




Speech By
Cynthia Lui

MEMBER FOR COOK

Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2018

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

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (4.00 pm): Today I rise to speak on behalf of my constituents and the communities that I serve and to congratulate the Premier and the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, the Hon. Jackie Trad, for handing down a phenomenal budget—a budget for all Queenslanders. I thank the Premier and the Palaszczuk government for their ongoing commitment and support to communities in my electorate.

The electorate of Cook is very unique. It is vast and diverse. From Saibai Island in the Torres Strait—which is in fact the most northern point in Australia and is just kilometres from PNG—to the Cape York communities in the north, out west to Mareeba and the tourist heartland of Port Douglas in the south, I am very lucky to represent an electorate where the unique geography shapes the various communities I have the honour of representing. The geographical size of the electorate is a major influencing factor that underlies the types of opportunities available to people living in rural and remote areas of Far North Queensland. For instance, the issues and challenges facing communities in the Torres Strait are vastly different from those faced in the southern part of my electorate due to the unique geography and diversity of my local communities. The Palaszczuk government understands the challenges that regional and remote communities face. That is why, when it comes time to deliver, the Palaszczuk government delivers.

The Palaszczuk government understands the importance of supporting health services in regional communities. Health is undeniably one of the most critical services that supports community wellbeing and longevity. In regional communities, investing in the right infrastructure ensures better quality and access to services locally, meaning local people do not have to travel long distances from their families for specialist health care. It is also vitally important to build infrastructure that will increase and support staff capacity.

Shortly after the election in 2017, the Palaszczuk government wasted no time in getting to the regions when the newly appointed Minister for Health, Minister Miles, visited the Mareeba community to discuss health infrastructure and resources in the region. As a result, the Palaszczuk government honoured its election commitment and I am pleased to inform the House that Mareeba and surrounds will benefit from a significant \$12.1 million investment to support health infrastructure and services to ensure the best possible outcomes for the community. The Palaszczuk government has invested \$5 million for a new CT scanner, \$1.5 million for staff accommodation and \$3.8 million for endoscopy services. That means less patient travel and the ability to attract quality health professionals to our region. To further support the growing demand on health services in Mareeba, the Palaszczuk government has allocated \$1.8 million to build a new ambulance station, which I welcome because it means effective and responsive services to deal with any emergency in a timely manner.

I am even more excited that the Palaszczuk government has committed over \$21 million to build health infrastructure throughout the Cook electorate. The Palaszczuk government's investment is a huge achievement for communities in Far North Queensland, as it will build stronger services throughout the electorate. Whether it is upgrades to and the refurbishment of existing infrastructure in the Torres Strait Islands and Cape York, building new staff accommodation in the northern peninsula area or committing grants for over five years to provide the management of environmental issues that impact on health in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities throughout Cape York and Torres Strait, it is all part of the Palaszczuk government's vested interest in health for communities throughout my electorate.

What about schools in my electorate? When it comes to backing the education needs for children in Queensland, only the Palaszczuk government can do it so well. The Palaszczuk government continues to support schools, because this government understands that every child deserves quality education no matter where they live. We can expect this budget to focus on supporting the ongoing maintenance of infrastructure with the refurbishment of school blocks at Mareeba State High School, Western Cape College, the Hopevale campus of CYAAA and Cooktown State School. It will provide funds for maintenance and electrical safety upgrades for Tagai State College campuses on Thursday Island and Horn Island, and the Pormpuraaw early childhood site. It will also provide for the replacement of school perimeter fencing at Mareeba State School. This all highlights the government's commitment to children in regional and remote parts of Queensland.

I am also very proud to support the funding that is going to the First 5 Forever family literacy program. The initiative will support librarian allocations for Mareeba, Cook, Douglas, Torres and Weipa. That important initiative responds to the educational needs of kids from a very young age and commits funds to supply library resources to public libraries. This is a great example of a government that is thinking not only about today but also about future generations to come.

