



Speech By
Glenn Butcher

MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE

Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2017

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (4.31 pm): I wish just shaming someone into doing something would get me a multimillion dollar project! It gives me great pleasure to stand here today to talk about the Palaszczuk government's third and greatest budget and the great opportunity that not only this budget but also the two previous budgets have delivered for the people of Gladstone. As I have said many times in this House, Gladstone has been the economic driver of Queensland for decades and I am proud to stand here today to say that the electorate is starting to see the benefits of the hard yards flow back into Gladstone.

The electorate of Gladstone has for too long delivered to the state of Queensland and will no longer sit back and be neglected when it has been forgotten for so many years on funding and infrastructure. If you visit any school in the Gladstone electorate you can see works happening right now, including major infrastructure upgrades at Gladstone State High School, Rosella Park School, Clinton State School and the recently completed Calliope State School and also Tannum Sands State High School. These projects are not only providing a better place for our children and our students to learn; they are creating opportunities for the workers of Gladstone. The Palaszczuk government's state budget will continue to deliver on the things that matter most in Gladstone—investment in health and investment in education.

Toolooa State High School will see a major \$1.5 million upgrade in this budget to its school hall precinct commence thanks to the 2017-18 Palaszczuk budget. The school hall precinct was in need of major refurbishment, and this upgrade will deliver better facilities for the students and the staff to utilise. On a recent visit to Toolooa State High School I asked principal Garry Goltz what was the major infrastructure upgrade that he required at the school. His answer was loud and clear, and that was that the school needed a major upgrade to its hall so that students can utilise this facility in comfort and make it more user-friendly for parents and citizens alike. I am glad that my government and the Minister for Education listened. Halls are a vital part of our school community and I know that Toolooa State High School will be very excited about this investment which it has been crying out for for years.

This is on the back of the already announced \$1.2 million upgrade to the hall at Boyne Island State School. Gladstone schools have been neglected for far too long. We are seeing money in this budget for investment in new classrooms at Gladstone State High School worth \$6 million for a brand-new, state-of-the-art, two-storey school building, \$4 million for Rosella Park School's administration building—I have visited them many times and they are beside themselves in terms of how much this new building is going to do for that school—and \$5.5 million for the Clinton State School. Seeing these projects started now and being completed shortly is a very big welcome investment to my community. The unprecedented investment in education infrastructure shows the Palaszczuk government delivering for our schools in Gladstone. Not only that, we are also spending more money on maintenance of much loved schools in the Gladstone electorate which have been neglected for so long. It is great to see further involvement with the government to continue the great work we are doing with maintenance in schools.

It was great to have the Treasurer and Minister Byrne in Gladstone last Friday to make an announcement on our government's fishing strategy for the state. The budget has delivered an extra \$20 million investment and 20 more Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol groups and staff as part of the release of the Palaszczuk government's Sustainable Fisheries Strategy 2017-2027. The Gladstone QBFP office will reopen and four new fishing inspectors will be based right in my electorate of Gladstone. This is great news for our local community. I know that getting these local inspectors back out on the water is a key to resolving the issues that we are facing in Gladstone with better research on fish stocks, better public education and more compliance checks in the Gladstone area.

This investment paves the way for Queensland to have a world-class fisheries management system with serious structural reforms that support many thousands of regional jobs, particularly in the Gladstone area. The current fisheries management system is cumbersome, costly and inflexible and is not keeping up with community expectations. This is the biggest fisheries reform in Queensland's history. The feedback from the public last year on our green paper on fisheries management reform made it loud and clear that from my electorate there was overwhelming support for an increase in front-line compliance capability. We have listened and we have delivered. The people of Gladstone have been expressing to me how happy they are that finally we will have compliance officers back on the water, ensuring that everyone is doing the right thing and our fish stocks are maintained.

Other local key initiatives in the budget that was just delivered include \$49 million out of a \$226 million total spend to upgrade the RG Tanna Coal Terminal at the port of Gladstone, and this is much needed infrastructure. As we know, coal exports are continuing to rise, particularly through the port of Gladstone. There is \$5.6 million out of a \$33.4 million total spend to upgrade drainage and undertake preventative esplanade works on Fisherman's Landing. I talked to the CEO yesterday about this infrastructure spend. This is vital to ensure that into the future we can continue to use the Gladstone port as the export hub in Gladstone. Not only that, it will develop new industry that wants to come to Gladstone and develop their business on this land that we are building ready for the future.

