




Speech By
Hon. Mark Furner

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

Record of Proceedings, 8 August 2017

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL:
INFRASTRUCTURE, PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

 **Hon. M FURNER** (Ferny Grove—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (4.37 pm): It is my pleasure to speak on the Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources Committee budget estimates report and I commend the chair and members of that committee for their stewardship of that report. This is a budget that is about creating opportunities for people in communities right across Queensland. In particular, this budget focuses on closing the gap on disadvantage for our first Australians so that they have access to the same opportunities as every other Queensland—things like aspiring to own your own home, getting an education, having clean drinking water and safe waste disposal. In our third surplus budget I am proud to say that this government is investing more than \$25.7 million in the 2017-18 budget to help close the gap on disadvantage in education, skills, jobs and economic opportunity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. We are investing \$120 million over four years for water and waste infrastructure for Indigenous councils and their communities. We have also increased the State Government Financial Aid program for Indigenous councils to more than \$33.7 million and restored the indexation the former Newman-Nicholls government scrapped.

Conversely, there is a difference between this side of the parliament and those opposite. They cut, they cull, they slash and they sell. Time and time again in this House they have shown they simply do not care about Queenslanders. In the opposition's statement of reservation in the estimates committee report the members talk down the great work that is being done across government to benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders. This is despite the member for Chatsworth undertaking to provide bipartisan support of this portfolio. It is actually sad that it has been 175 days and still no question from the member for Chatsworth during question time about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. His colleague from Glass House is worse. It has been 455 days without a question on local government. I welcome the fact that the LNP has finally shown some interest in the portfolio area of local government through its statement of reservation in the estimates committee report. What it really shows is that they have no grasp on what the portfolio entails. This lazy LNP opposition cannot even bother to read the charter letters of the Deputy Premier and myself. This lazy opposition did not even know which minister was which, exemplified by the fact that the member for Glass House had to actually ask what his portfolio entailed. All he had in his arsenal was a few critiqued, edited quotes from *Hansard*. The poetic licence he has taken is quite extraordinary. The LNP are yet to offer any policy vision, let alone for local government, for the people of Queensland to examine.

Let me help those opposite out and run through just some of the great things we are doing in local government across Queensland, welcomed by the LGAQ and the mayors across the state. In this budget we have allocated \$5 million over two years to help small councils add fluoride to their water supply if they choose. The Deputy Premier's Works for Queensland program, which we have heard quite a bit about this afternoon, has been a huge hit with the mayors. There is an extra \$200 million over two years to continue this great work. It has already created thousands and thousands of jobs

since the budget announcement. There have been 77,300 jobs created since Labor has been in government. There is close to \$29 million for community infrastructure works under the Local Government Grants and Subsidy Program. Last year alone this program supported hundreds of local jobs in the regions where we know jobs are needed the most. In our third investment in infrastructure we see the results that are being delivered right across this amazing state.

While the LNP wants to stay silent on supporting these regional communities and supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders, the Palaszczuk government is speaking up. I talk to the mayors and councillors on a regular basis. I hear time and time again about the support of the grants funding that this government is providing. Through this budget we are giving local communities the support they need to create jobs, build infrastructure and enjoy everything our state has to offer. Alternatively, the LNP opposition turn their back on this budget and Queenslanders in general.