




Speech By  
**Hon. Yvette D'Ath**

**MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2017

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

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for Training and Skills) (10.38 am): The Palaszczuk government's 2017-18 budget is a great budget for the people of Redcliffe, as well as the broader community. Redcliffe schools, health services and social housing will experience a massive capital investment from the 2017-18 budget. The justice system will see another boost in this year's budget, on top of the significant investment in the 2016-17 budget. Domestic and family violence specialist courts, drug courts, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, courts, the Coroner's Office and the Electoral Commission all receive additional funding in this year's budget.

In the area of training and skills, the news is not as strong. While the Palaszczuk government continues to invest in ensuring the people of Queensland have the skills they need to gain employment, due to the ceasing of the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform, which delivered \$105 million in the 2016-17 year, currently no funding arrangements are finalised. I will go through many of those initiatives in greater detail later in my speech, but firstly I will go to some of the highlights in my portfolios.

The government's key priorities and initiatives are: continuing to implement justice system initiatives in response to the *Not now, not ever* report into domestic and family violence in Queensland, including the rollout of the specialist domestic and family violence courts; rolling out a further three high-risk teams to Cairns, Brisbane and Ipswich to provide an integrated response across government and the community to domestic and family violence; implementing a whole-of-government youth justice strategy; implementing the government's response to the independent review of youth detention in Queensland to improve practices and services pivotal to the safety, wellbeing and rehabilitation of Queensland youth in detention; managing the social benefit bond contract with Life Without Barriers to reduce reoffending rates for young people; addressing recidivism and the underlying causes of offending through specialist courts and court diversion programs, early intervention initiatives, restorative justice programs and offender programs and re-entry services; enhancing service delivery and access to justice services for vulnerable and disadvantaged Queenslanders, such as victims of crime, adults with impaired capacity, children in need of protection, people with disability and people overrepresented in the justice system; providing funding over three years for legal assistance services for vulnerable and disadvantaged people, delivered by Queensland community legal centres, with additional interim funding to support Queensland community legal centres to maintain staff and services for three months while decisions are made about the allocation of the restored Commonwealth funding over 2017-20; and \$331,000 in 2017-18 to support the coronial inquest into the deaths at Dreamworld.

In Training and Skills, the government continues its focus on providing all Queenslanders with access to high-quality training and skilling opportunities to participate effectively in the workforce. The government is committed to: strengthening the Queensland VET market to support eligible Queenslanders to undertake training for employment in priority areas identified by industry; investing in

TAFE Queensland to be a premium public provider of VET; setting standards for high-quality training delivery through the implementation of the Queensland VET Quality Framework; continuing to support Queenslanders into work through the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative; collaborating with Jobs Queensland, an independent statutory entity providing strategic industry advice to government on skills demand and workforce planning; and strengthening prequalified supplier entry requirements to assure training participants that their chosen registered training organisation is able to deliver high-quality industry standard training.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*. In doing so, I confirm that I have the approval of the Deputy Speaker.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Linard): Order! Have you also provided an electronic copy and a copy for tabling?

**Mrs D'ATH:** Yes, I believe so.

Leave granted.

#### Justice System

This Labor Budget has ensured Queensland will now have specialist courts that tackle two significant criminal issues in our society: Drugs and domestic and family violence.

The State Budget has allocated almost \$69.5 million being \$49.492 million over four years and \$20 million capital over two years for a rollout of Specialist Domestic and Family Violence Courts. This funding will make the Southport Specialist Court permanent, and will also allow the specialist court to be expanded across two new locations at Beenleigh and Townsville, with circuit courts to Mount Isa and Palm Island. This means that in addition to the domestic and family violence matters heard by our magistrates across the State, Queenslanders will have five courts at which a specialist domestic and family violence magistrate will operate.

The allocation of funds to these courts was chosen after consideration of the evaluation of the trial of the Southport DFV Court and an analysis of the areas of greatest demand across Queensland.

