




Speech by

Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk

MEMBER FOR INALA

Hansard Friday, 17 June 2011

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL;
COMMUNITY AMBULANCE COVER LEVY REPEAL AND REVENUE
AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. A PALASZCZUK** (Inala—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Multicultural Affairs) (3.27 pm): I rise to speak to the appropriation bills. This budget is a win for transport in Queensland. The state government will invest a massive \$1.8 billion in transport infrastructure to deliver better public transport for our future. This budget will support the planning, delivery and management of the state's transport system by focusing on connecting communities, providing access to services that support commerce and industry.

We are supporting a number of key projects: the Gold Coast Rapid Transit system, the Moreton Bay rail link, a number of busway projects and improvements to the cycle network. In the budget for 2011-12 we will invest \$175.3 million for the Gold Coast Rapid Transit system to progress the light rail transport option from Southport to Broadbeach. This project will deliver a world-standard light rail system to the Gold Coast and bring the latest in light rail technology to Australia. Construction of the light rail corridor will start this financial year, and the project alone will transform the Gold Coast region into a truly international city. But it does not end there.

The Moreton Bay rail link is quickly becoming a reality. The Bligh government has moved forward funding of \$12 million as part of a joint commitment of \$47 million between the Australian government, the Moreton Bay Regional Council and the state. We already have geotechnical work happening out there. Moreton Bay is one of the fastest growing regions in the country. The current population of around 375,000 people is expected to increase to more than 500,000 people by 2031. The rail line is expected to be operational in 2016.

We are contributing \$93.7 million to complete the construction of the Northern Busway between Enoggera Creek and Kedron. Next year, this will extend the existing busway from the Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital to Kedron. This investment will be supported with a \$28.5 million injection of funding from this year's budget to plan the next stage of the Northern Busway between Kedron and Bracken Ridge.

We will continue to improve the busway network to the east with \$66.3 million to complete stage 2 of the Eastern Busway between the South East Busway and Main Avenue, Coorparoo. Our busways are world class. People from all over the world come to Queensland to see our state-of-the-art busways. Instead of the shadow minister criticising our public transport network, he should get out and start using some of it.

I already commented in the House this week about meeting our election commitment of delivering 1,300 park and rides. Not only will we meet that; we will almost double it. A hallmark of this government has been that we have delivered more frequent and reliable public transport services. This year, TransLink will receive a record \$48.2 million for improving public transport infrastructure. This means 125 new and replacement buses for Brisbane and a commitment for more train carriages on the Citytrain network.

These new 125 buses are funded 100 per cent by this Bligh government. TransLink's budget has increased by more than nine per cent on the previous financial year, with an extra \$134 million allocated for public transport services. This additional funding will help pay for more public transport services, new and improved stations and more park and rides.

In 2010-11 the Bligh government delivered an extra 305,000 weekly seats across the TransLink network and we will continue to deliver more this year. I can say that 200,000 of those seats were on buses and trains as part of the largest rail timetable overhaul in 15 years that commenced earlier this month on 6 June. This was particularly for the train line that incorporates Rosewood and Ipswich through to Caboolture and the Sunshine Coast. The timetable changes have been well received. I understand that there are some issues currently around the 5.22 pm service from Central to the Sunshine Coast, and Queensland Rail and TransLink will continue to monitor this service. In fact we had people out there last week and they will continue to be there this week. We are paying very close attention to this issue. I will be meeting with the CEOs of both Queensland Rail and TransLink at the end of the month to see whether we can make any improvements around that particular service. I am sure that members will be pleased that we are keeping an eye on that issue.

Once again, all we see is the opposition criticising these timetable changes, criticising Queensland Rail, criticising TransLink. But not all of the members opposite have criticised this change. The member for Gympie stated on 6 June in a tweet, 'Just back from welcoming the new midday train to Gympie. Passengers are really happy with the new service, better than the old 15 hour round trip.' It is good to hear some support right across-the-board.

