




Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**

**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2017

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

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (4.33 pm): I rise to speak in support of the 2017 Queensland state budget. It is a budget that is not only good for the people of Ipswich but also good for everyone in Queensland. It is non-prejudiced. It is one that puts all Queenslanders from Ipswich to Innisfail and beyond first. No-one has been forgotten in this budget.

This is a Labor budget to its bootstraps, and I am proud to be a member of the Palaszczuk government that delivered it. It is a budget that is focused on educating our children, not stealing their future. I acknowledge and commend the Premier, Anastacia Palaszczuk, and the education minister, Kate Jones, who this week announced \$24.8 million to deliver full-time teacher aides in every prep class in Queensland from 2018. It is great news for our prep classes. It is a budget that will continue our commitment and investment in jobs—an estimated additional 2,200 jobs for Ipswich, and I could not be happier.

This is a budget that provides record health funding across the state—money going to where it is most needed. I am delighted that Ipswich Hospital is one of the three South-East Queensland hospitals to benefit from the \$200 million initial investment over four years to enhance its capacity and services including mental health facilities. It is a budget that confirms that the Queensland economy is stronger today than when the Newman-Nicholls budget was kicked out of office in January 2015. It is a budget that is focused on providing the infrastructure that will be the cornerstone of this state's development, not the answer to its terminal decline.

For too many years I have heard from those in the LNP that we are a do-nothing government, one of big promises but little follow through. Some 69,000 jobs later, a drop in the unemployment rate and a 2.75 per cent rise in economic growth shows that those opposite do not mind throwing in an alternative fact or 20. This from a party that for three years did little more than hack and burn—its biggest idea for change likely an internal challenge to see just how many public sector and front-line jobs could be cut.

For proof that we are a government that keeps its promises, we need look no further than this government's commitment to re-establishing drug courts across Queensland—\$22.7 million has been allocated statewide for the introduction of local drug courts, and I am delighted that Ipswich will receive one of those courts. This is a budget that is focused on helping those with addiction, not turfing them onto our streets.

Since February 2015, my electorate of Ipswich has received over \$18 million in investment in our state schools—\$8 million to Ipswich West Special School for much needed expansion and over \$10 million to expand Claremont Special School. There is an additional \$500,000 to build a fence around Ipswich Special School, and in this year's budget I am delighted that Ipswich East State School will receive \$200,000 to refurbish Block D through the School Infrastructure Enhancement Program. From March 2015 to March 2017, we have employed an extra 439 teachers in Ipswich alone. This is not what a government who cannot keep its promises would do.

There is so much that this budget is doing for my community and for communities right across Queensland. Ipswich is projected to be the fastest growing region over coming decades. This growth is driving strong investment in infrastructure and service delivery. The Palaszczuk government has and continues to invest in jobs for Ipswich through a diverse range of projects and initiatives—things like the \$200 million commitment to upgrade the Ipswich Motorway, Darra to Rocklea; \$13 million to deliver capital works at Ipswich Turf Club's Bundamba Racecourse; the investment in public housing—383 new dwellings in the Ipswich region; a safe cycling facility at Raceview; and the upgrade of the police communications centre at Yamanto. All of this is in addition to the Palaszczuk government's continued investment in health and education.

There are a lot of people moving to Ipswich—many of them first home buyers. I have heard firsthand from many of those people what this government's \$20,000 first home buyer's grant has meant to them. The Palaszczuk government's announcement in this budget to extend this boosted grant offer for a further six months will not only help numerous young families in Ipswich but also further drive economic activity and construction.

It probably comes as no surprise to many that Rugby League is big in Ipswich, but we also have a significant number of AFL supporters. I would like to commend the Treasurer on his commitment of \$165,000, as part of a total \$375,000 investment, to provide unisex player and umpire change amenities, with storage, offices and a gym for cricket and AFL at Limestone Park. This has been a project that I and AFL Queensland have been working hard to secure, and it is great to see the government commit funds to this project.

If there is still any doubt that the Palaszczuk government is a hardworking, progressive, united, economically sound and visionary government, we need look no further than the Premier and Deputy Premier's announcement this week that the Palaszczuk government will build Cross River Rail. Widely acknowledged as being the single most essential and largest infrastructure project Queensland has ever seen, Cross River Rail has been fully funded under this 2017-18 budget. Malcolm Turnbull and the LNP failed Queenslanders by ignoring the need to invest in this essential piece of infrastructure and Queenslanders will not forget it. Once constructed, Cross River Rail will mean less congestion on the roads and faster and more efficient train travel for commuters. It will make Brisbane the world-class city it needs to be and it means Ipswich people will have access to more trains more often.

Mr Deputy Speaker, I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

I further welcome that \$8.9 million, as part of a \$35.7 million commitment over four years to provide out-of-home care placement services to ensure children and young people in need of protection are supported and safe, has been provided by this budget.

These funds will see those most at risk, our children and young people, kept happy, safe and secure.

Ipswich will also see a combined grant funding of \$1,130,000 to provide health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people in my community.

Mr Speaker, we have provided a large amount of funds to schools this budget, ensuring that their education is a paramount concern for our government.

At the same time, we will also be providing funding to families in crisis.