When it comes to the holistic wellbeing of children, youth, adults and community, the Palaszczuk government stands firm on supporting communities. The government has released a budget that will do exactly that. It will provide essential services to support out-of-home-care placements. It will provide family support services to work with vulnerable families to help improve parenting skills and provide intervention support. It will provide domestic and family violence services to improve the safety and wellbeing of victims and families in high-risk situations. It will give support to vulnerable women and individuals who need to get their lives back on track. It will also support women and youth by strengthening their connections with community.

Every child and family deserves the right to a roof over their heads, no matter where they live. On 30 June 2018, just over two short weeks away, the federal LNP government will turn its back on communities by walking away from a 50-year-old program to support housing in remote Indigenous communities. Government support for housing in remote Indigenous communities is absolutely vital. Unlike other areas of this state and other parts of Australia, people living in remote Indigenous communities do not have options available to them. If the Palaszczuk government had not stepped in to make up the shortfall following the federal LNP government's reckless decision, we would have seen a vast increase in homelessness, overcrowding, and poor health and educational outcomes in remote Indigenous communities in my electorate. Our government did that because we believe in a fair go for everyone. I acknowledge Minister de Brenni for his strong advocacy on this issue.

We all know that security plays a vital part in keeping communities safe. The Palaszczuk government continues to support police and corrective services in my electorate. The funds that Cook will receive will assist the Aurukun Aboriginal community's four-point plan in relation to the Adult Prisoner Reintegration Program and the upgrade of the water treatment plant at Lotus Glen Correctional Centre. I acknowledge Minister Ryan for his hard work on that.

Supporting local sporting groups and providing adequate infrastructure is particularly important in my electorate due to its limited opportunities. I am very proud of the work that the Palaszczuk government has done to support sport and recreation in my electorate. The Mareeba and District Cricket Club was thrilled to receive an election commitment of \$90,000 to extend and upgrade their clubhouse, saying that they can now grow and offer more opportunities for locals to participate. I am excited about the allocation of \$4 million to fund splash parks in Mapoon, Napranum and Pormpuraaw, which will offer safe water spaces and encourage children and families to interact in their communities.

Through the Building our Regions program communities such as Lockhart River will receive almost half a million dollars to build a new terminal at Lockhart River Airport and over \$400,000 to upgrade the ageing and failing freshwater station at Erub Island in the Torres Strait. This is truly a government that believes in building the regions. The Palaszczuk government looks after all Queenslanders.

The 2018-19 budget speaks for itself. Whether it is supporting a new animal shelter and boarding kennel for Paws and Claws in the Douglas shire, building better roads for people travelling throughout the region, commencing construction on the two-lane Newell Beach boat ramp, road safety improvements for Mossman-Molloy or investing to get the best out of future road infrastructure by funding the planning of the Mareeba bypass, Labor delivers for all throughout the region.

With the progressive sealing of the Peninsula Developmental Road there will be an increase in the number of tourists. That will open up immeasurable opportunities for jobs, small business development and investment throughout Cape York. I give a special thankyou to the Minister for Tourism, Minister Jones, for being a strong advocate for the Wangetti Trail—a 76-kilometre-long nation-leading bike and walkway between Palm Cove and Port Douglas showcasing the beauty of the Wet Tropics, the reef and World Heritage areas.

The natural environment is particularly important in an electorate such as mine. I commend Minister Enoch for her work in this area. Over \$5 million will fund critical projects, including the Springvale Station erosion management project, the Queensland Indigenous Land and Sea Ranger program and funding to support the Queensland Conservation Council and regional conservation groups.

This is a budget that creates jobs in a strong economy and supports growth and development in the regions. As a first term member of parliament, I am proud to represent a government that looks after the needs of all Queenslanders. I would like to commend this first budget of the Hon. Jackie Trad that creates jobs in a strong economy, supports growth and development in the region and delivers for all Queenslanders.