This funding provides for Magistrates, court staff, corrections officers, prosecutors, duty lawyers, support services for victims of domestic and family violence, and programs for perpetrators at these locations.

This funding also includes significant capital investment to the Beenleigh and Townsville courts, to ensure that our courts can provide the appropriate private spaces and facilities necessary to accommodate a special domestic and family violence court.

Upon coming to Government, Labor promised the people of Queensland that we would bring back our diversionary courts. The Palaszczuk government has already delivered on our commitment to bring back the Murri Courts and court-ordered Youth Justice Conferencing. With this budget, the Palaszczuk fulfils our commitment to diversionary courts by delivering on the last phase being a specialist Drug Court.

Funding of \$22.7 million over four years (including \$500,000 capital) and ongoing funding of \$6.5 million per annum across Justice Services and Corrective Services service areas, the judiciary and Legal Aid Queensland to reinstate the Drug Court and to provide referral and support services to help people address issues associated with their offending. The funding will deliver the new Specialist Drug Court and court referral and support services.

The Specialist Drug Court will operate in Brisbane, where the necessary support services are based, to best achieve the wrap around services. Brisbane is also the site where the largest volume of drug related matters arise. This decision is also supported by the views reflected in the Report to start with one court and ensure that the processes are bedded down and working effectively before any further roll-out.

Having said this, the Specialist Drug Court will be further supported by court referral and support services in other parts of Queensland. The Queensland Drug and Specialist Courts Review, which I table earlier this week, was conducted by leading experts in the field and set the framework for a Specialist Drug Court to be reinstated in Queensland.

The Specialist Drug Court was a key election commitment of the Palaszczuk Government and will provide an intensive, targeted and effective sentencing option for offenders whose behaviour is driven by drug or alcohol dependency, and will help reduce reoffending by addressing the underlying causes of addiction.

Another important investment in our justice system and our courthouses is an injection of \$31.6 million over five years reducing to \$4.2 million per annum, ongoing from 2022-2023 to expand and upgrade existing audio visual capability in the criminal justice system. This enables our courts to have the state of the art audio visual equipment to open up our courts to more areas and matters, through the flexibility of hearing matters via video link. This creates efficiencies across the justice system, including for police, corrective services and the legal profession.

This Labor Budget also provides \$16 million over two years to upgrade and maintain courthouse infrastructure across Queensland, including increased funding of \$7.5 million for repair work at the Rockhampton Courthouse.

Another important commitment being delivered by the Palaszczuk Government is the transition of 17 year olds from the adult criminal justice system into the youth justice system, as part of a broader whole-of-government strategy to reduce youth offending and recidivism. The Government has committed \$199.6 million over four years to implement reforms that will not only support the transition of 17 year olds into the youth justice system in a safe and manageable way, but also to invest in early intervention and address the underlying causes of offending. By doing so the Government can save money in the long term by reducing crime, thus reducing pressures on our courts, policing and detention centres, community services and the costs of long term incarceration including in the adult prison system.

This objective formulated on evidence-based models is far more effective in the long term in making our communities safer, than simply spending more money on building more detention centres. That philosophy simply accepts that crime will increase and more youth will be sentenced and require detention. That is a short sighted approach that does nothing to reduce crime and make our communities safer.

The Palaszczuk Government, on the other hand, is committed to long term youth justice reform, which has been widely supported by stakeholders, who recognise that Queensland was the only State in Australia that still treated 17 year olds as adults.

The Government will continue its commitment to the Community Youth Response initiative in Townsville by providing funding of \$7.3 over 2 years for this important intervention strategy.

The whole-of-government Youth Justice Strategy includes delivering Queensland's second Social Benefit Bond to reduce reoffending rates for young people aged 10-16 years old and also aims to reduce the risk of young people being held on remand. The multi-systemic therapy service provides the opportunity to address re-offending rates among young offenders where early intervention can reduce both severity and duration of future offending behaviour. Up to 600 young people over 5 years will be referred to the program by Youth Justice.

