




Speech By  
**Shane Knuth**

**MEMBER FOR DALRYMPLE**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2016

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

 **Mr KNUTH** (Dalrymple—KAP) (6.02 pm): I rise to speak to the 2016-17 budget. I was elected in 2004 and I was not here beforehand, but I think that this is probably the best budget I have seen since that time, particularly for rural and regional Queensland.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr KNUTH:** They may think it is an illusion, but obviously this is a good budget. With regard to education, a lot of schools have received funding support. The Ravenshoe State School lobbied for a shadecloth for the prep playground facility, and they received it. They are over the moon about it. It might not be a lot, but it is a good thing for them. The Yungaburra P&C lobbied us at least four weeks beforehand hoping to secure a shadecloth, and to them it is everything. The Moranbah State High School is still rapt because they received an upgrade to their air-conditioning in the last budget, and I thank the Minister for Education for her support. They have received another \$300,000 to refurbish and upgrade their classrooms. For the Malanda State High School there is \$323,000 to replace benches—and I have seen them—which should have been done many, many years ago.

Under the Significant Regional Infrastructure Projects Program the Ravenshoe State School received \$3.65 million to replace the dairy for the trade training program. Members may recall that the LNP spread horrible rumours they were going to close the ag science program, but this budget has provided \$3.65 million to keep the training programs going. They are absolutely rapt at Ravenshoe at this time, particularly as they have been going through a lot and I feel that they deserve this wholeheartedly. For the Atherton State High School there is \$1 million to refurbish the ceilings at C Block, and they are also very appreciative of the \$2.2 million for the special education unit which has more or less developed into a state-of-the-art facility. The Dimbulah State School received \$140,000 for refurbishment work.

I also acknowledge the \$10,000 for businesses that employ people who have been unemployed for quite some time in rural and regional Queensland. I believe the grant goes up to \$15,000, and that will be good for rural and regional Queensland.

The Herberton State School secondary campus received \$150,000 for the replacement of science benches and other internal refurbishments, and the Mount Garnet State School received \$150,000 for internal and external painting.

There is one other very important issue on which we have been lobbying for quite some time. I do recall that about eight years ago Craig Wallace, the former member for Thuringowa and minister for main roads, worked with Anthony Albanese to provide \$150 million over five years to upgrade the Gregory Development Road. We have not received much funding for that road, and there are at least 40 kilometres remaining. The good news is that we have received over \$42 million over three years to help fund or upgrade the last remaining sections. These are definitely big dollars well spent, because

this will create an inland highway. A lot of people go to Townsville and Charters Towers but will not travel up the Lind Highway and back to Herveys Range because of that narrow strip, which is a dangerous section, and this funding will resolve that issue.

Added to that is the \$34 million to upgrade the Cape River Bridge, and this is big stuff. The minister came out and had a look at the bridge and also travelled the road, and as a result of communication and dialogue with the community and the Chamber of Commerce—probably more so the previous local council—and with the lobbying we have done, it is just great to see this come to fruition because it will create an inland highway from Rocky. This will allow trucks and vehicles—and even tourists—coming from the Mackay-Rocky area to travel through Clermont up the Gregory Development Road and through to Charters Towers. They can stay in Charters Towers and head up towards Mount Garnet, the Atherton Tablelands and down to Cairns. This funding will help secure that inland highway. The Cape River Bridge is a low-level bridge and it has been a deathtrap for a number of years with hundreds of near misses. That bridge goes over with just a drop of rain, and a lot of travellers will not use that road because of the bridge. This is very much appreciated, and Charters Towers is over the moon at this time with funding for the Gregory Development Road and the Cape River Bridge.

There is a \$2.7 million statewide commitment over three years for flying fox management.

I also want to mention the Dimbulah Primary Healthcare Clinic. I commend the Minister for Health and the Treasurer, who came out to visit the community at Dimbulah. We had the opportunity to table over 750 signatures from that community calling for an upgrade of what was the Dimbulah Hospital. This is a big win for them. There was a public meeting, and we had the support of the Cairns and Hinterland Health Service. There were at least 100 letters of support from the community as well. This was nothing to do with lobbying the government: this was about the whole community banding together to get an outcome because it is full of asbestos. People had to wait outside under the mango tree, people with wheelchairs could not get in and the officers who did the paperwork with patients had to walk past them to get in there. This is big dollars, it is good stuff and the community is quite rapt about this.

Very importantly, we had the Ravenshoe blast. There are still issues with regard to the hurts and the effects it has had on the community. I thank the member for Barron River for attending the memorial service for the one-year anniversary. At the time of the blast it was acknowledged that the emergency ward and operating theatres of Atherton Hospital could not take in all the patients. It is very pleasing to know that the minister has committed funding out of the \$230 million statewide funding pool to upgrade and refurbish the emergency department and the operating theatres. This is big for the Tablelands. We have been pushing for a new hospital or an upgraded facility. I believe that the air-conditioners are now going up the top of the medical ward, where the flies would get in, and there are screens. We have been pushing for this for a long time. The minister and the Treasurer visited and listened to the community. The community has had a big win on this. This is not a win for Shane Knuth; this is a win for rural and regional Queensland, for the Atherton Tablelands and for the sick, the frail and the elderly. There is no doubt that this will benefit our region.

The Dimbulah Fire Station will receive the extension that the community has been fighting for for some time. It was unworkable and made things very difficult. There is \$700,000 for that. Herberton finally got \$1.2 million to replace their fire station. That is big news for Herberton, which does not get much. The people of Herberton are great, salt-of-the-earth people.

Another measure that is very important for the Atherton Tablelands is the provision to CST Atherton of \$250,000 for a feasibility study through the Neighbourhood Centre Investment Strategy. The Minister for Communities came to the Atherton Tablelands—

**Ms Fentiman:** A pleasure.

**Mr KNUTH:** Yes, and it is great to see this \$250,000 go to CST. It is good dollars well spent.

I acknowledge the \$78 million for the Rural Assistance and Drought Package. This includes \$42 million for extending the existing drought relief arrangements. The Rural Assistance and Drought Package includes mental health support as well as education support for children in drought-affected areas.

I mention the transitional package, relating to transitioning property from parents to their children. There will be 100 per cent stamp duty relief. That is a good thing because at present it costs \$200,000 to \$300,000 to give your property to your children. Now it will be completely tax exempt.

The neighbourhood centre in Charters Towers have been pushing for years to get a domestic violence shelter. They have lobbied previous governments and this government. They have made a number of representations here in Brisbane and have had meetings with the Minister for Communities

and the Minister for Disabilities on the need for a domestic violence shelter in Charters Towers. It is great news that we were able to secure up to \$2 million to facilitate two dwellings to help support those suffering from domestic violence. I believe that the minister is coming up maybe this week, I hope—

**Ms Fentiman:** Next Wednesday.

**Mr KNUTH:** Next Wednesday to extend that announcement. Overall, I believe this is a good budget. People may say that I am deluded, but what I have delivered is a good win.

One of the members mentioned the motorsports association and asked what we got. I believe that a funding announcement will be made in two weeks time regarding Millchester Motorsport. The member for Whitsunday was very critical that we did not receive funding for motorsports. He should just wait for two weeks, because we are just waiting for the grant announcement.

This is a good budget. I thank all of the people who live in rural and regional Queensland, and those in my electorate, for their hard work in lobbying and working with the government to get these outcomes. I commend the bills to the House.