




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 16 July 2015

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (5.42 pm): I am pleased to contribute to the debate and speak in support of the Appropriation Bill. I take this opportunity to address the House on the investment that this government is making to deliver better outcomes across both my portfolios.

This government is delivering for Queensland's justice system and is putting job creation and training front and centre. The reinstatement of the diversionary courts is a key point of difference between this government and the former LNP government in the administration of justice in this state. The Palaszczuk government has invested \$32.3 million over the next four years to get diversionary courts back up and running. I use the word 'investment' deliberately, because investing in early intervention courts and programs delivers better outcomes for taxpayers, for individuals and for community safety. This funding includes \$8.7 million to honour our election commitment to reinstate the Murri Court and the Special Circumstances Court Diversion Program.

The Murri Court was established in 2006 in response to the growing number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who were being incarcerated. It was yet another successful program that the previous government axed. In its absence, and despite the attitudes of the former government, the Indigenous Sentencing List evolved out of necessity and has played an important role in trying to bridge the gap that was left behind. I am committed to bringing the Murri Court back. I believe a community based approach can result in more positive outcomes for communities across Queensland. I can say that all of those in the legal profession, the community legal centres, the not-for-profit organisations with whom I have met with over the past five months and discussed our election commitments in bringing back these courts and these early intervention programs have welcomed them with open arms. They understood these programs. They had seen them at work. They knew the benefits of these programs and they are very eager to see them reintroduced.

Likewise, with the diversionary courts, the former attorney-general was even caught out under questioning in his first budget estimates hearing that he had axed this program without having any idea what it did or achieved. Reviving the diversionary courts goes hand in hand with our commitment to consulting across the legal sector and developing best practice in this space. Re-establishing these specialist courts will help to address the underlying causes of offending and divert offenders from prison by creating opportunities to address their behaviour. Success in the justice system is not about counting how many people are in our prisons; it is about reducing crime and doing our best to assist those to not reoffend and to transition them back into the community and to a better way of life. These courts help turn lives around and, in doing so, make safer communities across Queensland.

Another area where this government stands in stark contrast to its predecessor is youth justice. Unlike the previous administration, under the Palaszczuk government putting children in jail will be a last resort. Funding of \$23.6 million will bring back court based referrals to youth justice conferencing,

which was another positive program that the LNP cut. The conferencing process makes young people take responsibility for their actions and their effect on victims. Importantly, it gives victims the opportunity to be heard.

This government is committed to informing and educating the public about the role of the courts in society and the justice system. That is why it has allocated \$5.5 million over three years to bring back the Sentencing Advisory Council. That council will play an important role in explaining sentencing, collating statistical information and researching the effectiveness of sentencing practices in cutting down crime.

This government recognises the widespread harm that is caused by domestic and family violence to individuals, families and to the wider community. Much has been done to understand the underlying causes and the report of the Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence provided 240 recommendations based on extensive and wideranging research and consultation. This government has already started to take action to tackle domestic and family violence by allocating \$4 million as part of a total government package of \$31.3 million over four years as part of our initial response to tackle domestic and family violence. This funding includes a six-month trial of a Domestic and Family Violence Magistrates Court at Southport from September, including a dedicated magistrate. An amount of \$2.1 million will be allocated to establish an independent Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Board and expand the Domestic and Family Violence Review Unit.

A further \$1.1 million will be allocated to help to expand the Domestic Violence Duty Lawyer Service across the state through Legal Aid Queensland. I want to acknowledge those community legal centres and those not-for-profit organisations that have already been providing this important service in our courts. This is about helping expand those services across 14 sites in Queensland. This service will empower victims so that they can pursue matters in the justice system. It will smooth the way for victims in court and improve not only their safety but also offenders' compliance with court orders.

We know that we need to tackle alcohol fuelled violence in our communities. We are determined to protect Queenslanders from alcohol fuelled violence in and around licensed premises, particularly in our key entertainment precincts. That is why we have allocated \$9.6 million over three years for expanded compliance and enforcement. This will mean more inspections of licensed premises, particularly at peak trading times, and a boost in overt and covert enforcement capabilities.

This government will reduce alcohol fuelled violence by going straight to the core of the problem: trading hours. We will deliver on our pledge to introduce a 1 am lockout and cease the service of alcohol at 3 am. We will ban the sale of high alcohol content drinks after midnight and ban repeat offenders from entering licensed premises. Those opposite and others in the community would have us believe that this is actually going to have an impact on employment and service in those venues. However, the reality is that almost one in two people believe that it is unsafe to go out at night in their own towns and cities because of alcohol fuelled violence. If we can make our towns and cities safer, in fact more people will go out and patronise those venues, meaning more money will go into those venues in the evenings. As a government, we are willing to tackle the key issue based on expert evidence, that is, trading hours. The drink-safe precincts, first introduced as a trial by the Labor government in 2010, will continue in Fortitude Valley, Surfers Paradise and Townsville. We will keep building on our strong record to provide safe communities where Queenslanders can enjoy a night out without the fear of assault.

On the issue of organised crime, one of the key priorities for me as Attorney-General and for this government is our commitment to reviewing and addressing organised crime in Queensland. We have allocated \$6 million to conduct the commission of inquiry into organised crime in Queensland to give law enforcement a clear picture of the battle ahead and to make sure that our laws work to complement their efforts. Unlike the former government, I will ensure that there is proper consultation on our legislation and our approach to these issues, both through the commission of inquiry and through the task force into the VLAD legislation. We are committed to proper consultation, but we are also committed to looking at organised crime broadly across this state rather than narrowly thinking that the only organised crime is committed by outlaw motorcycle gangs.