The funding provided through the Special Domestic and Family Violence Courts roll-out, the reintroduction of the Drug Court and the Youth Justice Reforms, will include funding for an additional seven new FTE magistrates. One of these magistrates is to be a relieving magistrate to act in the Children's Court and provide the flexibility to move a special children court magistrate around the State where needed.

#### Training and Skills

In my portfolio of Training and Skills, the Palaszczuk Government continues its commitment to the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative by funding \$60 million in 2017-18 to support up to 8,000 Queenslanders to get into work or young people back into education.

This budget also supports the Back to Work program by supporting eligible jobseekers to gain required skills for employment in regional Queensland communities through additional training under the Back to Work Certificate 3 Guarantee Boost.

To ensure that training is being delivered in the areas of demand based on regional needs, Jobs Queensland is funded \$9 million over four years for the Regional Skills Adjustment Strategy.

The Government continues its development of the Advancing skills for the future: A strategy for vocational education and training in Queensland, a blueprint to ensure Queensland has the skilled population to attract investment and encourage job creation.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government will continue its unwavering support for our public training providers, including TAFE Queensland, with funding of approximately \$203 million in 2017-18 under the State Contribution Grant.

The Government will be developing strategies to provide services to better inform students and employers about qualifications, study options and training providers suited to their needs. This includes partnering with TAFE Queensland to provide up to 10,000 state school students with personalised information about potential career and training pathways.

With the VET Investment Plan for 2017-18 to be released shortly, there is currently a reduction in the overall budget due to the decision of the Commonwealth Government to not renew or extend the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform. This NPA delivered \$105.4 million in 2016-17.

While the State Contributions to the Training and Skills budget is increasing from \$576.5 million in 2016-17 financial year, to \$614.9 million in 2017-18, the Commonwealth Contribution decreases from \$483.3 million in 2016-17 to \$419.6 million in 2017-18. This is including \$70 million (down from \$105.4 million in 2016-17) under the Commonwealth's new Skilling Australians Fund, which is subject to the passing of legislation that if passed, will not commence until March 2018. In addition, the revenue for this fund is wholly funded through a new levy on the hire of migrant workers by businesses.

This new Fund is to provide funding to States and Territories to fund an increase in apprenticeships and traineeships, however, the funding is reliant on bringing in as many migrant workers as possible. If the migrant workers are not employed in sufficient numbers to fund the scheme, the funds will not be available to support apprenticeships and traineeships in Queensland.

This means we have a scheme that is not finalised, the terms are still to be determined and the funds have no certainty going forward.

The Palaszczuk Government will continue to advocate for the best deal for Queenslanders with the Commonwealth Government, with the aim to lift apprenticeship and traineeship commencements and completions in Queensland.

#### Redcliffe

In my electorate of Redcliffe, I am proud to be part of a Labor Government that is investing \$11m in 2017-18 for school infrastructure projects across the Redcliffe Peninsula, totalling \$14 million. This includes \$4.9 million in 2017-18 for Redcliffe Special School to construct additional classrooms, with total funding of \$6.5 million.

In 2017-18 \$4.7 million will also go to Redcliffe State High School to construct a new hall and administration building, as well as new basketball courts and sports shed. In total Redcliffe State High School will receive \$6.1 million. This construction is due to be completed by the end of 2017, for the start of the 2018 school year.

Clontarf Beach State High School, Redcliffe State High School, Scarborough State School and Kippa-Ring State School will all receive \$350,000 each under the School Infrastructure Enhancement Program. These grants will refurbish manual arts blocks at our 2 state high schools, with the state primary schools refurbishing school blocks and classrooms.

Our health services get a great boost, with \$4.6 million funded in 2017-18 out of a \$6.6 million project to be used to construct two replacement Day Procedure rooms and refurbish sterilising service and pathology areas. The upgrade will improve patient flow for patients receiving gastroenterology day procedures.

