




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR GAVEN

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Gold Coast, Federal Budget

 **Ms SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (2.41 pm): Last Tuesday night I rushed home from the Nerang Community Association meeting to see what was in the federal budget for the Gold Coast. I was bitterly disappointed, because this federal budget is fundamentally unfair for Gold Coasters who time and time again are taken for granted by the wall-to-wall federal LNP MPs in our city.

The Gold Coast has been duded when it comes to roads funding. The Turnbull government promised to make a contribution towards projects like the Varsity Lakes to Tugun and Eight Mile Plains to Daisy Hill upgrades. However, most of that money for these projects does not show up in this budget. It will not be allocated until 2022-23. To put that into perspective, a child starting year 1 this year will likely not see the full billion dollars that the Turnbull government promised until that child graduates primary school. That is an absolute joke.

To add insult to injury, we have again been short-changed when it comes to the Turnbull government's contribution. For the same road just over the border in New South Wales they get 80 per cent of the funding from the federal government. However, on the Gold Coast where every single federal member of parliament is an LNP member we get 30 per cent less. What that means is that the Palaszczuk government is going to have to stump up extra cash on top of what we have already committed to pay for these upgrades before we see any substantial money from the Turnbull government.

I know that Gold Coasters are sick of sitting in traffic and want work to begin on the third and fourth upgrades of the M1 as soon as possible. They want governments to invest in infrastructure for our growing population. Over the Commonwealth Games we saw how successful public transport can be if you provide a quality service for commuters. Infrastructure projects like Cross River Rail will mean fewer cars on the Pacific Motorway, as 47,000 people in South-East Queensland are projected to travel by rail instead. We know that Cross River Rail will reduce travel time for Gold Coast commuters travelling to Brisbane by 15 minutes and will see a train leaving every five minutes on average and an extra 3,150 seats during peak times. Despite all of those benefits for the Gold Coast and South-East Queensland, the Turnbull government is not contributing a single dollar to this congestion-busting project.

It does not end there. One of my previous jobs was working as an educator in the outside school hours care sector. Many of my colleagues worked within the early childhood sector, so I was extremely disappointed to see that we still have no long-term funding certainty. This budget delivered another short-term, 12-month extension of the national partnership agreement on universal access to kindergarten for children in the year before school and no new funding after 2019. The budget also fails to provide any further funding commitment beyond 2018 for the national partnership agreement that covers the regulation of early childhood services.

The practical implications of this mean that the sector cannot plan ahead and retain qualified and experienced staff without funding certainty in an industry that we know has a profound impact on our little ones and their future. Labor believes in the value of investing in TAFE skills and training so that Queenslanders can find meaningful work and career pathways. We know that our Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative has reaped rewards for those in our community, with more than 1,380 Gold Coasters participating in this valuable program.

Only last month we announced more than \$1 million in funding for Ashmore TAFE to upgrade facilities to ensure that students receive the most up-to-date training to equip them for long-term and secure jobs, but unfortunately the federal government does not value this sector as highly as we do. Malcolm Turnbull has cut \$270 million from the National Partnership on the Skilling Australians Fund, which is the equivalent of a \$60 million cut to funding in Queensland. This means that 6,000 people from across the state are at risk of missing out on the opportunity to access vocational education and training. It is absolutely outrageous that the Turnbull government collects 80 per cent of the taxation revenue in this nation and yet it seriously expects the Palaszczuk government to fill in the funding black hole for skills training, infrastructure projects and front-line services after they have taken a razor to these sectors.

Queensland hospitals are still owed \$460 million for services already provided in 2016-17. While the Turnbull government had to be shamed into coughing up some of that money, we will still have a shortfall of nearly \$100 million. We have also seen an extraordinary cut of \$184 million from the AFP budget over the next four years resulting in the loss of 151 Australian Federal Police personnel this year alone. Let us be clear: instead of giving Queensland its fair share, the Turnbull government has chosen to give big business and banks a corporate tax cut. My question is to the federal MPs on the Gold Coast: who is it that they claim to be standing up for—Canberra or the Gold Coast?