




Speech By  
**Leanne Linard**

**MEMBER FOR NUDGEES**

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL**

 **Ms LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (6.19 pm): It is a pleasure to rise and speak to the Appropriation Bill before the House. I would like to congratulate the Treasurer on this his first budget. It is a responsible and measured budget and one that remains true to the commitments we made to Queenslanders at the recent election. I would also like to acknowledge and thank his office and departmental staff who have worked tirelessly to pull together such an important suite of budget measures.

One of the reasons I joined the Labor Party was that we believe deeply in the value and dignity of work—in the opportunity it provides. There is little that is more important than having the opportunity to gain work and the independence and ability to support your family that it provides. When we went to the election, we did so in an environment of significant anxiety in the community following the far-reaching Public Service cuts undertaken by the previous government. We made a commitment to Queenslanders that we would create jobs now and jobs for the future. It is our No. 1 priority.

The \$1.6 billion Working Queensland package is about stimulating job creation, increasing the productivity of our labour force and fostering emerging and innovative industries—jobs now and jobs for the future. It is about creating the broader economic environment necessary for business confidence and economic growth, as well as having targeted programs to reduce the barriers to labour market participation experienced by some groups within the labour market.

The \$60 million this financial year for Skilling Queenslanders for Work and the \$34.5 million investment over three years to rebuild TAFE after the former government's undermining of the sector is an investment in improving the skills and training necessary to support up to 32,000 Queenslanders into work. I am also particularly excited by the investment contained in this budget in science and innovation and in the cultivation of emerging industries like biotechnology under the Advance Queensland package. As a government, we must of course govern for the welfare and good government of Queensland today, but we should also have a vision for where Queensland is going tomorrow, something that we can aspire to, and this package builds on and advances many forward-thinking initiatives and policies of successive Labor governments.

The budget will restore front-line services, with a record investment of \$14.2 billion in health and \$12.4 billion in education. Additional funding contained in the budget to lower class sizes and provide extra teachers and guidance officers is an investment in our children and our future. Funding for 4,000 new graduate nursing places, 400 nurse navigators, investment in preventative health and measures to reduce the 'waiting list for the waiting list' ignored by the former government is a focus on the needs of patients across the entire health and patient journey.

Measures contained in the budget as part of the government's response to the *Not now, not ever* report—some \$31 million over four years—are vital to continue the fight against domestic violence in Queensland. Domestic violence is insidious, it is contemptible and it is taking the lives of women in our

community. I applaud the \$347 million commitment in this budget to pensioners and Seniors Card holders who will continue to receive one or more of the core energy, water and transport concessions. While the federal government, Tony Abbott and Joe Hockey are cutting \$52 million this year alone from the pensioners scheme, this government is determined to maintain concessions for Queensland pensioners.

I am so pleased to see that Queensland mums and dads will receive new support under this budget with \$6.6 million for the Triple P—Positive Parenting Program. This program is about giving parents a helping hand and access to strategies to build the skills and confidence they need to give their child the best start in life. The two-year trial will give families free and voluntary access to a range of programs, including an online program, topic specific seminars, parent discussion groups, one-on-one consultations as well as more intensive, small group based and individual programs. The necessity and benefit of these programs cannot be underestimated. When pregnant with my first child, my obstetrician spoke highly of this program and the support it provides to first-time mothers. My two young boys, aged 21 months and four years, are without doubt the light of my life but all parents know how challenging parenting can be. Children have the best start to life when parents have the support they need, and I commend the Treasurer and Minister for Communities for investing in families in my electorate and across Queensland.

Locally, I am delighted to see \$232.4 million allocated to progress widening of the Gateway Motorway upgrade between Nudgee and Bracken Ridge. When complete, this joint \$1.1 billion Commonwealth-state project will make an appreciable difference to the journey time of local residents of the electorates of Nudgee and Sandgate, held by my colleague, as well as the 80,000 motorists who use this stretch of road daily.

Two local train stations will receive upgrades, with \$13 million allocated to commence detailed design for upgrades at Boondall train station to improve accessibility and \$888,000 to be spent on a new pedestrian footbridge at Banyo train station. The upgrade at Boondall train station will significantly improve station facilities and accessibility for Boondall passengers. Boondall station sees approximately 6,400 passenger movements each week and is a key destination station on the Shorncliffe line owing to its proximity to the Boondall Entertainment Centre. When an event is on at the centre, the station can experience up to 1,800 passenger movements in one night. This investment will significantly improve access to the station for all customers, including those with disabilities, the elderly, parents with prams, people with injuries or just those carrying luggage.

In addition to upgrades at Boondall train station, I am very excited to see the commitment by Queensland Rail under the Deputy Premier's portfolio to build a new pedestrian footbridge at Banyo. My community has been calling out for improved access between the station's two platforms for some time, after an ageing timber footbridge was removed in 2006 at the northern end of the station due to it having reached its useful lifespan and having become structurally unsafe. Since then, access between the station's inbound and outbound platforms has been approximately 170 metres away via the St Vincents Road level crossing at the southern end of the station. Of concern, over 500 people have risked their lives to cross the tracks irresponsibly over the past three years, making it only a matter of time before someone was injured or killed. These near misses, along with concerns raised by my community, prompted me to raise this issue with the department and I am delighted to see this safety improvement delivered for my community. Construction on the new footbridge is expected to start in November and will be completed by March 2016. The project will also include new lighting, CCTV and signage for the new footbridge.

The budget also contains welcome improvements for my local schools. The first issue raised with me by the Zillmere State School P&C on being elected was the state of their playground. This budget contains \$58,778 for replacement of this playground equipment which will make a tremendous difference to children at the school. I look forward to continuing to work with the school community and the education minister's office on the tennis courts next. In addition, both Geebung State School and Geebung Special School have received \$650,000 and \$35,000 respectively to complete the refurbishment of amenities commenced in the previous financial year.

I made a promise during the election to Earnshaw State College, my former high school, that they would receive funding to upgrade their current part-time guidance officer to a full-time-equivalent position, and this budget delivers on that commitment. I thank the Minister for Education for this investment in providing the very best support possible for these students.

The 2015-16 state budget will lead Queensland to financial sustainability while keeping our income-generating assets in public hands. It is a budget that will grow our economy, generate jobs and restore front-line services. It is also the first budget in 16 years to forecast a reduction in debt across the forward estimates and I know Queenslanders will support the responsible and measured spending put forward by the Treasurer in this budget. I commend the bill to the House.