




Speech By
Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 16 July 2015

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (3.29 pm): I rise today to speak about how the Palaszczuk government's budget, which was handed down on Tuesday, supports jobs and invests in front-line services in my electorate of Gladstone. Not only this, but it also gives improvements and funding to critical parts of my electorate including health, education, police and roads. This government has a plan to work together and work smarter to build Queensland's economy now and into the future. Gladstone is a region which includes a \$62 million investment to upgrade the RG Tanna Coal Terminal at the Port of Gladstone.

Not only did this government stop this profitable government owned asset from being sold; we are now investing in infrastructure and upgrades which will generate jobs and prosperity in our region and our state now and into the future. This budget will deliver a new road, health and education infrastructure as well as social services and grants. This government is investing in initiatives across the breadth and depth of Central Queensland's economy to support this growth.

The Palaszczuk government is committed to restoring front-line services and investing in the future of our great state. I am excited to see the government's commitment of \$212 million to boosting overall nurse numbers in Queensland and the commitment to nurse-to-patient ratios. I am sure that the many nurses who work at the Gladstone Hospital will be guaranteed extra resources to help them continue the great work they do in our wonderful electorate of Gladstone. This will see a legislated minimum of four patients per nurse during the day shift and seven patients per nurse during the night shift at Gladstone Hospital, keeping the patients in my electorate safer than ever before.

As part of the new Enhancing Regional Hospitals program, the people of my electorate are set to have a second-to-none emergency department following upgrades to the aged and run-down facility at the Gladstone Hospital. The Gladstone Hospital was a core concern for many of my constituents during the recent election. The issue with our hospital is not the staff who work there or the tireless efforts they put in to keep the people of Gladstone healthy and safe but the facilities they have to actually work in. This is a big win for the Gladstone community, who have been crying out for an investment in health for way too long. I was pleased to have the Minister for Health visit Gladstone recently and listen to my request for a much needed upgrade to this facility. This upgrade will allow us to be confident in the care of those who are in need of emergency care. I must say on the record that I will continue in my quest, along with many in my community, to advocate for a new hospital for Gladstone.

I am glad to call my home an industrial city, one which can develop our youth into tomorrow's tradespeople and trained employees. By working together with industry and TAFE, we can connect skills to jobs. It is a smarter way to help reduce unemployment. In my electorate, \$3.1 million is being invested in a trade skills centre at Gladstone State High School—a wonderful investment in this school. This centre will increase the skills of our high school leavers and provide pathways to successful futures for these children.

The Palaszczuk government's commitment to our kids continues in Gladstone, with approximately \$1.96 million invested in additional classrooms for Calliope State School. This school has seen a rapid rise in student numbers, and this investment will help cater for this community's needs. With ever-increasing numbers in our senior high schools in Gladstone, there is an increasing need to invest more money into another high school in Gladstone and in Calliope. It is my intention to continue to work to ensure our students get vital infrastructure for the future of my area.

I am also pleased that there has been a funding announcement of \$250,000 for classroom renewal and refurbishment at Rosella Park School. This school does so much in my community to assist those students with special needs, so extra classroom and facility upgrades will be very well received by that school.

I was also pleased to hear that flashing lights will be installed at one of the busiest schools in Gladstone, Kin Kora State School, to remind motorists to slow down and watch for kids at pick-up and drop-off times. This is critical for the safety of our students and their parents.

This budget focuses on working smarter with what we have and sees an ongoing commitment of \$434,000 to the Gladstone Women's Health Centre. This centre provides vital support and counselling services to the women of Gladstone. To ensure continuity of service relationships and to build on what we already have and what is already working, the Palaszczuk government has committed this funding for the next three years. I know that Tash from the Gladstone Women's Health Centre will be ecstatic with the amount of funding continuing on for a guaranteed three years.

This budget at its heart is about jobs—jobs now and jobs for the future. This government has committed \$780,000 to upgrade the Gladstone watch house closed-circuit camera system. I know that this is a very important piece of equipment that needs upgrading because my twin brother is a policeman in Gladstone and he tells me that the need for this service is critical to ensure the safety of police. This upgrade focuses not only on increasing the safety of our police while they carry out their important public service but also on generating jobs in my electorate.

The Palaszczuk government has allocated \$785 million to infrastructure spending in Fitzroy which will support an estimated 2½ thousand jobs in my region. This includes the completion of the Kin Kora roundabout, which I must admit is an ongoing project in my electorate, and upgrades to the Bruce Highway at Gladstone-Mount Larcom Road. The Palaszczuk government is committed to working together with industry and local communities to build a stronger, smarter Queensland. This budget is a testament to that vision.

I congratulate the Treasurer and the Premier on a responsible budget for Queensland. I thank all of the government ministers for listening to me and to the voice of my electorate and starting to deliver for Gladstone after many years in the budget wilderness. My electorate is a fantastic, diverse community, and this budget is finally delivering for what is needed now and into the future. I support the bills.