




Speech By  
**Julianne Gilbert**

**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (6.20 pm): It gives me much pleasure to rise and speak to the 2017-18 budget. Before I speak on the budget, I take a moment to pay my respects and send my condolences to the family, friends and colleagues of Sergeant Brendan James Poustie. The community of Mackay have in their thoughts and prayers his wife, Jakki, his children, Liam and Lucy, and also his police family. Earlier this week Superintendent Bruce McNabb told me that his colleagues are devastated by his loss.

This week my electorate of Mackay and the surrounding regions have millions of reasons to smile, all because we have fared well in the third Palaszczuk Labor government budget. I thank Treasurer Curtis Pitt for his work on this jobs budget. Roads, health, education, the Mackay port, social services and emergency services are all big winners with job-creating spends.

The budget is a true jobs and infrastructure budget, with 2,300 direct jobs created through regionally funded programs, which is just what my electorate has asked for and needs. Unemployment peaked at eight per cent on the back of a downturn in the mining and construction industries. Mackay was left high and dry by the former Newman-Nicholls government, which had no plan in place for the regions when mining came off the boil. All mining towns and communities that service the mining industry were abandoned by the former LNP government. It has no plans, no support and no infrastructure builds to get my community back on its feet. The only infrastructure build we in the north heard about was a building at 1 William Street, Brisbane. The regions were abandoned.

Under the stewardship of the last two Palaszczuk Labor government job-building budgets, the unemployment rate in Mackay has dropped to 5.8 per cent. The people of the Mackay electorate and the wider community know that to grow employment and business opportunities and to future-proof ourselves from future industry downturns, we need to diversify our current industries and find new and modern markets. To develop markets and businesses, you need a quality and reliable transport chain. Labor is building the transport infrastructure that those opposite neglected in Mackay while in government.

Under the Palaszczuk government, the Mackay bulk port has had breakwater wall upgrades, breakwater bulk cargo set-down areas constructed, power lines placed underground and this budget will see \$7 million spent on wharves 4 and 5 fenders to increase the ability to bring freight in and out. This will also increase our ability to develop export possibilities from our own port.

To access the port, vehicles need to travel across the Vines Creek bridges. Previously I have spoken about the shocking state in which the previous LNP government was prepared to leave those bridges. The bridges are literally crumbling. The LNP solution was to restrict two two-lane bridges to one lane each, cut the speed limit to 40 kilometres per hour and reduce the load limit. Labor's solution is a complete rebuild of the bridges with a capacity for heavy mass limit.

**Mr Costigan** interjected.

**Mrs GILBERT:** Unfortunately, the member for Whitsunday has not noticed the signs that are up and the work that has already started on the bridges, just as he missed the sod turning for the information centre project. He has moved into the seat of Mackay, but he does not notice what is going on. He should get on the page.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mrs GILBERT:** The member should read the paper.

**Honourable members** interjected.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Elmes): Order! A couple of people in the chamber are very lucky, as it is close to dinner time. There will be no more chatter across the aisles.

**Mrs GILBERT:** Labor's solution is a complete rebuild of the bridges with capacity for heavy mass limit. That shows the difference between them and us. The rebuild is a \$28 million project that will generate over 45 jobs. This year's spend is \$6.8 million of the total spend.

Of course, one of the most significant projects in the history of the region is the Mackay Ring Road. To support this vital transport supply chain, the Palaszczuk government has partnered with the federal government to build the brand new Mackay Ring Road. There is \$70 million in continued funding for the ring-road in 2017-18, which is part of a total cost of \$497.8 million. The Mackay Ring Road will also deliver a section of the Walkerston Bypass. Another \$150 million has been allocated for the construction of the remainder of the Walkerston Bypass. Apart from the obvious infrastructure benefits the ring-road project will deliver, it will also support around 600 jobs, which will be a tremendous economic and employment boost for our local community. As there is more I would like to put on record, I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Key benefits from Stage 1 of the project will include:

- reduced congestion on the network as traffic is transferred to the Ring Road
- reduced traffic demands on Nebo Road, with a two lane rural highway deviation approximately 11.3km in length
- reduced travel times by avoiding 10 signalised intersections from Stockroute Road to Bald Hill
- 80km/h and 100km/h speed limit (compared to a 60km/h urban network)
- improved safety by removing fuel and sugar trucks from travelling through built up areas
- major bridges over Pioneer River and the Fursden Creek floodplain
- overpasses of local roads and rail network
- Improved connectivity for industry to the Port.

