




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2016

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

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (5.36 pm): The second budget of the Palaszczuk government delivers for Queensland in the areas that most matter. It allows the government to continue working with Queenslanders to get the training they need for jobs now and to build careers for the future. We know that investment in training and skills can help deliver the high-skilled workforce Queensland needs for economic growth, industry development and jobs growth.

This budget ensures that crucial programs continue to be funded—initiatives like Skilling Queenslanders for Work, which is providing skills, opportunity and career paths right across this state. This is a program that those opposite cut, denying a path to a job to those who most needed the assistance. The ongoing work to remedy that damage continues. In that regard, I would like to thank our partners in these efforts, training providers, NGOs, local government business and employee representatives right across our regions.

What would the LNP do to address the important issue of helping Queenslanders find jobs? It would re-establish its Ministerial Industry Commission across the whole state as an alternative to an independent expertise based body like Jobs Queensland. The LNP's body was run by an assistant minister—an entirely political approach to addressing one of this state's most significant challenges. We have established through legislation an independent authority. It will be comprised of representatives from a broad range of industries who possess the expertise needed for the critical functions of Jobs Queensland. Jobs Queensland has already been established in its Ipswich home with high-level staff already working hard to support their interim reference group.

The opposition leader talks in vague but disturbing tones about cutting unnecessary bureaucracy. Exactly what does he believe is unnecessary? Does he mean Queensland's Training Ombudsman, who is ensuring that people who are paying for training have access to the highest quality programs that maximise their chances of improving their jobs skills and finding employment in their chosen field—the body that supports students, business, training providers and families navigate the training sector; or does he mean Jobs Queensland, the independent expertise based body working from its offices to develop future skills priorities and a strategic outlook for future workforce planning?

The LNP says it would pay for its apprenticeship scheme by cutting funding from Back to Work. Such a decision would destroy the key focus of Labor's plan announced earlier this week by the Treasurer. That focus is to deliver jobs for regional Queensland which, as everyone in this House is aware, is suffering far more than the south-east corner from the transition out of the mining boom.

The Leader of the Opposition says the LNP wants to address the decline in apprenticeships. That is one area where he does have some expert knowledge. When the LNP came to power, there were 96,300 apprentices in training in Queensland. By the time they left, less than three years later, that number had fallen to 68,600. That is 28,000 fewer apprentices in training than when they started.

In contrast, this government has acted to attract apprentices. The Queensland Government Building and Construction Training Policy requires contractors to employ apprentices and trainees, and undertake other workforce training, as a mandated component of being awarded work on eligible Queensland government projects. What this means for apprentices is that a minimum of 10 per cent of the total labour hours on eligible projects be undertaken by apprentices and/or trainees and through other workforce training.

The Palaszczuk government introduced a new payroll tax rebate from 1 July 2015 to make it more affordable for employers to hire an apprentice or trainee. This incentive will deliver up to \$45 million in payroll tax rebates for employers of apprentices and trainees. If we make it easier for business to be able to take on an apprentice or trainee, then the business will be able to make a go at it, and this boost, especially in regional Queensland, is vital to give confidence.

Apprentices will be eligible under the government's Back to Work program. That means smaller businesses, which might not benefit from the payroll tax rebate, will receive \$10,000 to put on an unemployed Queenslanders, including as an apprentice to get their qualification. This could increase to \$15,000 for a business to employ a long-term unemployed person. This Labor policy is more effective than the LNP's ill-conceived proposal, as it directly targets the long-term unemployed and in the regions. I know the Minister for Employment will expand further on the opportunities provided under Back to Work. This budget ensures Queenslanders have access to an effective, responsive and efficient justice system. We are committed to providing accessible and effective justice, providing the support and courts system Queenslanders deserve. We are committed to working with the profession to achieve these aims.

Increasing demands on the justice system across Queensland will be addressed through the provision of an additional \$20 million over two years. This government knows that the staff in court registries right across the state are dealing with an ever-increasing workload of complex matters. This funding package represents the greatest injection of support to court services in more than a decade and will be used in part to respond to increased domestic and family violence proceedings, Land Court referrals and criminal law proceedings.

Also \$20 million over two years has been allocated to ensure that Queensland courts and tribunals have the resources they need to effectively deal with budget and workload issues. It is expected that these measures will increase accessibility to justice for Queenslanders and assist in effective and timely outcomes for practitioners and clients alike. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated into *Hansard*.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Miss Barton): Attorney, have you had a chance to show your speech to either the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker?

Mrs D'ATH: I have provided it to the Deputy Speaker and I have received approval to incorporate it.

Leave granted.

Access to justice

Any commitment to improving access to justice has to translate to a long term, sustainable funding model for legal assistance services. We are providing funding certainty for those services, and the vulnerable Queenslanders who rely upon them. Until now, funds from the Legal Practitioner Interest on Trust Accounts Fund (LPITAF) and Queensland Government Consolidated Fund have been used for the delivery of these services.

