




Speech By
Hon. Craig Crawford

MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

Record of Proceedings, 14 June 2018

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

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (8.15 pm): I thank the member for Gregory for his kind words. I can report to the House that commencement of construction of the Longreach fire and rescue station is scheduled for 2019-20 with completion in 2020-21. I look forward to keeping the member up to date on that.

I rise to support the Appropriation Bill 2018 and contribute to the debate on the Queensland state budget. First and foremost, I am the state member for Barron River, and I am delighted that this budget delivers for people across the far north. The Palaszczuk government will deliver \$253 million of road infrastructure in 2018-19 for Far North Queensland as part of another record investment—for the third year in a row. After my strong advocacy, I am particularly excited that this budget commits funds to begin construction of the \$152 million Smithfield bypass—delivering on yet another of our commitments in the region and ensuring we provide the infrastructure that will service our growing communities well into the future. This budget commits \$17.5 million to begin work on the project to construct a bypass route connecting the Yorkeys Knob Road roundabout and the McGregor Road roundabout to bypass the town of Smithfield. This project is 100 per cent funded by the Palaszczuk government.

I am very proud to be part of a government that is supporting our key industries by investing in Cairns and the far north in areas that truly matter to the local residents of my electorate. This is a budget that will boost my local economy, it will create jobs and it will inspire confidence, building on the work that has been done since 2015 to support our region. Since the 2015 election, the Palaszczuk government has improved front-line health and education services in the far north by employing an additional 143 doctors, 364 nurses, 182 teachers and 86 teacher aides.

This year we commence a \$1 million business case study into the Wangetti Trail. If members have not heard of the Wangetti Trail, I urge them to do some investigations. For those members of the House who like adventure trails such as the ones down in Tasmania, I can say that the Wangetti Trail will outshine them all. I am sure the member for Cairns will join me in that testimony. People in the far north have put in the hard work on this, with advocacy groups, councils and business progressing this to the point where we now have the funding for a business case to move forward.

The budget commits \$10 million to significant school infrastructure in my electorate, including the Tropical North Learning Academy, which is the Smithfield State High School and the Trinity Beach State School. Over four years, \$10 million will be spent to refurbish that school and bring it up to speed. Also, \$109,000 will be used to refurbish the home economics block, block 7, at the Kuranda District State College.

Across the Cairns region, I want to recognise my parliamentary colleagues—the member for Cairns, the member for Cook and Mr Speaker, as the member for Mulgrave, for the work that has gone into preparing this budget for the far north.

There is also \$26.4 million of \$66.5 million to go towards the construction of the Cairns Performing Arts Centre on the site of the existing Cairns Civic Theatre in the Cairns electorate. More than \$26 million is allocated to support job-creating maintenance and minor infrastructure works through the Works for Queensland program in the far north. I have to say that I have never met a mayor who has not talked constantly about Works for Queensland and what they have managed to do in their patches.

The Cairns Indigenous Arts Fair will receive \$1.9 million in 2018-19 as part of a \$6.2 million partnership between all levels of government to build and celebrate culture and create economic opportunity for Indigenous artists. This funding is on top of \$1 million from a \$4.1 million pool to provide Indigenous artists access to space, training, education and enterprise development. The 2018-19 budget also delivers on the Palaszczuk government's election promise to refurbish the Cairns State High School classrooms in the electorate of Cairns, with \$900,000 of \$1.8 million allocated this year. There is \$116,000 for regional councils to provide preschool literacy sessions, known as First 5 Forever. I am sure that the libraries and our schools across the far north will enjoy this funding.

As someone who appreciates just why the Great Barrier Reef is such a priority for this government, I applaud the \$6.3 million commitment to achieve this government's targets for the uptake of best management practices by farmers in pursuit of Great Barrier Reef water quality targets. That cannot be talked up enough in the city of Cairns and in the region of Far North Queensland. Tourism drives our economy and the Great Barrier Reef is at the heart of our tourism. This is another important step for the 69,000 people who rely on the reef for their livelihood and it is important for the range of industries it supports, from tourism to commercial fishing, that inject over \$6 billion into our regional economies.

