




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MACKAY

Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2018

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

 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (8.07 pm): I rise in support of the appropriation bills. The Palaszczuk government gives our businesses, local governments and entrepreneurs the environment and resources to establish and thrive in Queensland. Once again, the Treasurer and Deputy Premier has demonstrated that it is the Palaszczuk Labor government that has a positive plan for our state. We have the biofutures 10-year road map, the agricultural 10-year road map, a 10-year plan for health and a Mackay-Whitsunday transport plan, just to name some.

The Palaszczuk government's support of local government has seen the Mackay Regional Council complete sewage and water treatment upgrades, develop parks, undertake local community hall upgrades, install a whale-viewing platform and continue to develop the Mackay region as a tourist destination, keeping locals in employment. Our innovators, researchers and developers are supported through grants. I refer to Split Spaces, Make a Space and the QUT racecourse laboratory, which is developing biofuture products, and other brand-new businesses that are being developed. Under the Palaszczuk Labor government, my region is not just focusing on now; we are preparing for the future.

The Mackay electorate and surrounding regions have begun to thrive under the Palaszczuk Labor government. Vital infrastructure is being built such as roads, bridges, hospital upgrades and school upgrades and we are funding more police, nurses and teachers.

We want to create jobs in a strong economy. We know the world is changing at a rapid rate. Our programs like Advance Queensland are attracting new and exciting businesses and industries to Queensland, and in particular to my region of Mackay. Mecurius, a US based company, is one of these businesses. They are developing biodiesel, aviation fuel and marine fuel at the QUT laboratory. This is what my community wants and needs to future proof our economy from the fluctuations of the rise and fall of commodity and sugar prices.

The Palaszczuk government is serious about training and apprenticeships. The unemployed need skills to gain work. I am pleased that Skilling Queenslanders for Work is continuing. In my community the long-term unemployed got their chance at a qualification through this very successful program. Skills gained include certificates in construction, administration, aged care, heavy vehicle operation, rail and hospitality. Participants gained their qualifications and most gained ongoing employment. I have had many invitations to graduation ceremonies cancelled because graduates could not get time off work with their new employers to attend the ceremony.

Participants I have met come from varied backgrounds. One thing that has stuck with me is the number of parents with young children completing the program. This program changes the lives of participants and it changes the lives of children who get to see their parents engaged in work. Young Ian McNaulty gained a carpentry apprenticeship from his Skilling Queenslanders for Work program in construction. This has made a huge difference to him and his young family's life. The Palaszczuk

government's incentives for employers to take on apprentices are being taken up in my part of the state. During the dark days of the LNP government the number of apprenticeships being advertised began to slump.

To create jobs in a strong economy Minister Fentiman and the Premier while in the Mackay region unveiled a \$1 million assistance program for employers to encourage them to engage apprentices. This is to make up for some of the adverse effects on training after Scott Morrison stripped \$60 million from the training sector in the federal budget.

I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*. I can advise that the Deputy Speaker has viewed and approved my speech for incorporation and an electronic copy of my speech has been made available to Hansard.

Leave granted.

This year I attended induction of apprentices, 5 at Ergon, 42 at BMA and in yesterday's Daily Mercury there is an article featuring Hastings Deering needing a further 44 apprentices. These opportunities are being taken up by school leavers and mature aged workers reskilling.

Our apprenticeship incentives, added with youth Boost ,Back to Work and Skilling Queenslanders for work programs that has resulted in an unemployment rate in my region in now sitting at 3.8%. The Palaszczuk governments programs are working.

We want to give all our children a great start.

We will increase the number of babies born healthier.

Increase childhood immunisation rates and improve wellbeing prior to school.

We all know education is the passport to the future that's why we are funding preschool literacy lessons, there is \$70, 000 for councils in the Mackay region to provide the First 5 forever program in our local libraries. The foundations of literacy set children on a path of lifelong learning.

As a former teacher I know education is our passport to the future, that's why we are investing in quality facilities to enhance student's learning. \$1,236,000 has been allocated for maintenance and minor works across Mackay schools.

