




Speech By
Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (4.55 pm): I rise to support the budget bill before the House and congratulate the Treasurer and his staff on delivering a budget that not only meets Labor's commitments during the recent election but also demonstrates that there is a better way of managing Queensland's finances—a better way for jobs now and in the future, a better way for an economic and debt reduction plan that does not include the sale of our income-producing assets and a better way to deliver a \$1.2 billion surplus for 2015-16, a forecast surplus that Queensland has not achieved in nearly a decade, with combined surpluses over the next four years of nearly \$7 billion. As Paul Keating would say, it is a nice set of numbers.

This budget outlines a plan for jobs, jobs, jobs in difficult times, with a key element being the \$1.6 billion jobs plan, Skilling Queenslanders for Work, which aims to support 32,000 Queenslanders back into work. We know that training is a key driver in workers obtaining jobs, and I welcome the additional \$34.5 million funding to rescue TAFE to deliver more courses, more qualifications through schools and more TAFE teachers. But innovation and developing the jobs now and into the future does not just happen. I recently toured the Brisbane Airport to view the early stages of the second runway and other Brisbane Airport Corporation initiatives at the site, and I saw firsthand the smart jobs created by Beattie's Smart State plan. Those jobs in aviation, technology and science that were once a pipedream are now a reality.

Advance Queensland is the next important step in the jobs of tomorrow. This is an even smarter strategy and one of the centrepieces of this budget, with what was a \$50 million commitment growing to a \$180 million investment in innovation, skills, education, business development and a start-up program to achieve similar outcomes to what I recently witnessed at the Brisbane Airport Corporation. I know the constituents of Brisbane Central will welcome funds to ensure that our young people have the skills of tomorrow in science, technology, engineering and maths, including computer coding abilities, which will be advanced via a \$50 million Best and Brightest Fund. Some \$46 million will be advanced for a Future Jobs Strategy that will open the doors to global industries to tackle innovation and research collaborations. Finally, there is a \$76 million advancement in a Business Investment Attraction package to encourage the business and industry ideas of the future.

Creating local jobs is what drives the Palaszczuk government, and it is also what drives me every day. During the campaign, so many of my constituents talked about the difficulty of obtaining not only jobs but the training to get those jobs and also, unfortunately, the job cuts they endured under the previous LNP government. As we all know in life, it is not just about jobs. Health, education, the communities we live in and the social fabric of our societies are just as important. This is why I welcome a record health budget of \$14.2 million this year. This is the largest on record to meet the growing demands of our health system. I am particularly delighted that we are addressing our commitment to employ up to 4,000 new graduate nurses as well as employ 400 nurse navigators across our health

system to work with patients. Labor will deliver over \$212 million to employ more nurses for the delivery of safe patient care and for the first time to legislate ratios to ensure the best patient care and safety is delivered by our hardworking nurses and midwives.

I welcome the \$361 million over four years to reduce the numbers on the waiting list for the waiting list and I look forward to seeing these funds and additional nurses at the RBWH, Queensland's premier tertiary hospital. This budget also delivers a record spend in Education, with \$12.4 billion allocated to delivering the best schools in Australia. We will reduce class sizes, employ 875 extra teachers, including 275 specialist teachers for high schools, and an extra 45 guidance officers in our secondary schools. I welcome the increase of \$300 million in the state's school maintenance budget and I can assure the minister that I will be doing all I can to ensure Brisbane Central gets its fair share for the schools in my electorate.

I welcome the boost to ambulance services for Queensland and look forward to the upgrade of the fire and rescue station at Kemp Place in Brisbane Central, which will benefit from a \$1.35 million investment facelift. It is also great to see the employment of an additional 75 paramedics throughout the state being included in this budget. My niece Ellie Grace is currently completing a paramedic degree, and I am sure she will be very happy to hear that we are going to be employing more paramedics.

We will continue our commitment to save the Barrier Reef with an additional \$100 million over five years to improve water quality and additional funds for other initiatives which will ensure that our best tourism attraction is saved for generations to come. Labor also has a community rebuilding plan which was decimated by the previous government. I look forward to restoring the TAS services and other community services such as \$13.3 million over four years to re-establish the Biala Sexual Health Clinic in Roma Street, which was closed by the LNP government. I believe that one of the significant initiatives in this budget is the allocation of over \$31 million over four years to address domestic violence and I welcome an allocation of around \$3.78 million for the delivery of support services and construction of a crisis shelter within Brisbane for women and children suffering violence in the Brisbane Central electorate.

At a local level, I welcome the \$2.9 million for the continuation of the northern bikeway, \$639,000 for the refurbishment of early childhood centres in Windsor, Wilston and Spring Hill and additional funds for school classroom accommodation. Law and order also gets a boost and I am pleased that the budget provides for additional police and essential safety equipment such as body-worn cameras and vehicles to support our hardworking police officers. I am pleased that \$233 million over four years has been allocated to pensioners and seniors via concessions for energy, water, rates and transport, which will now be retained following Commonwealth cuts last year.

I also welcome funds of \$173 million for the arts. We will work to restore arts funding, invest in our wonderful arts sector and protect the heritage value of our cultural institutions. I am pleased that \$11.2 million over four years is available to safeguard programs slated to end in 2014-15. What is life without a vibrant arts sector?

This budget is a budget about people, about jobs, about health and education, and about rebuilding our communities. It restores funds for training, the vulnerable and safe patient care in our hospitals. It delivers a debt action plan, delivers all the election commitments made during the last state election campaign and, more importantly, saves our assets. We said there was a better way and this budget delivers a better budget than those opposite are capable of delivering. I commend the budget to the House.