




Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman

MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 17 July 2015

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for Communities, Women and Youth, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (3.57 pm): The Palaszczuk government has a clear and unwavering focus on jobs. Many of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in this state will benefit from enhanced employment opportunities that our government is providing through the 2015-16 budget. This year, the expenditure of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services grows by 6.5 per cent to \$2.7 billion. We are rebuilding the community sector and returning its focus towards the families we support.

As many members of this House know, combating the terrible scourge of domestic and family violence is a priority for me and for the Palaszczuk government. In addition to the terrible human cost, domestic and family violence is estimated to cost the Queensland economy up to \$3.2 billion every year. Through my community involvement I have seen firsthand the pervasive effects that domestic and family violence has across a community. Since becoming Minister for Communities and Minister for Women, I have met many incredible people working in the field of violence prevention—women such as Amy Compton-Keen, who is the director of the Domestic Violence Prevention Centre Gold Coast and who has spent decades working in this area and coordinates what is referred to across the country as one of the best models for an integrated approach to domestic and family violence. Under this model, every agency that impacts on domestic violence prevention and support—from police and corrective services to education and counselling—works together to support the victim and hold the perpetrator to account.

I have also met many brave victims, including a woman anonymously awarded the Heroic Woman of the Year Award at the Gladstone Women's Health Centre Inspiring Women's Award breakfast. This woman literally crawled out of her last beating with just the clothes on her back and she was supported to create a new life. She is now giving back and helping to support others like her in her local Gladstone community. I want to ensure that at the end of my term we have far fewer women and children living in fear and we have more places for them to go when they need help. That is why I am so pleased the Palaszczuk government will invest more than \$65 million to reduce domestic and family violence in Queensland. My local electorate of Waterford will also be receiving close to \$1 million to respond to domestic and family violence, including court based services provided by Centacare at Beenleigh and perpetrator intervention services provided by YFS at Slacks Creek.

Our community groups and services are the backbone of the support we provide for our state's most vulnerable. The 2015-16 budget provides funding for 341 community organisations. This includes \$20.1 million for support services to assist young people to connect with positive family support, stable housing, jobs, education or training and to live a safe, healthy life as well as funding for a financial resilience program to help Queenslanders deal with cost of living and the expansion of the number of rest and recovery services in drink-safe precincts to reduce alcohol related violence.

We will also support Queensland women to achieve their best through funding the Office for Women to support a range of leadership initiatives as well as better engagement with women and women's networks across the state to address gender inequality and the development of a Queensland Women's Strategy to be released during Queensland's first Women's Week in March 2016.

A number of improvements have been made in recent times following through on the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry recommendations. But we all know more work needs to be done. The 2015-16 state budget continues the Palaszczuk government's commitment to place early intervention front and centre of its approach to helping Queensland families. We will provide more than \$930 million to support Queensland families and help protect vulnerable children. The safety of children must be paramount. Where they cannot remain in the home, we must provide a supportive and stable environment. Our foster and kinship carers play a crucial role in making sure these kids reach their full potential. I am pleased that our budget has support from key stakeholders. The CEO of Peakcare Queensland, Lindsay Wegener, says that in this budget there are—

... new initiatives that we think have great potential.

In particular, we're very happy about the increase in family support services being provided in different areas of the state.

The opposition questioned the government's commitment to family support services, but our commitment to child and family reforms is there in black and white in the budget papers: \$54.5 million in 2015-16, which includes funding for six new Family and Child Connect Services. We will take the best advice available and decide locations of these vital services in partnership with the sector.

I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Triple P Parenting

Mr Speaker, we know that every family has times where they need help. Where some simple strategies would reduce the stress in their home. That is why Queensland Mums and Dads will now have access to a state-wide free support to help their families thrive with the \$6.6 million innovative Triple P Parenting program. The two year trial will give Queensland families voluntary access to a range of programs including an online program, topic-specific seminars, parent discussion groups and one-on-one consultations, to more intensive, small group-based and individual programs. At the launch of this fantastic program, I met a mum constituent of Di Farmer whose son has special needs. She told me this sort of support is essential to her, and to many people she knows. Also, online parenting community the Parenthood endorsed the initiative, saying it will 'enable parents across the state to gain access to evidence-based parenting support.'