There is a \$1.9 million commitment for a multifunction facility in Atherton for natural disaster resilience and preparation training, as well as the local disaster coordination centre. The government has always been—and will always continue to be—committed to doing everything we can to ensure the safety of Queenslanders. That brings me to the record 2018-19 budget commitment for Queensland Fire and Emergency Services. Nowhere in Australia is more at the mercy of natural disasters than Queensland, which is why we have the best emergency services teams in the world and why the Palaszczuk government is committed to maintaining their lofty standards. Queensland is growing and the operational response of our emergency services needs to grow with it. QFES provides vital front-line services to the Queensland community and it is important we show our support, allowing for our emergency services to continue their great work within their local communities.

The Palaszczuk government has committed to spend \$702 million on QFES in 2018-19, promising to deliver jobs and upgraded front-line services, facilities and equipment. The funding included in this budget is for staffing for more than 3,300 full-time-equivalent firefighters, delivering on the Palaszczuk government's commitment to enhance community safety across the state well into the future. As I mentioned this morning, the budget includes a \$29.5 million commitment over four years to provide 100 front-line firefighters and 12 extra communications officers, ensuring communities continue to receive quality services. This delivers on an election promise made by our Premier.

The budget invests \$82.3 million in Fire and Emergency Services facilities, vehicles, information and communications systems and equipment. I am pleased to announce here tonight that we will be building new staffed fire stations at Charlton and Pimpama. The budget has allocated \$7.6 million in 2018-19 to the commencement and delivery of new auxiliary fire and rescue stations in Childers, Rathdowney, Richmond, El Arish, Esk, Gracemere, Kilkivan, Wooroolin and Yarraman. I want to thank the member for Gympie for helping me with the pronunciation of Kilkivan.

Gracemere will receive funding for a \$2.1 million state-of-the-art station, recognising Central Queensland's increasing demand for services. Building modern facilities means the community can feel at ease knowing our fire and emergency services are properly equipped and ready to respond at a moment's notice. An amount of \$2.5 million will ensure fire and rescue stations in Loganlea, Mount Ommaney and West Logan receive their upgrades in 2018-19. It was great to be out at Mount Ommaney the other day with the member for Mount Ommaney while we had a look at the station and spoke to the crews. They will be moving out for nearly six months before they will come back to their new, renovated facility around Christmas time.

Planning is underway for the construction of a multimillion dollar auxiliary fire and rescue station at Yarrabilba in coming years. I want to thank the member for Logan for his strong advocacy leading into the last election. I thank both the member and the former minister for fire and emergency services, Mark Ryan, for committing to the future for Yarrabilba. We have now put that into play. That will be a magnificent facility that will serve that community well.

The government's record funding demonstrates our commitment to meet Queenslanders' current and future needs by delivering quality facilities. I am pleased to announce that the 2018-19 budget also includes more than \$1 million of the \$3 million committed during the election campaign towards the commencement of a new QFES complex in Maleny that will accommodate the local Rural Fire Service, State Emergency Service and Auxiliary Fire and Rescue Service.

In addition, the budget commits \$44 million for 180 new urban and rural fire appliances. Cutting-edge vehicles will soon be rolling out the doors of new fire and rescue stations and rural fire stations right across this state. I am confident that the projected delivery of 61 new fire and rescue vehicles, as well as 119 Rural Fire Service vehicles, will go a long way in bolstering our firefighting efforts across the state of Queensland. These 180 new appliances due next financial year are on top of more than 100 which have already been delivered under our capital works program. That will be a statewide total of more than 280 new firefighting appliances over two financial years. Even better, they will all have been completed locally by Queensland companies. In addition, local parts are sourced to provide maintenance and servicing for the life span of vehicles.

About \$2.7 million has been allocated for the commencement or completion of joint Rural Fire Service and SES facilities in Howard, Horn Island and Mount Isa. We are upgrading communication facilities in Cairns and Rockhampton, spending \$3 million to upgrade those communications centres. The Cairns fire communications facility deals with calls from up to a thousand kilometres away. That facility is currently shared with the Queensland Ambulance Service. The new communications centre will be incorporated into the overall design with QAS when we build a new facility at the Cairns Ambulance Station.

The state's far north is no stranger to severe weather and it is important that QFES has the support to effectively serve the Queensland community. Damage caused by severe weather events, such as Tropical Cyclone Nora, continues to influence the region's disaster management. Community safety is also a priority in Weipa where we are investing \$400,000 for the commencement of a \$1.2 million emergency and disaster centre. These capital works in the far north are crucial for the community, particularly for those in isolated areas.

I enthusiastically commend this budget to the House. I want to thank the Treasurer and all members of cabinet for their input into the budget.