In my portfolio of Training and Skills, we are creating jobs for Queenslanders now and well into the future. In our first term, this government's prime focus is jobs. I have heard a lot of complaints from the other side about how their communities are not getting enough and how they value community organisations, in which case it would be fair to say that every member opposite should get up and thank this government for bringing back programs such as Skilling Queenslanders for Work. They ripped funding from that program, which was an attack on every single one of our communities across this great state. If they want to talk about harm to communities, they should look at the funding that was ripped from that program. Most centres lost 50 to 75 per cent of their funding if they could keep their doors open and had to halve, if not more than halve, their staff numbers. That contributed to the

unemployment figures we now see in the state. I am delighted that \$1.08 billion will boost the training and skills component of the budget of the Department of Education and Training for 2015-16. Our commitment is to offer all Queenslanders access to skills training, no matter where they live. We will invest \$60 million this year and \$240 million over four years to reinstate the successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative that was axed by the LNP government. This cost-effective program will support up to 32,000 Queenslanders back into the work.

As part of the \$34.5 million to be spent on our Rescuing TAFE commitment over three years, we will invest \$6.63 million to restore TAFE Queensland's status as our state's premier provider of VET. We have allocated \$40 million over four years to establish Jobs Queensland, an independent statutory entity providing industry advice to government on skills demand and long-term workforce planning. Last night, this government abolished the LNP's Queensland Training Assets Management Authority and returned control of the state's training assets to the Department of Education and Training. If there was ever any doubt, during that debate members opposite confirmed that they still believe in their asset sales agenda.

We are conducting a comprehensive audit of the state's training assets and are delivering a 10-year strategic plan to bring stability and purpose back to the state's TAFE network. Last night the member for Everton mentioned the Pimlico TAFE site as an example of a site that is in desperate need of repair, refurbishment, rebuilding and redevelopment. He said that it is a very rundown site and I absolutely agree. That is why, when in government, we built the new trade training centre in Bohle to relocate TAFE from the Pimlico site. Also, \$17 million was set aside in the forward estimates to redevelop the Pimlico TAFE site, but in 2012 the LNP government came in and removed that \$17 million so no further redevelopment happened at that site. That was its commitment to TAFE campuses.

We have already started the process of reinstating an independent training ombudsman by hosting a round table attended by significant stakeholders from across the sector. We will invest \$745.6 million in vocational education and training this financial year, which is a 22 per cent increase of \$139 million on the LNP's budget last year through the VET Investment Plan for 2015-16. In his budget response today, I heard the member for Everton say that Labor is just throwing money at training. I am very proud to be part of the Palaszczuk Labor government that is increasing funding in training and skills in this state. This will target key areas across-the-board, from giving school leavers basic literacy and numeracy skills to helping mature workers to retrain for the new jobs emerging in the regions. This training is the first step on a career path for thousands of young people. It will give disadvantaged Queenslanders the skills boost to get back on track and make a positive contribution to their communities. That is why we are committed to ensuring that apprentices and trainees make up 10 per cent of the workforce on large government projects and that projects in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities commit to making up 10 per cent of total labour hours by employing Indigenous workers.

Before I finish, I want to talk about my beautiful electorate of Redcliffe. It is a very beautiful part of Moreton Bay and the state of Queensland. I stood as a candidate for the Redcliffe by-election and I pledged to the people of the Redcliffe peninsula that I would work tirelessly every day for the community and I would make sure that they have a voice in government and in parliament. I ran in the by-election because I would not stand by and watch what the LNP was doing to our communities, hurting our schools, damaging our hospitals and attacking public services and community organisations on the peninsula.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: As those on the other side attack the fact that I stand here as a member of parliament, what they are doing is attacking the people of Redcliffe for the decision they made. They put their trust in me and every day I work hard to fulfil that commitment to the people of Redcliffe. I can now proudly say to the people who put their faith in me that this government's first budget will bring real and much needed benefits to Redcliffe. The budget will provide \$139.6 million to continue construction of a proud Labor achievement. It is an achievement that those on the other side have tried to claim for the past three years, that is, the highly anticipated Moreton Bay Rail Link. That project started under Labor and it will be finished under Labor. It is due for completion in 2016.

Along with this government's broader election commitments for education, Redcliffe schools will receive up to eight additional full-time-equivalent teacher resources. In 2016, Clontarf Beach State High School will gain a full-time-equivalent guidance officer. This government has allocated funding for increased specialist homelessness services in Redcliffe with \$967,000 to go to those who need it most. This will provide a helping hand to empower those who are homeless to get back on their feet. Domestic and family violence services will receive \$420,000, while \$338,000 will go to help resource family support services. Metro North Hospital and Health Service will receive much needed funding in order to cope with increasing needs as part of a \$3.396 billion investment push into our state's health services.

I welcome the funding commitment to tackle the waiting list for the waiting list. As we know, there are many people on the waiting list for their first outpatient appointment at Redcliffe Hospital. Finally, I am pleased to announce that the Peninsula Power Football Club will receive \$100,000 for new change rooms.

I am proud to speak in support of this budget. It is a good Labor budget that will benefit Queenslanders in my portfolio areas across this great state and in my local community.