




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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

 **Mr HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (12.17 pm): It gives me great pleasure to speak in support of the Palaszczuk Labor government's budget. I must say that I have a very different view from that expressed in some of the speeches I have been listening to. This budget is consistent with the true values of this government—one that is delivering a future vision for our great state while not leaving those less fortunate behind. This budget offers a blueprint on how to strengthen and diversify our economy, build the much needed infrastructure to keep up with growth and deliver the priorities that Labor believes in, some of which are great health, quality education and delivering jobs.

The total infrastructure spend over the next four years is \$45 billion. The Palaszczuk government understands how important our regions are, and that is reflected in the fact that 65 per cent of total infrastructure spending of the 2018-19 budget is located outside of the greater Brisbane area. Let me tell the House that the people of Cairns will be very happy to hear that.

Prior to this budget, in the seven months since I have been elected to parliament as a representative of Cairns, we have seen an injection of over \$9.5 million into my seat. Some of these investments include \$1.4 million into the Cairns Hospital for the cardiac laboratory, \$1.5 million to support Indigenous tourism businesses to develop new products, nearly \$2 million to local schools including a new multipurpose hall for Trinity Bay State High School, additional accommodation at Cairns West State School and a new industrial arts complex at Freshwater Christian College.

Our investment also includes: funding for new change rooms for AFL, women's football and cricket; \$35,000 to the Cairns Municipal Band, and let me tell the House that they play a great tune; a new fire truck with state-of-the-art firefighting equipment; and an upgrade to the kitchen at the West Cairns Bowls Club. In addition to this, we have seen investments from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund, and we have seen organisations benefit from the Engaging Science Grants program, the Queensland Destination Events Program administered by Tourism and Events Queensland, and the Small Business Digital Grants Program—totalling over \$580,000. This is before the budget.

Just two weeks ago, I proudly stood with Minister Jones and my learned colleagues the member for Barron River and the member for Mulgrave—unfortunately, the member for Cook was very busy in her large electorate and could not make it—while the minister announced the state government's investment into the scoping document for the design and business case for the Wangetti Trail. This is a 76-kilometre nation-leading bike and walkway eco-tourism project which is aimed at allowing operators to leverage off and invest in this new ecologically-sustainable, state-sponsored tourism offering. This is a game-changer. This amazing product will benefit our region whilst also providing new and sustainable jobs, in particular for our Indigenous communities. The Wangetti Trail is one part of a new future for tourism in the far north and for Cairns in particular. Another amazing game-changing proposal is the Global Tourism Hub. The government's commitment to delivering a Global Tourism Hub in the tropical north is already having a profound impact on this sector.

I have heard members on the other side say that this is not encouraging investment. I cannot state strongly enough that in Cairns investors are recognising the exciting opportunities that we have. This can be witnessed in our city with significant developments totalling hundreds of millions of dollars, like the Aboud Corporation which is building a number of hotels and Singapore's World Class Global's Nova development which is already proceeding. These are real investments happening because the government is investing in Cairns.

Tourism in Queensland is a \$25 billion industry and projects like the Global Tourism Hub and the Wangetti Trail will ensure this industry continues to grow, creating jobs and supporting our economy in the north. To be competitive in the world of tourism, regions need to ensure that they have world-class products, and the Palaszczuk government's investment in these key job and regional building developments reflects that understanding.

This budget has delivered for the people of Cairns. The important Skilling Queenslanders for Work program will continue, with \$5 million for the next 12 months for our region. That is more funding for training opportunities. There will be \$26.3 million available in the next 12 months for our region to undertake job-creating activities through the Works for Queensland program. The important Back to Work program, which has been fundamental in seeing a reduction in the unemployment numbers in our cities and regions, particularly youth unemployment, has supported over 13,000 jobs across Queensland, and this will continue.

This government recognises the fact that 80 per cent of Cairns businesses are small businesses and we have invested a further \$40 million into the Business Development Fund, in addition to \$26 million to extend the increased payroll tax rebate initiative. These are key, and they are targeted specifically at small businesses. Cairns will get \$176 million for the expansion and upgrade of the Cairns Convention Centre. This facility generates \$80 million a year for our city. The investment in this important part of our infrastructure is an investment in jobs and economic growth in our city and region. That \$80 million is expected to grow significantly as our Convention Centre does. During the construction phase, it is expected there would be more than 300 jobs, plus 11 direct jobs and 350 indirect jobs once it has been completed.