There will be \$5.6 million as part of a \$22.6 million commitment over four years to provide family support services to work with vulnerable families to help improve parenting skills and give parents the support they need to prevent problems from escalating to crisis point.

This will ensure that Ipswich parents are given every opportunity to provide a strong, stable base for their families, and that no family is unduly separated.

Domestic violence is a scourge on modern society, and something that I understand all too well.

There are many worthy groups combatting this issue in my electorate of Ipswich, groups like the Domestic Violence Action Centre, Ipswich Women's Centre, and so many more actively combating this issue in our community.

These organisations have quickly cemented their place as institutions in Ipswich, providing service and assistance where it is often times the most essential.

I commend the Treasurer for providing \$1.7 million as part of a \$6.98 million commitment over four years to provide domestic and family violence services to improve the safety and wellbeing of victims and their children, particularly those in high risk situations.

Mr Speaker, this budget has provided evidence of what I've been saying consistently, that we are a government of action, a government of follow through that benefits all communities across our state.

But it wasn't just continuation of funding for our communities, our government has presented a number of important new infrastructure and social projects that will vastly benefit not just Ipswich, but the state of Queensland.

Mr Speaker, grant funding of \$10.4 million in 2017-18 will be provided for non-clinical support services to people with mental illness, their carers, and their families.

Mental Health is no joke, it is something incredibly debilitating, family destroying even.

By committing \$10.4 million to the people of Ipswich, the Palaszczuk Government is ensuring that this will no longer be an issue confined to asylum, that as a government and community we will stand by everyone, no matter their story, and ensure no one falls through the cracks.

Mr Speaker, in my electorate of Ipswich I have a brilliant hospital, the aptly named Ipswich Hospital, organised and run by the West Moreton Hospital and Health Service.

In a city like Ipswich which is continually growing and expanding, projected to hit 400,000 people by 2050, they are able to provide a dynamic team which is constantly evolving and developing to meet the needs of our growing community.

I was thrilled to hear from the Treasurer and the Minister for Health, the Hon Cameron Dick, that \$3 million for business case development, detailed planning, site preparation and land purchases, at a total cost of \$24 million was being provided for the Ipswich Hospital.

This is great news for Ipswich.

For a city like mine, population growth and increased demand for services is one of the most severe issues that we face.

These funds will provide the necessary foundations to ensure that the expectations of my community are met when it comes to their health and wellbeing, and I am eagerly anticipating the results from the detailed planning.

But those were not the only funds provided to the Ipswich Hospital network.

Our government has seen the West Moreton Hospital and Health Service receive a funding boost of \$42.3 million in this year's 2017-2018 Budget.

This new budget of \$554.6 million represents an 8.3% increase in funding provided to the Ipswich communities number one health care provider.

What this will mean at a fundamental level, is that we will see a number of crucial developments throughout the Hospital and Health Service.

It will provide funding to meet growth in the emergency department, a \$5 million increase that was promised earlier this year by the Minister for Health.

It will provide a new mental health acute care team for the hospital, further acknowledgment of the critical approach we as government have to take when it comes to our community's mental health.

Overall, this boost of funding to the West Moreton Hospital and Health Service is part of a \$1.28 billion boost to Queensland's health budget.

This increase in spending is emblematic of our Palaszczuk Government's approach to health, a sign of the priority that we as a government are placing no person at risk, ensuring Queenslanders' health is a top priority.

As I've mentioned earlier, the Minister for Racing, the Hon Grace Grace, recently announced \$13 million from the Racing Infrastructure Fund to deliver capital works at the Ipswich Turf's Club's Bundamba Racecourse.

Mr Speaker, this is an emphatic victory for the Ipswich Turf Club and the Ipswich people, a project that is decades in the making, possibly even more, that I can assure you the people of Ipswich having been champing at the bit for it.

In the end, as is so often the case in Queensland, it took the concerted effort of the people and the Palaszczuk Labor Government, to hear the call to action, and accept it.

Finally, I would like to extend a significant commendation to our Treasurer, for the reinstatement of a Drug Court in Ipswich.

Mr Speaker, there is an ice problem in Queensland, and Ipswich is not exempt, and it's an issue that I and the Palaszczuk Government are putting every effort into eradicating and solving.

This is not a problem that has a quick fix, no one size fits all solution that will resolve it, with the reinstatement of the Drug Court being a positive step in the right direction.

Honestly, it defies reason that it had to be reinstated at all, that the LNP thought that the best way to help those with drug addictions was to remove a proven program and replace it with nothing.

Mr Speaker, what my government has done is shown that we not only stick to our election commitments, but that we understand the issue.

With this third budget, the Palaszczuk Government has shown that we are not just a party in government, but a party that can and will lead.

These projects, which are upgrading crucial Ipswich infrastructure, uplifting our economy, and providing jobs for the Ipswich region, represent a government that will not back down in the face of adversity.

These projects represent only a portion of what the Palaszczuk Government is spending on Queensland, symbolising the commitment we have not just to the South East, but the regions as well.

When the Palaszczuk Government presents a budget, a real Labor Budget, it provides Queenslanders with assurances, a guarantee that we will always represent their best interests, and put the people of Ipswich and Queensland first and foremost.

I commend the 2017-2018 budget to the House, Mr Speaker.