




Speech By
Hon. Leeanne Enoch

MEMBER FOR ALGESTER

Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2017

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

 **Hon. LM ENOCH** (Algester—ALP) (Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business) (11.25 am): I rise to speak in support of the Palaszczuk government's 2017-18 Queensland state budget. On Tuesday, the Treasurer delivered the budget and delivered on our government's commitment to providing a better future for all Queenslanders. This budget will support 40,000 new jobs right across Queensland. It is a budget designed to improve the lives of everyday Queenslanders, to lower the cost of living and to help us take advantage of the abundant opportunities available in our state. It is a budget for families, for battlers and, as I said, a budget for Queensland's future.

We are getting on with the job of diversifying Queensland's economy and providing the right economic conditions to help small businesses, start-ups and entrepreneurs turn their great ideas into commercial realities in our state. Of course, commercialising ideas in Queensland means more jobs for Queenslanders. This budget sets out a clear path for our state's future, but what did we hear yesterday from the member for Clayfield in his budget reply speech? We heard nothing more than empty promises, recycled policies and tall tales.

When it comes to small business the LNP claims to be a friend of small business, but its record when it comes to supporting our state sector speaks for itself. How many references to small business did we hear from the shadow minister, the member for Indooroopilly, during his budget reply? Just one. There was one reference to small business, and it did not even outline how the LNP would support this important sector in Queensland's economy. The LNP is not serious about small business and does not care about small business. The Leader of the Opposition stood in this place and promised six-year targets and annual repeal days, but history shows us that the LNP failed miserably when it came to cutting red tape.

Let us be clear on this: the burden of red tape increased under the Newman-Nicholls government. Their approach was simply to fill rooms of bureaucrats counting words and documents. That is how they looked at reducing red tape. In its April 2015 red tape survey report, the Chamber of Commerce & Industry said—

The burden of red tape has intensified over the past two years and continues to adversely impact the performance of Queensland businesses.

The report also found that one in four businesses felt growth was hindered by red tape and were disappointed the LNP government had let them down.

Unlike the LNP, we are actually working with Queensland small businesses to build a better Queensland. Our economic plan is setting the right conditions for business growth after the disastrous cuts of the Newman-Nicholls government. The LNP did nothing but slash jobs and services. As treasurer, the member for Clayfield cut small business support, abolished the small business commissioner, cut on-line business services and oversaw cuts to the incredibly successful Mentoring for Growth program—actions that according to the ABS contributed to over 14,000 small businesses

being lost in that first year. That is an average of 269 small businesses being lost per week in the first year of the former LNP government. That is what happens when one sacks 14,000 public servants overnight.

Contrast this to the work being done by the Palaszczuk government. We have committed an additional \$22.7 million to deliver our Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy. We have seen our small business numbers grow from 406,000 to 414,000—the biggest increase in the numbers of small business in Queensland in three years. The Suncorp Group CCIQ Pulse Survey for the March 2017 quarter shows business confidence at its highest since 2014, with business conditions perceived to be the best since 2009. We are seeing these positive results because the Palaszczuk government is listening to small businesses and delivering programs to meet their needs, programs such as the \$3 million Accelerate Small Business Grants Program.

This week I announced eight small businesses will share in funding totalling more than \$63,000 to engage business mentors, coaches or an advisory board to work closely with the business for six to 12 months. Our Small Business Entrepreneur Grants Program provides \$3 million over three years to help new small businesses access professional advice and support in the critical early stages of establishing a business. The Small Business Entrepreneur Grants Program provides up to \$5,000 in matched funding to enable small businesses to access planning, coaching and training. The Office of Small Business received more than 200 applications, with 148 of these approved to receive a total of \$559,547 in grant funding.

Our Small Business Digital Grants Program has seen 155 Queensland small businesses share in \$1 million to help them boost their digital capability and participate in the global digital economy. These grants are helping Queensland small businesses start, grow and employ and are being welcomed by small businesses across the state. In addition to this, our expanded Mentoring for Growth initiative has proven beneficial for 148 Queensland small businesses in the past financial year, by helping them increase profit and employ more Queenslanders.

While the member for Clayfield made some fleeting references to small business in his budget reply speech, it is once again those working in the research, start-up and innovation sectors who should be most concerned by what he did not say. Despite acknowledging the vital role science and technology will play in our economy now and in the future, the Leader of the Opposition once more failed to outline the LNP's policy to support Queensland's best and brightest minds. Yet again there was no real mention of innovation, no mention of entrepreneurship, no mention of start-ups, no mention of the digital economy and no mention of research.