Mr Speaker, the Mackay Ring Road is an example of the huge investment the Palaszczuk Government is delivering in road infrastructure across my region and across Queensland.

The Palaszczuk Government has granted \$8.64 million assistance for Mackay's proposed \$50 million bio refinery to help accelerate the project's development and construction.

The initiative could create up to 115 jobs and will position the Mackay region as an emerging bio-industry hub.

"Bio Processing Australia's facility is proposed to be co-located at one of Mackay's Sugar Mills and would deliver up to 70 construction and 50 skilled operational jobs and attract significant investment and further jobs in the region.

Mackay is looking for skilled jobs, this project in operation will require, bio chemist's electricians, fitters, plant operators, truck drivers and labourers.

It is a game changing concept for Mackay and exactly the type of project we've been targeting to generate jobs and economic activity in Mackay.

The government has put sensible commercial conditions on the funding to ensure it delivers and we will be releasing the funding in stages on the completion of agreed construction milestones."

The \$8.64 million funding will come from the \$130 million Jobs and Regional Growth Fund. A fund that helps facilitate private sector projects that will create employment and economic growth opportunities in the regions.

The Palaszczuk Government has beaten out international competition to reach agreement with Bio Processing Australia to pursue Mackay exclusively as the potential location for a new integrated bio refinery. The intellectual property of this new industry was being bidded for in Asia.

BPA will complete a full feasibility study with a view to making a final investment decision and potentially commence construction of the bio refinery in 2018.

This is another step towards our vision for a \$1 billion sustainable and export-oriented industrial biotechnology and bio products sector, creating the high skill jobs of the future. I am so pleased Mackay is part of this exciting future for Queensland.

The wider Mackay region felt the effects of Cyclone Debbie, I am pleased that the Government is providing to the Mackay Regional Council \$14.7 million for recovery and reconstruction projects in partnership with the Australian Government. It is important to get our businesses and social structure back up and running fast.

Small business and tourism operators will be able to access grants to help rebuild tourism infrastructure or the 'Go Local-keep Queensland going strong' campaign to encourage Queenslanders to buy from local businesses. The \$12.3 million funding is in partnership with the federal government.

The Mackay fishing community, both professional and recreation anglers were in upheaval during the implementation of the very successful net free zone north of Mackay. Both groups recognise more needs to be done to ensure a modern fishing industry, to be managed to ensure jobs are maintained. Mackay will get one of the new 20 front line compliance officers, this program is funded over 4 years at a cost of \$30 million this year delivering \$9.9 million of funding.

\$1.5 million spend on the River Street boat ramp will be undertaken including a floating pontoon to make the launching of boats safer.

The Mackay Hospital and Health expenditure of \$415.1 million is welcomed. The ongoing expenditure brings the construction of the much needed mental health transition Step Up Step Down facility closer to fruition. Since the Federal Government's slashing of funding for transition housing it is a facility of great need for the ongoing health for patients transitioning from acute care back into mainstream living in a safe environment.

Frontline services make the liability of our community better. I am pleased my region will see an increase in doctors, nurses, and teachers, extra 91 nurses up 12.%, extra 56 doctors up 27.3% and an extra 68 teachers up 3.2%.

Deputy Speaker the tender for the Mackay's \$7 million new fire station will be announced next month. This will be another boost for local jobs.

This is a budget for jobs, now and for the future.