This is in addition to the work already underway to move the oncology and dialysis units over to the Moreton Bay Integrated Care Centre (MBICC), making way for 26 new acute hospital beds to be developed on level 6 of the Redcliffe Hospital. The MBICC is on track with construction works underway and completion forecast in the coming months. The new ward is expected to be completed by mid-next year in time for the busy winter season. The Health Service also opened a newly refurbished ward on level 4 in 2015 and funded an additional 8 beds in 2016 that are now open throughout the hospital.

The next phase of the project will be the announcement of tenders in the third quarter for both the new ward and other work planned including the upgrades to the Day Procedure Unit, sterilising services and pathology areas.

As the people of Redcliffe are well aware, we are not immune from social issues such as homelessness. Anyone could find themselves homeless when unexpected events happen in people's lives. The reasons why people end up homeless can be complex, but it is important that Governments meet their obligations to provide social and affordable housing for our most vulnerable in our community.

That is why I am so proud to be part of the Palaszczuk Government that is investing \$8.5 million over the next 5 years on the Redcliffe Peninsula to build at least 30 new social housing dwellings.

Local non-government organisations that perform incredible work in our community, Chameleon Regional Community Housing and Open Minds Australia, will continue to share in \$1 million for homeless services.

\$490,000 is also provided to upgrade the Cowan Bypass Road, Moreton Island, \$444,000 as part of a \$1.7 million local commitment over four years to improve the safety and wellbeing of victims of domestic and family violence, \$350,000 as part of a \$1.4 million local commitment over 4 years to support people with a disability transition to the NDIS.

Many local Dolphins fans will also be pleased to know that \$618,000 is provided in the 2017-18 budget as part of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to \$1.1 million for stage 2 of the Dolphin Stadium. This stage includes upgrading the field, constructing rooms for coaches, referees, media and a recreational bunk house.

Another big announcement that will benefit the people of Redcliffe along with Queenslanders right across South-East Queensland is the funding of the Cross River Rail. Queenslanders are sick of waiting for the Commonwealth government to join with the Queensland Government to deliver on this important public infrastructure. That is why the Palaszczuk government is funding this project. Our inner city rail line is choking. We need to create greater capacity to allow for increased services and reduced travel time across South-East Queensland.

The facts about the Cross River Rail project:

- a new 10.2 kilometre rail line between Dutton Park and Bowen Hills, with 5.9 kilometres of tunnel under the Brisbane River and CBD. New stations will be built at Boggo Road, Woolloongabba, Albert Street, Roma Street and Exhibition showgrounds. Early works will begin in 2017 with the demolition of the GoPrint site at Woolloongabba;
- 1500 jobs each year over five years of construction and more than 3000 jobs in the most intensive year of construction;
- all state approvals are ticked off, with the Coordinator General approving the Request for Project Change for the Environmental Impact Statement in June 2017;
- Cross River Rail will free up the transport network right across South East Queensland resulting in travel time savings for all regions by removing the rail bottleneck across the Brisbane River.

The people of Redcliffe understand the benefits of investing in public transport, having just celebrated our 1 millionth passenger travelling on the new Redcliffe Peninsula rail line. Once operational the Cross River Rail will save Redcliffe residents up to 8 minutes travelling time to the city on the Redcliffe Peninsula line.

This is a city-shaping project 10 years in the making and it will be delivered by the Palaszczuk Labor Government.

These funding announcements in the 2017-18 budget for the Redcliffe community are in addition to the ongoing fund for road upgrades, grants for sporting and community organisations, including our most recent announcement of \$60,000 for the Redcliffe Harness Racing Club for track upgrades and semaphore boards.

The funds provided in the 2017-18 State Budget are on top of the significant investment in the Redcliffe community to our frontline services. In just over 2 years the Palaszczuk Labor government has delivered a major boost to the frontline services our community relies on:

- 95 extra nurses at our local hospital;
- 19 extra doctors at our local hospital;
- 23 extra teachers and teacher aides at Redcliffe schools with 2 extra guidance officers.

The Palaszczuk government continues to deliver for the people of Redcliffe, and as the local member, I will continue to be a strong voice for my community, and a person that the people of Redcliffe can continue to count on into the future.