Neighbourhood centres

Mr Speaker, our Government believes in building leadership capacity and capability in our communities. This is why this year's budget includes additional investment for our much-needed and much-loved neighbourhood centres. Mr Speaker, I have visited many neighbourhood centres across Queensland and seen first-hand how they strengthen social cohesion and wellbeing in our communities. My visits to cyclone affected towns in Central Queensland very early on (in my role as Minister for Communities) cemented in my mind the importance of neighbourhood and community centres as a hub for the provision of support when disaster strikes. The same is certainly true of the Ravenshoe Community Centre recently. We have committed \$12.2 million over four years to fund a new capital upgrade and replacement program for these community hubs in our towns and suburbs. These centres have been neglected for too long and we will work together with them to invest this funding in the smartest way possible. This funding is in addition to \$14 million in support for 121 Neighbourhood Centres around the state, some of which have lost vital Federal funds.

Multicultural funding

Mr Speaker, over the past three years, Multicultural Affairs has not had the attention that it deserves. The Opposition has said it didn't understand what the budget meant for Multicultural Affairs. I'm happy to explain. The budget highlights the development of a Multicultural Recognition Bill and Multicultural Charter and appointment of an Advisory Council. All things called for by the sector and ALL OPPOSED BY THE LNP IN GOVERNMENT! And they accused US of being disrespectful to our Multicultural Communities! The Palaszczuk Government is committed to genuine consultation with Queensland's array of multicultural groups. In addition to legislation to enshrine their recognition, Queensland's multicultural community will, for the first time, have access to guaranteed \$1 million recurrent funding to stage events and projects that celebrate and promote cultural diversity. More than a million people are expected to participate in more than 100 funded events and projects across Queensland this year alone. And there is additional funding to support the introduction of a Multicultural Recognition Bill.

Local budget items

Turning now to my electorate of Waterford. We are a growing community and economy, but our expanding city needs jobs to prosper. I want to see a reduction in disadvantage, and I want our social services to be even more capable, sustainable and connected. And to provide rewarding jobs and careers. I am so pleased the Beenleigh Courthouse will get a \$1.4 million makeover courtesy of the 2015-16 State Budget. It's a partnership with Logan City Council to complement their multimillion dollar makeover of the Beenleigh Town Square. Mayor Pam Parker says they see these sorts of partnerships as being very important for the revitalisation of Beenleigh's CBD and I am pleased we can work together to deliver for the community.

Mr Speaker, I want Waterford's young people to be able to fulfil their dreams and aspirations. And this starts with better investment in our schools. I am very pleased that \$100,000 will be going to Waterford State School and Beenleigh Special School for classroom refurbishments and upgrades. Schools in Waterford are also set to welcome up to 10 additional teachers over the next

three years as part of the Government's election commitment to 875 additional teachers across the state; and, Loganlea State High School's much valued Guidance Officer will now be funded Full Time. And our Government will be investing \$11.4 million over four years to re-establish a primary school nurse service across the state, starting in Logan. When the Premier and I met with St Joseph's Tobruk Memorial School P&F, we heard first hand from the mums and dads how important the school nursing service was in detecting hearing and vision problems in young students. Angela Houghton, P&F President at St Joeys said: "It is something that the school system has really missed, especially here at St Joseph's. It opens doors for kids to be able to see nurses, who outside of school, might not be able to see nurses regularly. We can't wait for the school nurses to come back" pledge.

Mr Speaker, I am also happy to announce that we will be getting \$839,000 to enhance safety on local roads in Beenleigh including improvements to the intersection of Milne Street, Honeyman Street and Buna Street. As well as \$4.81 million in building works for the Logan Hospital Emergency Department; and continued access for Waterford's pensioners to concessions on energy, water and rates bills, which can deliver up to \$710 in savings annually for eligible pensioners.

Conclusion

Mr Speaker, the Palaszczuk Government cares about people. We know that creating jobs and investing in our community sector is the gateway to social and economic empowerment across our great state of Queensland. Mr Speaker, we have a plan and we are delivering on it.