon. Annastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard Friday, 19 June 2009

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL;
INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT (ASSET RESTRUCTURING AND
DISPOSAL) BILL; FUEL SUBSIDY REPEAL AND REVENUE AND
OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

Hon. A PALASZCZUK (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs) (8.19 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill 2009 and the other bills. This year's budget has been drafted during challenging and tough economic times. The government has had to make tough decisions to respond to the harsh realities that are facing our state—about what governments should be involved in and what governments do not need to be involved in.

The Bligh Labor government is committed to building Queensland's future. It is investing a record \$18.2 billion into its building program. It is investing not only to keep Queensland's economy strong but also to emerge from the global financial crisis with better schools, better hospitals, better roads and better services. The government is keeping its promise to invest in front-line services, protecting and creating jobs and rejecting the cuts proposed by the opposition.

That is why I am especially proud that in this budget the Treasurer announced the single biggest allocation of additional resources, which is some \$414 million across four years, to provide support to the community sector to continue their essential work. I can say that both QCOSS and National Disability Services have welcomed this announcement, the single biggest injection in the budget.

The total operational budget for the Disability Services portfolio is almost \$1.4 billion—an increase of \$164.4 million, or a 12 per cent increase on last year's budget. Labor has a strong record of helping people with a disability and those who care for them. From 1999-2000 to now, the Queensland government's funding for Disability Services has increased from \$250 million to a record \$926 million. That is a record that we can be proud of.

The first priority area that the budget addresses in relation to disabilities is the Positive Futures reforms. To continue this important and groundbreaking initiative, \$26.8 million has been set aside for the 2009-10 financial year to continue the specialist response service across the state and the innovative Centre of Excellence for Behaviour Support in Ipswich. This funding will go a long way towards progressing a range of initiatives for adults with an intellectual or cognitive disability who exhibit challenging behaviours.

A further \$15.3 million has been allocated in this budget to the complementary Growing Stronger suite of reforms. These reforms aim to redesign the current specialist Disability Services system to make it fairer and more sustainable. Key features of Growing Stronger are the creation of a single application form for easy access to government funded disability services and a professional face-to-face assessment process that is fairer for all applicants.

Another key priority is early intervention services with the focus on children and young people with a disability. I believe that this is central to the future direction and sustainability of the disability sector. The Bligh government has been listening to the concerns of people with a disability and carers as well as the

wider community. That is why it will be investing \$1.1 million over two years to pilot self-managed funding to support families with children and young people with a disability. This will give families more choice and flexibility when it comes to the care and support of their children. The pilot will target two groups: children aged zero to six with a disability, their families and carers, and young people aged 25 to 35 years with an acquired physical disability. The pilot will provide for two non-government organisations each to employ a support worker to support around 40 families, with an approximate funding level of \$4,000 per family or young person per year.

Our program to assist younger people with a disability moving out of aged care and into more appropriate accommodation is also a focus of this budget and a personal key priority of mine. It delivers our key election commitment to provide \$3 million over three years to support the new Youngcare complex to be built on the Gold Coast. My parliamentary secretary, the member for Mount Ommaney, and I had the opportunity to see the Youngcare complex at Sinnamon Park and talk to the residents about how their quality of life has improved. Similarly, at Gordonvale, with the member for Mulgrave, I met a resident of the new accommodation run by St John's Community whose life has improved immeasurably since moving there 12 months ago. This budget will also provide support for those young people who, by choice, remain in residential aged care by giving them access to services and supporting a better quality of life.

The budget contains \$446.8 million for the Home and Community Care program—a 16 per cent boost on last year. With this funding services such as the ever-popular Meals on Wheels volunteers will continue to deliver more than two million meals annually to Queenslanders across the state.