We are focused on improving public transport services, public transport infrastructure and customer service. I was very pleased to hold the first meeting of our Public Transport Advisory Group a couple of weeks ago. We now have community champions right across South-East Queensland. One of our first priorities, as I have said in this House, is to look at how we can bring about some go card enhancements. That is something I am committed to and everybody on that committee shared those views.

The Bligh government has a plan for the future. That is why Queensland Rail will be spending \$1.157 billion for infrastructure investment on improving the state's rail network through major projects, including the Darra to Springfield Transport Corridor project. This project is vital to the south-west corridor and we are catering for the growth in this region. The Darra to Richlands part is now complete, and we are currently commencing geotechnical works from Richlands out to Springfield. This is a fantastic project.

The Richlands Train Station is in my own electorate and I can report that I had a call to my electorate office from a constituent this week. He called to say that there was excellent service by staff at the Richlands station, that he was a first time user and that he could not have been happier with his experience. So we are not only expanding our services; we are also getting new people onto our public transport network. We will spend \$118.3 million on this project to complete construction of new dual track from Richlands to Springfield and new stations at Springfield Lakes and Springfield. There is also \$27.3 million for new stabling facilities for rolling stock.

It is worth mentioning at this point the outstanding efforts of Queensland Rail to reopen rail lines following our summer of disaster. Approximately 3,800 kilometres of track was closed due to the effects of flooding and cyclone activity. I acknowledge the tremendous recovery efforts made by Queensland Rail to re-establish these vital links and get Queensland moving again. I want to place on record my thanks to the staff who helped get our state moving again—the hundreds of workers dedicated to getting our passenger and freight lines up and running.

I have spoken in this House about our efforts in relation to cycling. We are doubling our effort here, from \$20.2 million in 2010-11 to \$48.3 million this year. Once again, this shows our commitment to providing alternative means of transport, and this is critical.

We are also continuing our \$2.9 million investment in our Regional Airports Development Scheme. I know that members in the Cairns region are happy with the \$12 million to work on City Place Bus Station. The member for Keppel is very happy with the \$1.1 million for the Yeppoon Rail Trail, a cycling and walking track. This is something that he has been speaking to me and the Treasurer about. He has been very passionate about it and this is very well received in his local community. We will also connect regional and rural Queenslanders through improvements to rail freight lines, such as the \$1.5 million upgrades and priority works on the Mount Isa line.

In relation to multicultural affairs, we will continue to contribute to our multicultural communities through this year's budget. The 2011-12 multicultural services budget is \$8.032 million. Yesterday, the member for Indooroopilly stood in here and mislead the House in relation to funding for multicultural affairs by stating that there have been significant cuts in funding from the previous year. In fact, when looking at the hard figures alone, you can see that in 2010-11, we actually funded 29 more events and projects than we did in the previous year. That is an increase in funding of 29.6 per cent. I would personally like to again acknowledge the outstanding fundraising efforts of multicultural groups to the Premier's flood relief appeal. There have been outstanding contributions from our communities.

I want to mention some specifics in my own local electorate. The budget has been very well received. I have spoken about transport and how vital that is. Education is also very important. Over the last couple of years, we have seen \$70 million injected into basically renewing our schools under the State Schools of Tomorrow fund. The Minister for Education recently came out to the opening of the new Richlands East State School. It looked brand-new. We are seeing a huge transformation in these children. Their behaviour is fantastic, they are committed to learning, they have got smart boards in the classroom. This is the Bligh government investing in education. This budget also includes a new kindergarten for Durack and new air conditioning at Darra State School.

In conclusion, I want to mention that \$54.9 million is funded to continue developing the Queensland Police Academy at Wacol. All of these good things are happening out at Inala. There is a brand-new police academy. Progress is going well. We had the opening of the driver training centre recently and we also have some work to upgrade Progress Road.

Housing always continues to be a major issue in my area. It is good to see that we have partnered with the Australian government's National Rental Affordability Scheme to offer financial incentives to private investors to build more homes to be rented at 20 per cent below the market price. I welcome this substantial development for housing in Inala.

The choices made in this year's budget will hold us in good stead for our future. I thank the Treasurer for his efforts in delivering a fantastic budget which is going to have a huge impact on our communities. I commend the bill to the House.