What of the hope offered by the member for Mount Ommaney in her role as the shadow minister? It is a role the member is happy to have the title and extra pay for but not that happy to do the extra work for. The member for Mount Ommaney is happy to stand in this place and crack jokes about the hugely successful Advance Queensland initiative—she is even happy to misquote me—but the transition of Queensland's economy is no joking matter. The future prosperity of our state depends on it and it will take all levels of government—of all persuasions—working together with the private sector to ensure prosperity for generations of Queenslanders to come. In that spirit, I would like to share some insights with the member for Mount Ommaney so that she might consider them.

International evidence tells us that attracting experienced overseas companies, start-ups and entrepreneurs to our state is investing in Queenslanders. It is providing them with access to the experience of what it takes to turn a great idea into a business. It is providing them with the opportunity to learn firsthand what it takes to attract venture capital investment. It is providing them with international connections to take the ideas they have commercialised in Queensland to the world.

I would encourage the member for Mount Ommaney to get out and spend quality time with our local start-ups, innovators, researchers and entrepreneurs. I would encourage her to hear their stories, listen to their challenges and understand the opportunities before them. Once she has done that, she should release the LNP's policy to support our state's best and brightest minds. That is something that has been promised but is still nowhere to be seen.

Given the LNP's track record in the innovation space, we should not hold our breath. In their first budget they cut \$50 million from the innovation and science division. Over the three years of LNP government their total investment in innovation was just \$7.2 million and they created just 41 jobs. In contrast, we have seen more than 2,100 jobs created through our Advance Queensland initiative in just two years. We continue to support our best and brightest minds. In the three years of the former LNP government they only awarded 14 research fellowships—the lowest number in over a decade.

The Advance Queensland initiative through the Palaszczuk Labor government is supporting the best and brightest minds. Through our research fellowships and PhD fellowships we have supported close to 100 researchers in this state and that continues to grow through programs such as our Knowledge Transfer Partnerships program.

This is a government that is committed to ensuring that we are not just keeping pace with the rest of the world but that we are getting ahead of it. We are going to ensure that we get our fair share of the new global industries and the new global jobs so that the next generations can participate in those and have the quality of life that all Labor governments expect into the future. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*. I have sought guidance from the Deputy Speaker and have made available to Hansard an electronic copy.

Leave granted.

Mr Speaker, the Palaszczuk Government is investing in this future in many ways—including a \$40 million funding injection to strengthen Queensland's digital infrastructure.

Although we continue to call on the federal LNP government to lift its game when it comes to the so far very disappointing NBN, our government won't stop forging ahead with our digital plans.

We see this commitment as essential work—allowing Queensland to evolve along with our knowledge economy that's built on innovation and entrepreneurship.

The funding will allow us to develop intelligent and tailored government services, to transform the delivery of scientific information, and to safeguard our state's records.

Because Mr Speaker, a revolution is sweeping through our state, and the Palaszczuk Government is committed to improving service delivery for Queenslanders against this backdrop of digital transformation.

That's why the 2017-18 Budget includes an allocation of \$20 million to continue transforming government services through the One-Stop Shop program.

Because Mr Speaker, we want to make it easier for Queenslanders to interact with us.

One-Stop Shop works with all tiers of government and our partners to provide customers with easy access to information and services.

A great example of the improved services being delivered is an online seniors' concessions service, which has reduced the processing time of concession applications from 20 days to 24 hours.

Understandably, this service has received overwhelming positive feedback.

Mr Speaker, \$12.7 million over two years will support the first stage of a digital archive solution to help keep the most significant records of our state safe.

Meanwhile, to modernise the delivery of science services, the government is providing additional funding of \$6.2 million in 2017-18 for the first phase of the Science ICT Remediation and Renewal Program.

This will help us ensure scientific information is not only integrated, coherent and reliable, but that it provides new and accessible insights, and supports more informed decision-making across government.

In addition Mr Speaker, Open Data will receive a further \$1.1 million over two years to increase the publication of high-value datasets and improve data visualisation.

The work will enable access to free, useable Queensland Government data, and will help unlock fresh ideas and fuel greater innovation. Mr Speaker, I am proud of the immense work done by our government to lead Queensland into the digital era.

This \$40 million dollar injection of new funding further adds to the foundation we're building for Queensland to truly be the state of innovation.