But while the need for those services grows, the revenue from LPITAF has been reducing, and can no longer meet these funding commitments.

As announced by the Treasurer, on 1 July 2016, we will commence implementing a long term funding model. Funding of \$166.2 million over five years will be provided with ongoing funding of \$40.6 million per annum.

In doing so, this Government has moved to provide certainty and sustainability for these important services.

We have delivered on our election commitment to review the available funding sources for Legal Aid Queensland with a view to increasing, over time, the funding provided for state-funded legal assistance services to the national average.

LAQ has been provided with increased funding of \$32.4 million over four years, with an ongoing funding increase of \$13 million per annum.

This funding will enable LAQ to deliver vital domestic and family violence and child protection services and other legal assistance services including to those farmers across our state who continue to experience significant financial hardship.

Domestic and family violence measures

As part of the Government's almost \$200 million investment package to boost crucial domestic and family violence (DFV) services the department has also received funding:

- for the continuation of the Southport pilot specialist DFV court and independent evaluation until 30 June 2017;
- subject to the Southport DFV court evaluation, \$13.6 million over four years commencing 2017-18 to roll-out specialist DFV courts to a number of other locations;
- \$11 million over the next four years to build the capacity of Community Justice Groups in 18 discrete Indigenous locations;
- \$0.3 million over three years to maintain funding to the Women's Legal Services Helpline; and
- \$0.7 million over the next four years for the professional development of magistrates in DFV matters.

These initiatives have been warmly welcomed by the Community Legal sector, the Domestic Violence sector, the Queensland Law Society, and Legal Aid Queensland.

These measures are proof of this government's leadership in this field and our commitment to provide a fair, accessible, effective justice system for the Queensland community.

Crime Statistics Body

Another of the Government's election commitments was the establishment of a crime statistics body. Both the Commission of Inquiry on Organised Crime and the Taskforce on the Organised Crime Legislation recommended the creation of an independent crime statistical body that would prioritise the collection of data on organised crime in Queensland.

The Government has approved \$8.4 million over three years for the establishment of the Crime Statistics Body to collect data and monitor organised crime, as well as impacts and trends across all crime types.

This builds on the commitments already made by the Government upon receiving the report of the Commission of Inquiry last year.

Given the deeply concerning finding of the involvement of organised crime in the child exploitation material market, the Government acted immediately to provide the Queensland Police Service, as a first stage response, with \$3.2 million, to be shared with the Crime and Corruption Commission, to improve front line investigations into child exploitation.

The Crime and Corruption Commission received funding of \$485,000 to help tackle child sex offending.

We also approved that the Crime and Corruption Commission use retained earnings of \$510,000 for the Cerberus team and the Forensic Computing Unit towards those capital costs to undertake more criminal investigations.

As part of our commitment to tackling organised crime in all its forms, this budget includes:

- \$3.6 million over four years for crime intelligence hearings into organised crime.
- increased funding of \$3.5 million over four years to continue confiscation proceedings in relation to participants in criminal organisations, unexplained wealth orders and the serious drug offender confiscation order scheme.

It is imperative that the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions must be properly resourced to pursue convictions of serious and organised criminals.

Accordingly the Government has approved funding of \$12.136 million over four years for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. This funding will enable the Office to increase its staffing by a further 26 positions, significantly boosting its efficiency and addressing workload issues.

All of these funding measures, coupled with our robust legislative reform agenda, are designed to create a safer, more just Queensland for all.

Redcliffe:

I am also proud to stand in this Chamber in the capacity as the Member for Redcliffe.

There are a range of initiatives that will be a fantastic result for the Redcliffe peninsula.

Key initiatives include:

- \$100,00 to replace the roof of the hall at Clontarf Beach State High School
- \$20,000 to complete the outdoor landscaped learning area at Clontarf Beach State High School.
- \$60,000 to refurbish the outdoor learning area and replace playground equipment at Clontarf Beach State School.
- \$200,000 to refurbish the amenities of Block 6 at Humpybong State School.
- \$3.5 million (over next two years) for the replacement of the Hall at Redcliffe State High School.
- \$5 million (over next two years) for the construction of additional classrooms at Redcliffe Special School.

I am also pleased that the Palaszczuk government is delivering \$7.1million in 2016/17 to increase inpatient capacity by relocating cancer care and renal services to the Moreton Bay Integrated Care Centre.

Beyond the boundaries of the electorate, but just as important to my constituents, is the funding to address the Rothwell Roundabout.

Just as I had to stand up for my constituents when money was taken out of the Redcliffe Rail project, I have been fighting for years for a solution to the Rothwell roundabout. I also know the Member for Murrumba has been advocating strongly for this.

I am so pleased that this government is delivering once again.

We delivered the rail line, we are delivering the roundabout upgrade, and we are delivering improvements to the Redcliffe hospital and to local schools.

I urge the Parliament's support for these initiatives.