In relation to non-clinical mental health services, this budget provides an extra \$26 million for non-clinical mental health services to help support people transitioning from health facilities to the community. Another example is our commitment to early intervention and prevention. An amount of \$2.2 million is allocated this year, increasing to \$6.5 million over three years, to pilot two residential options to assist young people aged 15 to 25 years showing early signs of mental health illness. We are very fortunate to have both a Premier and Treasurer who understand the value and importance of early intervention. We know that the more support people have in these crucial early stages of mental illness the better their chance of making a full recovery and leading rewarding and meaningful lives.

The Treasurer stated the following in his budget speech—

Not all will get the results we might hope. But through these pilots and these trials we seek not only to avoid the human costs of violence, neglect and lack of support but to avoid the inevitable cost to the public of dealing with the consequences.

The Bligh government is equally committed to supporting Queensland's multicultural communities. Around \$6 million has been provided over three years to strengthen multiculturalism in Queensland in partnership with local councils and community groups. I acknowledge the support of the member for Hinchinbrook for these programs. At least there is something positive over there. As well, the budget has committed \$700,000 to continue the Multicultural Assistance Program.

I now would like to turn to my electorate of Inala. The Bligh government is committed to building Queensland's future today. This coming term I look forward to the progress of some major infrastructure projects in my electorate. The Darra to Springfield railway line will provide significant benefits not only to the constituents of my electorate but also the entire south-west corridor. The heart of this project is the brand-new \$40 million Richlands Railway Station. I had the pleasure of unveiling the cutting-edge plans for this station with the Richlands ward councillor, Milton Dick. We are investing more than \$1 billion to provide the vital infrastructure that is needed for the growing population of the area.

In education, as part of the State Schools of Tomorrow program, the government is injecting \$70 million to build better schools to provide quality education in my electorate. Under this initiative, work is well underway on the modernisation and renewal of six Inala cluster schools. The 2009-10 budget provides \$11 million for Durack State School, \$12.91 million for Glenala State High School, \$10.17 million for Inala State School, \$10.17 million for Richlands East State School, \$8.94 million for Serviceton South State School and \$3.43 million for the Western Suburbs Special School.

I remember when the now opposition leader was protesting on Poinsettia Street at Inala, surrounded by placards, condemning the government for our State Schools of Tomorrow initiative. In fact, the Leader of the Opposition as education spokesman said—

Under LNP policy, the State Schools of Tomorrow program will end.

I think it is a disgrace that the Leader of the Opposition wanted to rip nearly \$70 million out of the schools in the Inala electorate and almost \$1 million in total out of the Queensland education system.

A government member: It is a disgrace.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is a disgrace. The LNP stands for one thing and one thing only: cuts, whether that be job cuts, like the 12,000 public sector jobs that would have been slashed by those opposite or cutting nearly \$1 billion out of the state schools budget. On the other hand, we are committed to investing in education as this is integral to the future of Queensland. This is about equality of opportunity, this is about giving students at Inala State School the same educational facilities and opportunities as students who live in Clayfield. The State Schools of Tomorrow program is about creating jobs and building better schools. It is about a Labor government committed to education and delivering for all, not just the few.

The budget recognises the need to continue providing resources to grassroots community projects because we recognise the important work they do. In my electorate, Inala Community Health has been allocated over \$1 million—

Mr Nicholls interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: If the member for Clayfield has something positive to say, that would be great and I invite him to please stand up and say something in his speech.

In conclusion, the budget outlined by the Treasurer earlier this week is about building Queensland's future. It is about investing in our schools, hospitals, roads, rail, housing and, most importantly, it is about jobs. In this budget we chose not to cut the essential services that Queenslanders rely on, nor did we decide to stop our \$18.2 billion building program.

This is a budget where we have had to make some tough decisions but at least we make decisions. The Leader of the Opposition has provided us with no plan, no policies, no initiatives and absolutely no response to the global financial crisis that this state has had to face. As the Treasurer said, 'This budget lays the foundation stones for the path that lies ahead.' We are determined to see our state through the current economic situation and this budget is the first step towards that goal. I congratulate the Treasurer and I commend the bill to the House.