




Speech By
Peter Russo

MEMBER FOR SUNNYBANK

Record of Proceedings, 16 July 2015

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Mr RUSSO** (Sunnybank—ALP) (10.52 pm): I rise in this House to speak in support of the appropriation bills, the Queensland budget 2015-16. Before I proceed with my prepared speech, I will go off script—

An opposition member: Don't do that.

Mr RUSSO: I am going to, because it is important that you guys listen to this. This is a report card on our budget, which you guys have been criticising continually. Someone else, some independent person—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Sunnybank, you have the call, but your comments will be directed through the chair.

Mr RUSSO: PeakCare Queensland is a not-for-profit organisation with a membership base comprising non-government organisations involved in providing child protection, out-of-home care and related services. A network of supporters made up of individuals or other entities with an interest in child protection is part of PeakCare. I will relate what PeakCare had to say about youth mental health services. Today in this House we heard the Premier speak of the importance of the Barrett centre. PeakCare had this to say about our budget and restoring the Barrett centre—

PeakCare has held longstanding concerns about the lack of specialised youth mental health services in Queensland. Member agencies have similarly reported their concerns about assisting children and young people to access suitable services.

PeakCare is pleased therefore that the budget allocates an amount of \$11.8 million over four years to honour the Government's election promise to 'rebuild mental healthcare for young people'. The Government's budget papers state this will be expended on:

- additional day services and expanded youth residential mental health services in Townsville, and
- initiation of a Commission of Inquiry into the closure of the Barrett Adolescent Centre with the aim to restore and improve mental health services in the **south-east corner** of the State.

PeakCare welcomes the opportunity that a Commission of Inquiry will present in examining the best range of options for improving youth mental health service models and their delivery.

That is something positive about the budget that I thought honourable members opposite would be interested to hear. I would also like to outline some of the benefits that will flow to my electorate of Sunnybank.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! There is an awful lot of conversation on both sides in the House. If members feel the need to have a conversation, please leave the chamber.

Mr RUSSO: There are a number of great institutions in the Sunnybank electorate that will benefit from the Palaszczuk Labor government budget: the QEII Jubilee Hospital, the Acacia Ridge TAFE Queensland SkillsTech campus and great schools.

I have visited QEII hospital a number of times. I had a memorable visit with Minister Bailey, the member for Yeerongpilly, on 12 June. My second visit was with the Queensland Nurses' Union on 2 July. The patients and staff at the QEII Jubilee Hospital will benefit greatly from the record investment being made by the Palaszczuk government to restore and expand health services. The Palaszczuk government's first budget will restore balance to the health system, with significant investments in front-line services, patient safety and preventative health.

The budget will address real issues created by those opposite and will reverse cuts to front-line services. There will be \$110.7 million over four years, in addition to internal funding, to offer up to 4,000 additional places to new Queensland nurse and midwifery graduates and 16 new nurse educator positions in Queensland's hospital and health services.

I had the pleasure of being able to visit this great hospital and its hardworking, dedicated staff. It has become abundantly clear that the hardworking staff at this hospital are truly dedicated to patient care—

Ms Jones: They looked after my granddad when he was dying. They're brilliant.

Mr RUSSO: I take that interjection—and provide a great service to the people of the Sunnybank electorate. The hardworking staff at the QEII hospital have spoken of the difficulties caused by those sitting opposite with the severe and unnecessary cuts to staff at the QEII hospital and other hospitals in the south metropolitan area. By severely reducing staff, for reasons completely unknown, the previous government put patient safety at risk, in addition to placing stress on nurses, staff, patients and their families, who were greatly affected by those unnecessary, cruel cuts. The record investment to restore and expand health services will be greatly welcomed by the people in my electorate.

It is obvious that the nurses and staff perform an outstanding professional role and are genuinely compassionate and committed to the welfare of their patients. The Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to ensuring that this does not continue under its watch and is genuinely committed to restoring the nursing staff ratios in the Metro South region.

I now turn to the Acacia Ridge TAFE. This campus delivers over 120 pre-apprenticeships and post-trade programs to more than 22,000 students each year. The Acacia Ridge campus provides a safe, modern, world-class facility for its students. It boasts state-of-the-art facilities for engineering and automotive and has an automotive precinct and electrical training facility. The budget, as the Treasurer said in his first reading speech, is about creating jobs now and jobs for the future. The budget has five key priorities: skills and training, enhancing business productivity, boosting government services, fostering emerging and innovative industries, and growing our regions. The budget also delivers an additional \$34.5 million in funding to restore TAFE over the next four years to ensure more Queenslanders are job ready. This injection of funds will greatly enhance the ability of the Acacia Ridge TAFE campus to prepare students for skills that will be matched to jobs—jobs of the future.

The last highlight that I want to address about the budget in support of the Appropriation Bill is the increase in funding for our schools in this state. As a result of Labor's election promise to commit an additional 875 teachers as part of 2,500 total new teachers in this term of government, the Sunnybank electorate is expected to receive up to 10 new full-time-equivalent teacher resources over the next three years across state, state high schools and special schools as part of this initiative, which may include letting teachers teach, providing more curriculum coordination time, more teacher release time, more specialist teachers in high schools, more deputy principals and more support for principals and teaching principals. I commend the Appropriation Bill to the House.