




Speech By  
**Glenn Butcher**

**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2016

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; DUTIES AND  
OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (9.57 pm): It is going to be very tough to follow the member for Whitsunday—aka the ‘I’ve been everywhere man’ member. I rise tonight to commend Treasurer Curtis Pitt on delivering a budget that sets out a clear economic plan for Queensland and for my electorate of Gladstone. The Gladstone electorate sits in the southern Great Barrier Reef and is surrounded by some of Queensland’s richest natural resources.

Building on traditional strengths in mining, agriculture and manufacturing, Gladstone has been the centre of the state’s coal and LNG investment boom. Gladstone is at a critical time in its history and we have a great challenge ahead of us to support the region’s transition following the completion of major LNG construction projects and the downturn in major commodities in our manufacturing industries. This economic plan focuses on three priorities—job-creating innovation, investment and infrastructure. I wanted to take the opportunity to speak about how these priorities and this budget will support the people of Gladstone.

I rose in this chamber earlier this week to talk about the unique opportunity that Gladstone presents and the fantastic position we are in to attract future projects and investment thanks to the state development land with direct access to the world-class port facilities we have. This budget delivers almost \$20 million over three years to turn the state’s emerging biofutures industry into a \$1 billion export sector via a 10-year road map and action plan. We are starting with \$7.68 million in 2016-17 which will underpin the government’s vision for an export oriented industrial biotech and bioproducts sector.

These funds will drive home our biofuels 10-year road map and our action plan that will lead the way to new industry opportunities for regional Queensland, particularly in my electorate of Gladstone. There is no doubt that, with the ramp-down of the construction phase of the LNG plants, some families in my community are suffering. While our economy transitions from our traditional strength in mining, the Palaszczuk government is supporting working families in communities like mine by investing in innovation. In addition to encouraging investment in future industries, this budget directly benefits those struggling to find work in my electorate through the Back to Work regional jobs package. It is a \$100 million package that will give businesses the confidence to employ regional jobseekers while providing an economic boost to regions in these challenging times. Regional employers who hire an eligible employed person will get an extra \$10,000 payment under this initiative, which will rise to \$15,000 for the long-term unemployed who have been out of work for 12 months or more. Unlike the Newman-Nicholls LNP government that put regional unemployment into the too-hard basket, this budget delivers a plan to bring jobs to the regions.

Clearly, our government is focused on job creation. While 43,000-odd jobs were created in Queensland since the election of the Palaszczuk government, we are determined to deliver more jobs for Queenslanders, particularly those doing it tough in electorates such as Gladstone. To this end, this budget also delivers much needed infrastructure investment into my community while creating jobs for local tradies and improving facilities across my wonderful community.

I thank the Deputy Premier and the education minister who, via the Significant Regional Infrastructure Projects Program, delivered \$21.45 million in additional funding for building projects in six local schools including Calliope State School, Gladstone State High School, Clinton State School, Kin Kora School and of course a school that has a special place in my heart, Rosella Park Special School. Rosella Park Special School will replace a replacement administration building and reconfiguration of their car park. This is the culmination of years of blogging, P&C petitions and lots of hard work.

Although \$4 million is being allocated to the school, it is a drop in the bucket. It is everything to this school. I am truly thankful to Minister Jones for visiting this wonderful school and for seeing firsthand the issues the school dealt with in the past. They have made do with one designated disability park in the set-down and pick-up area at a school that supports students with moderate to severe intellectual impairments whose ages range from five to 18 years. This is just not good enough.

I am thrilled for the principal, Kate Russ, and for the entire school community that these facilities are finally being delivered under the Palaszczuk government. This announcement comes after additional funding was sourced to fix an unsafe playground that involved children with disabilities and mental health issues playing on substandard and unsafe play equipment. It is this kind of support that is improving schools in my electorate.

Our biggest primary school, Clinton, with 800-plus enrolments, will receive a new building with eight classrooms to replace the demountables. They cannot come quick enough for this school. I thank the minister for the investment. Schools right across my electorate make do and get on with the job, but our teachers and school staff deserve access to the infrastructure and facilities they need to support the great work they do in my community.