And an additional \$10 million has been reallocated for the highly successful Ignite Ideas Fund, which has provided almost \$16.5 million to approximately 120 businesses in the past 18 months.

Queensland's first Chief Entrepreneur, Mark Sowerby, is right behind this move, and calls it a program that's doing what it's meant to do—which is giving Queenslanders a chance to start a business, employ people, and create jobs and wealth.

Mr Speaker, innovation is at the heart of our \$420 million whole-of-government Advance Queensland initiative.

Since its introduction, Advance Queensland has backed more than 900 innovators and supported more than 2100 jobs.

Not to mention, Mr Speaker, Advance Queensland has already helped 3400 entrepreneurs learn new skills to pursue their big, bright ideas.

In 2017-18, through Advance Queensland, \$50 million will be spent unlocking further opportunities and positioning Queensland as the innovation state.

And Mr Speaker, let's not forget about all the associated benefits for Queensland small businesses from initiatives like Back to Work and Made in Queensland, and through energy concessions and the payroll tax rebate.

Our Back to Work program—which has been expanded in this year's budget—is helping break the cycle of long-term and youth unemployment, and the \$20 million Made in Queensland initiative is allowing our local manufacturers to become more innovative and competitive.

Meanwhile, the Palaszczuk Government's Smart Savings website has made it easy for Queenslanders to learn about and apply for concessions and rebates that will ease the cost of living and running a business.

And Mr Speaker, we will also continue with the successful initiative of raising the payroll tax rebate for apprentices and trainees from 25 to 50 per cent. This is in addition to keeping those wages exempt from payroll tax until the 30th of June, 2018.

Because, Mr Speaker, we want to address the issue of falling apprenticeships among our youth, and put more young Queenslanders into jobs that will eliminate a skills shortage and further develop our highly skilled workforce.

Our state is made up of 12 vast and highly diverse regions.

In these regions, we find passionate communities, and I'm proud to speak in the House on behalf of my electorate, Algeester.

This Budget will offer greater support to local families, schools, and individuals with disabilities. It is about empowering people with purpose, and connecting our community as a whole.

Mr Speaker, \$5 million will be invested in the Algeester electorate during the next financial year—part of a \$20 million, four-year commitment—to deliver out-of-home placement care that will ensure children and youth in need of protection are safe.

Almost \$800,000 will be spent on providing vulnerable families with parental and crisis support services, and improving family and community connections for young people at risk.

The Algeester Electorate will benefit from more than \$12.6 million in disability services funding that will support individuals with disabilities, and their families, through the different stages of their lives.

And \$330,000 in grant funding will be used to strengthen dementia respite services—part of a \$1 million commitment over three years.

Mr Speaker, Boronia Heights State School—which has approximately 700 students enrolled from prep to year six, and an enriching Special Education Program—will now be able to upgrade pathways and ramps throughout their grounds with \$100,000 in new funding delivered through the School Infrastructure Enhancement Program.

\$490,000 of a half million dollar investment will also be used to refurbish specialist spaces at Calamvale Community College, while \$50,000 of an allocated \$200,000 will be made available to refurbish the library at Watson Road State School in Acacia Ridge.

And football will now be a constant feature in Willawong, with \$50,000 to be released to construct a new playing field, which is half of a \$100,000 funding commitment.

In addition, Mr Speaker, an \$11,000 commitment has been made in 2017-18 to support and enhance community relations with people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Last weekend I took part in the Algeester Parkinson Lions Club's 'Many Cultures, One Community' event, and it was wonderful to see so many smiling faces from every pocket of our multicultural electorate, so this funding will no doubt be a valuable investment.

Our greater region will also continue with its recovery efforts following extensive flooding earlier this year, with an estimated \$9.5 million to be provided to Logan City Council in 2017-18, in partnership with the Australian Government.

Mr Speaker, as I suggested earlier, this is an inclusive budget that looks after all Queenslanders.

It's supporting jobs, it's investing in critical services and infrastructure, it's helping our state recover from disaster, and it's connecting us like never before.

The figures show the Advance Queensland initiative and the Advance Small Business Queensland Strategy are working.

The programs involved are putting more Queenslanders into jobs, and are helping put Queensland on the map when it comes to innovation, entrepreneurship and startups.

That's why we are holding strong on our current course with both initiatives, and will continue to invest in Queensland, and Queenslanders, so they can start businesses, grow their business, and employ more people in the community.

I commend the Budget to the House.