There is also \$570,000 to install new offshore moorings within the Great Barrier Reef. For those who do not know, Gladstone is the home of the southern Great Barrier Reef. The government and Minister Miles are investing money into these moorings so that people do not just throw their anchors on the Great Barrier Reef. This is a great investment. This means that there are hubs that they can go to and tie off their boats and do their fishing without ruining the reef with their anchors. There is also \$55,000 for the Gladstone Turf Club to repair its barriers, stables and towers. Dave Weinert, the Chairman of the Gladstone Turf Club, was ecstatic with that funding because the work that it has been doing at that racetrack has all been done by voluntary contribution and volunteer members. He was telling me that it has not had any funding for the last 20 years. Even a token of \$55,000 will go a huge way to help the Gladstone Turf Club fix its barriers for the safety of horses and jockeys.

There is \$9.974 million as part of \$30 million over four years for fisheries management. As I said before, that puts four brand-new fishing inspectors in Gladstone. There is half a million dollars out of a \$11.7 million total spend to develop the next stage of the Clinton Industrial Estate to support the Gladstone State Development Area. I have spoken in this House many times about the benefits of the Gladstone State Development Area for large-scale industrial development. This investment of another half a million dollars to kick-start the Clinton Industrial Estate certainly gives us confidence that any small businesses that want to come to Gladstone can do so just as much as big industry wants to come to town. As I have said many times in this House, we are open for business and we are ready to go.

The 2017-18 state budget delivers a \$34.8 million funding boost to the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service, taking its total budget to \$566.3 million. In addition to the increase in operational funding, Gladstone stands to gain from major infrastructure projects, including \$7.1 million to commence the \$42 million upgrade of the Gladstone Hospital emergency department and the \$4 million step-up step-down mental health facility that is starting in the next week or so. There is also additional funding of \$238 million for allied health services.

This budget delivers record health funding for Queensland. I know that the people of the Gladstone electorate are benefiting from this government's commitment to increasing our nursing, teaching, Child Safety and police numbers. These front-line workers are critical to the safety and security of my community. I am proud to be part of a government that values and invests in them, not sacks them along with 14,000 of their co-workers.

I now seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*. I can confirm that I have sought permission from the Deputy Speaker.

Leave granted.

Back To Work Program

The Government's successful Back to Work program, offering up to \$20,000 for employers taking-on eligible job seekers in regional Queensland, will continue, which has already seen 308 Central Queenslanders getting back into work.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work

Over \$2.5 million dollars has been delivered under this program by the Palaszczuk Government to the Gladstone electorate, supporting 459 people to develop the skills they need to find meaningful work. This program has helped jobseekers in Gladstone, develop skills, undertake paid work placements and earn nationally recognised qualifications. Organisations in my electorate are delivering incredible outcomes from the training they offer under Skilling Queenslanders for Work, with the majority of participants going on to further education or finding employment.

These organisations should be commended for their effort and for their commitment to generating employment opportunities in Gladstone, including Gladstone Engineering Alliance, Gladstone PCYC Association, Gladstone Community Linking Agency, Energy Skills Queensland, Welcoming Intercultural Neighbours, Gidarjill Development Corporation and Five Brigades.

Participants have undertaken everything from certificates in retail services and business, conservation and land management, warehousing operations, community services, scaffolding, early childhood education, hospitality and job readiness preparations. Programs like the Palaszczuk Governments Skilling Queenslanders for Work are vital to communities like mine and I am proud of our achievements in this area.

Works 4 Queensland

This Budget also delivers for the regional communities that I have been privileged to represent in my role as the Assistant Minister for Transport and Infrastructure.

And the program I am most passionate about is of course Works for Queensland which I'm incredibly proud to say has received another funding injection of \$200 million over the next two years. As I travel around the state in my role as Assistant Minister every council I visit tells me about the incredible impact this program has had on their community.

From playgrounds to roads to tourism infrastructure and from Bundy to Burketown this program is transforming our regional communities and delivering more than 700 projects.

Most importantly Works for Queensland is delivering jobs, jobs, jobs, almost 7,000 of them through the first \$200 million allocation.

But don't just take my word for it Cr Nev Ferrier Mayor of Banana Shire said that 'This is the best funding program I have seen in 13 years in Local Government.'

This was echoed by Mayor of Barcoo Shire Council Bruce Scott who said 'In all of my 23 years in local government and serving on public sector boards and committees, I have never seen a program with the potential to deliver community needs quickly and with little need for time consuming competitive processes holding up the implementation of projects.'

We see the impact it is having and we listened to councils who told us they wanted more and we are delivering with \$200 million more to be injected into the regions.

Soon we will be announcing how much more every council will receive and I encourage everyone

That's more jobs and more infrastructure for regional Queensland and that is what this Palaszczuk Labor Government is all about.