For our children to have the best chance of success, we need to ensure that our state schools continue to be a quality learning environment and that these kids will be the innovators of our future. All of this investment is on top of the announcement earlier this year of a \$60 million brand-new high school in Calliope. At our recent community cabinet I was so proud to stand beside the Premier of Queensland and the education minister to make this wonderful announcement for the ever growing community of Calliope. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated into *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Mr Speaker this budget is about innovation, investment and infrastructure, but most importantly it is underpinned by Labor values. Focused on jobs, education and health.

Our kids, teachers, parents, medical and front line staff and our communities deserve a government that priorities our community needs and understands the importance and flow on positive impact of investing in this. Not one that sells assets, forgets regional Queensland and cuts front line jobs.

The Palaszczuk Government has hired 940 teachers and teacher aides, 1940 more nurses, 651 more doctors, 479 extra health professionals, 300 extra police, 54 new paramedics and 44 new firefighters in the past 12 months.

And this investment continues with a record commitment to health funding across the State. In last year's budget the Central Queensland Health and Hospital Service of which the Gladstone Hospital is a part received \$488 million in funding.

In this year's budget the CQHHS will receive \$531 million. The services, and facilities at the Gladstone hospital are an ongoing concern for my community and one that I am working closely with the Minister and hospital executive to improve.

This increase in funding is a welcome announcement and one that will assist my local hospital in improving access to services from my community. This year's budget will also see the plans for the Accident and Emergency Upgrade come to fruition by the end of 2017.

The Palaszczuk Government is delivering infrastructure projects in my electorate where it is needed most, with a 10 bed community-managed mental health facility being built in Gladstone.

Which together with those being built in Mackay and Bundaberg form part of a \$12 million investment in the health of regional communities, unlocking up to 35 construction jobs.

The new 'Step Up Step Down' facility will provide a safe, therapeutic environment, where patients can step down after a stay in hospital, or step up if they feel their health is deteriorating.

This service is so necessary in our community with no hospital based mental health facility, being able to support residents to return to their town after a hospital admission for recovery or to act preventatively prior to admission, is a welcome and desperately needed resource.

The facility is expected to open in late 2017 and will be staffed by a mix of clinical and non-clinical staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Mr Speaker, I am also pleased to hear that two major intersections in Gladstone will finally receive an upgrade in funding from this budget.

Work has started this week on two major intersection upgrades on Gladstone-Mt Larcom Road thanks to a \$4.5 million funding boost.

I thank the Minister for Main Roads and Road Safety Mark Bailey for his commitment to upgrading these vital road projects which will see Reid Road and Landing Road intersections on Gladstone-Mt Larcom Road, a major freight and commuter route fixed.

These upgrades will result in significant safety and traffic flow improvements for Gladstone-Mt Larcom Road and cater for the continued development of the Gladstone State Development Area.

Transport and Main Roads has worked closely with Economic Development Queensland designing the two intersection upgrades to align with the long-term plans for the State Development Area north of Gladstone.

Mr Speaker, the Palaszczuk Government is planning for the future of Gladstone and prioritising jobs for the region.

These upgrades will benefit the more than 7000 motorists who use Gladstone-Mt Larcom Road daily, including to gain access to the Bruce Highway, the State Development Area, heavy industry operations and port facilities.

An average of 14 direct jobs will be supported over the life of the two intersection upgrades, which is great news for the area.

Work at the Landing Road intersection will involve realigning the intersection, building protected turn lanes and upgrading lighting.

New lighting and turn lanes for vehicles entering Landing Road will increase safety, including for the heavy vehicles that use this intersection.

The works at Reid Road will improve safety and access to and from Gladstone-Mt Larcom Road for heavy vehicles, which currently turn across four lanes of traffic.

Mr Speaker, BMD has been appointed the successful contractor for the upgrades.

With an office based in Gladstone, it's good for the community to see BMD the successful contractor, and I implore them to utilise local workers for this local project.

The project is funded through the Queensland Government's LNG Proponent Funding Program.

Mr Speaker, as part of this budget I also welcome valuable ongoing support for vital services that look after my community including Child Protection, Domestic and Family Violence, Family and Child Protection, Women's Support Services and People with Disabilities.

Mr Speaker the Palaszczuk Government is committed to working together with industry and local communities to build a stronger, smarter, innovative Queensland and this budget is a testament to that vision through huge investments in Education and Health and Infrastructure.