




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee, Report

 **Mrs LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (4.13 pm): I rise to speak in support of the report that has been tabled on the estimates hearing of the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee. As a new member of parliament and participating in my first estimates hearing, like the member for Gladstone, I was frustrated at the number of irrelevant questions asked by the opposition of both the Deputy Premier and minister. Here is a perfect opportunity to examine the budget, the Deputy Premier and minister and their respective portfolios. However, their time was wasted asking questions with no relevance whatsoever. There is no doubt that the persistence of members of the opposition to ask questions with no relevance tested the chair of the proceedings, the member for Mirani, but I congratulate the chair for his measured approach, as per usual.

Both the Deputy Premier and the minister's portfolios involve a lot of the heavy lifting when it comes to economic growth and creating jobs. They have had a big job to fix the economic hurt caused by the previous government. We know that when the Labor government came to office it had some pretty challenging economic issues—debt was up, unemployment was up, confidence was down and also household consumption had fallen through the floor. I am confident that both the Deputy Premier and Minister Lynham have been working incredibly hard towards growing our economy and creating jobs, whilst balancing growth and ecological sustainability, and the budget does just that.

We know that with good planning comes good development and that means jobs. The planning reform process is an important part of the plan for Queensland. Planning reform can improve the quality of places and spaces and deliver a stronger economy and jobs and make housing more affordable. As a qualified town-planner, I was so pleased to hear that the budget includes an allocation of \$59 million for planning reform and that the government is committed to planning reform that delivers a more efficient system that supports investment and jobs but not at the expense of community participation.

The \$59 million commitment for planning reform is in stark contrast to the zero dollars that were allocated by the previous government for the State Assessment and Referral Agency and the planning reform unit. The staff tasked with these responsibilities were set to have their contracts expire as at 30 June this year. I am extremely pleased that not only has the government made the commitment to make sure that we can get the planning reform process finalised and embedded and get councils working with government but also it will mean that Queenslanders get to keep their jobs.

Part of that planning reform process also includes a commitment to delivering a user-friendly electronic DA system. In my previous role as a planning consultant, I was often tearing my hair out over the flaws in the MyDAS electronic DA system. Poor scoping at the start of the MyDAS project by the previous government, along with bug fixes and other variations, resulted in incredible cost blowouts to

the MyDAS system. I was concerned to learn that the original contract supplier, APN, was contracted at \$491,000. However, the contract was varied some 14 times and it has now blown out to \$5.8 million. The system was so bad that, rather than invest in correcting and enhancing the MyDAS system, the decision was taken to redevelop the entire platform.

I was also particularly impressed with the Deputy Premier's commitment to Trade and Investment Queensland—in particular, the international education and training sector. This sector contributes \$2.5 billion annually to the economy. It is a growing industry which has doubled in the last 10 years and is Queensland's fourth largest export sector and second largest service export. This industry is estimated to create 20,000 jobs. However, Queensland is losing its market share to New South Wales and Victoria. We are losing market share because the former government did not prioritise export education in Queensland.

This budget allocates \$7.7 million over four years to stimulate export education. The Palaszczuk government will promote and elevate export education as a key sector within our trade agenda for Queensland. This is in stark contrast to the previous government where this was not even one of their four pillars and there was no continued funding in the export education part of Trade and Investment Queensland. That alone says a lot in terms of the future focus of the former government.

As a regional member of this House, I am also so pleased that \$200 million will be pumped into regional Queensland through the Building our Regions program, supporting around 600 jobs across the state and funding critical economic and community infrastructure.

I commend the Deputy Premier, Minister Lynham, all of their ministerial staff and all of the staff from the departments. I thank them for their tireless work and for being prepared for the scrutiny that we applied through the estimates hearing. I wish to thank the chair of the committee, other committee members and our secretariat staff. The Deputy Premier and Minister Lynham have demonstrated that Labor is committed to growing Queensland's economy.

(Time expired)