Slade Point SS will receive \$200,000 for fence replacement, I would like to congratulate P&C President Mikee McGrath for his tireless effort over 7 years to realise his passion for his project. He tells me the fence was old when he went to the school, time for new modern infrastructure.

\$7.4million towards the Northern Beaches SHS performing arts facility will give the talented students and opportunity to hone their skills in a modern purpose built state of the art facility.

Well maintained learning spaces is what our students deserve to reach their full potential.

Keep Queenslanders healthy.

We will strive to increase the number of Queenslanders with a healthy body weight and reduce suicides.

Good Health is real wealth for our community. When you use our local hospital, it is crucial you get quality care.

That's why I am thrilled to see Mackay HHS has a record budget of \$441.7 million, an increase of \$26.6 million from last year's budget. The budget increase will take pressure off our hard-working doctors, nurses and health professionals in the emergency department. They have been stretched since the last bulk bill clinic ceased in Mackay. The LNP Federal government have stood by without addressing this desperate situation. Families doing it tough financially are relying on the hospital's emergency department for general medical treatment instead of attending a GP surgery. Mr Turnbull this is not good enough for my community.

Funding of \$5.5 million of a \$16.5 million rebuild of the Sarina hospital will enhance the health services to the south of Mackay it will also take pressure of the Mackay hospital. It is always better for a patient's recovery if they are closer to home with family and friends.

Importantly there is an additional \$2.1 million to support community mental health services.

Unfortunately, the Mackay region has gained exposure in the media recently as a centre with a high percentage of overweight people.

We need to all look at our lifestyles, diet and exercise.

When I was going up in Mackay I was lucky to have the opportunity to play a range of sports. I was not the best player on the field but I got the physical and social benefits from participation.

It is so important to have quality facilities to encourage participation in all sport. The Mackay Netball Association will receive \$500,000 to extend and upgrade existing amenities including change rooms, first aid room. Amenities for people with disabilities. Also parent and rooms to promote women in sport. This will be a win win for the sport and the health of the wider community.

Ethan and Flynn two 12 year old's successfully lobbied during last year's state election campaign for a skate park in the Mackay Northern Beaches neighbourhood. The dedicated work of these two young men has paid off with \$1 million for a skate facility in the Camilleri Street Park, the funds will also go towards a family recreational hub with shade and barbecues. A fantastic community facility with health benefit of exercise.

Protecting the Great Barrier Reef is an important issue for the Mackay Region regardless of the industry a person works in.

Reducing Queensland's contribution to climate change and improve water quality is something we can all work towards.

Mackay Whitsundays Healthy Rivers to Reef Partnership supporting the Reef 2050 Plan will receive \$260,000 out of \$1.3 million.

Farmers need assistance to implement best management practice, this will improve cropping as well as improve water quality on the Great Barrier Reef. They will receive \$6.3 million out of \$31.3 million.

The Palaszczuk government is contributing over \$12 million towards the recovery of our community outdoor spaces, this over and above the joint state federal disaster recovery funding. The government want to see my community back on its feet and ready for the next weather event stronger and better than before.

Many of us were shocked to see the Blue Water Trail and the fishing platform on the old hospital bridge smashed by cyclone Debbie.

Their reconstruction plus the refurbishment of Queens Park will restore our beautiful outdoor spaces and be an added attraction for tourism.

One year on, the destruction of Cyclone Debbie is still being felt across our community. Residents at Lambert's Beach, Midge Point and St Helen's Beach saw metres of their foreshores eroded away. This funding for beach restoration is in addition to the already allocation cyclone recovery grants.

Our local beaches are for everyone. That's it is important to restore and replenish our beaches, at the same time add resilience measures so they can withstand the next weather disaster.

We can't stop natural disasters but we can prepare our beaches and infrastructure for its onslaught.

I congratulate the Deputy Premier and Treasure Jacki Trad on a budget for all Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.