In addition to these projects, we have seen the announcement that the project to widen the Bruce Highway from four to six lanes between Kate Street and Aumuller Street, immediately south of Cairns, will start construction. I acknowledge that this project is jointly funded by the Australian and Queensland governments as part of staged upgrades of the Cairns Southern Access Corridor. It reflects only a portion of the \$253.3 million of road infrastructure in 2018-19 for Far North Queensland as part of another record investment for the third year in a row.

The vitally important area of education has received an extremely positive boost in Cairns, with over \$15 million being allocated in the first 12 months. The Cairns State High School has secured over \$10 million for funding for a new hall and classroom refurbishment, and Trinity Bay State High School gets \$1.3 million for eight new classrooms and four specialist areas. I am so pleased to announce that Parramatta State School gets \$50,000 for those Big Ass fans—and, yes, that is the correct name of those fans. These are just some of the schools benefiting from this major investment. There is \$730,000 being allocated across eight schools in the Cairns electorate for maintenance. In addition to this, over a quarter of a million dollars has been allocated for minor works throughout the 2018-19 year. We know how important education is. We have heard about it and we are seeing the investment. This is where it is hitting the ground.

The fire and emergency services will receive a \$2.5 million investment in Cairns, whilst the environment, the Great Barrier Reef, science and the arts sees investments in the Indigenous and regional arts initiatives, in addition to a \$5 million contribution to the Cairns Performing Arts Centre amongst many other important investments, totalling \$8 million. I am very happy to be part of a government which is prepared to help out the regional councils.

The government is providing over \$900,000 in 2018-19 as part of a \$2.5 million commitment to undertake crocodile population surveying, provide assistance to local government and promote public education as part of a \$5.8 million investment over three years as part of our enhanced crocodile management strategy. The government is providing \$290,000 in the first 12 months as part of a \$1.2 million commitment over four years to provide funding to Queensland based arts and cultural organisations to deliver arts and cultural activities in Cairns. The government is providing another \$260,000 over the same period for additional district domestic and family violence coordinators to provide direction, guidance and training on issues associated with domestic and family violence. We recognise the importance of these investments and we continue to make them.

There will be \$3 million in the next 12 months for a state-of-the-art hybrid operating theatre to meet the future health needs of Far North Queensland. Surgical capacity will expand with three new operating theatres in block D, increasing the number of theatres at Cairns Hospital to 11. Direct admission into the new day surgery unit will improve patient flow and, more importantly, improve the patient's experience.

The Palaszczuk government understands the importance of protecting vulnerable families, and this budget invests over \$26 million into the Cairns community. This includes funding for out-of-home care placement services to ensure children and young people in need of protection are supported and safe. In addition to this, we have a four-year commitment to provide family support services to work with vulnerable families to help improve parenting skills and give parents the support they need to prevent problems from escalating to crisis point. I suspect that is far better than locking people up.

This government understands the importance of the Agricultural Industry Development and Fisheries portfolio and will invest over \$14 million into Cairns in the next 12 months to deliver urgently needed reform, improve sustainability of Queensland fisheries, ensure jobs are maintained and deliver a more modern, responsive and consultative approach to fisheries. Included in this figure is \$6.3 million to achieve the government's targets for uptake of best management practices by farmers in pursuit of Great Barrier Reef water quality targets. We are working with farmers, not blaming farmers.

I want to reassure the people of Cairns that this government is committed to the Cairns Shipping Development Project, and that is absolutely well and truly on track. The port is currently awaiting federal approval of their environmental impact statement, and the business case for the project is being finalised. Once that is finalised, the state's funding will be triggered and this will be reflected in future budgets, once all relevant approvals have been obtained.

I take great pleasure in thanking the Premier and the Treasurer and their teams and, more importantly, my fellow ministers and colleagues for providing for the people of Cairns. I will continue to work and be an advocate for what we need in the future.