




Speech By
Peter Russo
MEMBER FOR TOOHEY

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

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (11.00 pm): Tonight I rise to support the budget bills introduced into this House by the Deputy Premier and Treasurer on 12 June 2018. This budget is emblematic of good Labor policy. As outlined by the Deputy Premier, this year's budget is all about delivering for all of Queensland, including regional Queensland. It is a road map for Queensland's future. The Palaszczuk Labor government's 2018-19 budget delivers on the infrastructure, skills and services that Queensland needs. As has been outlined by many speakers, recently we welcomed the birth of the five millionth Queenslanders. Queensland's population continues to grow at one of the fastest rates in the country. The 2018-19 budget will deliver the infrastructure needed to keep pace with that population growth.

The 2018-19 budget includes a capital program of \$45.8 billion over the next four years. Some of those projects, such as Cross River Rail and the upgrades to the M1 at Eight Miles Plains, will benefit my electorate of Toohey. A strong economy requires community members who feel equipped and inspired to participate and succeed. We are investing an additional \$50 million in Advance Queensland initiatives to continue to support our entrepreneurs, increasing funding under the Back to Work initiative to \$369 million and delivering on our election commitment of a further \$180 million in the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program to fund more apprenticeships and increase workforce participation. The 2018-19 budget also supports small businesses with a \$26 million commitment to a further extension of the 50 per cent payroll tax rebate for Queensland businesses to employ apprentices and trainees until June 2019.

Within my electorate of Toohey is the QEII Jubilee Hospital. The 2018-19 budget will continue to provide the world-class services that Queenslanders rely on, with a record \$17.3 billion health budget and a \$14.1 billion education and training budget. To ensure that our services meet the needs of our growing population, over the next four years Labor will deliver more than 3,700 additional teachers, 3,500 new nurses, midwives and nurse navigators, 400 extra police and 100 extra firefighters.

In my electorate of Toohey our state schools are great schools that show initiative and deliver a first-class education to their students. I would like to tell a story about the Sunnybank State School. The school has a library that showcases the commitment and support the teachers give to their students by allowing them to explore their imaginations through how the library is set out. More encouraging is the giant xylophone in the courtyard of the school, where students are encouraged to belt out a tune. Those great teachers are encouraging young minds to grow and explore. The Palaszczuk Labor government is committed to supporting our state school teachers into the future. The 2018-19 state budget includes an investment of \$107 million over three years for our Teaching Queensland's Future program to help prepare and nurture beginning teachers.

In my first speech in this House I spoke about improving the lives of my constituents. I went on to speak about the issues that I felt were important to my electorate. I spoke about education and infrastructure in my electorate. I also spoke about how the constituents of my electorate were keen to see that our student-teacher ratio is replaced after the Newman government cuts to teacher numbers in my electorate.

At that time I was concerned about the fact that seventeen-year-olds were being dealt with as adult offenders. In September 2016, the Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Act 2016 was introduced into the House and ultimately passed. The Youth Justice and Other Legislation (Inclusion of 17-year-old Persons) Amendment Act 2016 commenced on 12 February 2018, bringing Queensland into line with other Australian states and United Nations conventions. Government agencies, together with community, youth and legal stakeholders have worked tirelessly to implement several initiatives in preparation for the transition of 17-year-olds. The Palaszczuk government has made a commitment to the people of Queensland to move to an evidence-based approach that acknowledges the risks and needs of the different age cohorts in the youth justice system. The research is clear: programs, practices and policies that hold young people accountable for their offending, while also targeting the causes of crime, are effective in reducing offending and improving community safety.

Young people who end up in the criminal justice system are characterised by a multitude of complex needs. Often they present with significant child protection histories, drug use and mental illness. Many have disengaged from education and have limited job prospects. Everyone has a role to play and the Labor government will continue to work with local communities as well as legal, youth and welfare organisations, academic partners, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners and government agencies to build new pathways for at-risk children and their families and create safe, nurturing and responsible communities. It was encouraging to see that the 2018-19 state budget has injected funds to continue the good work that has been started by the Palaszczuk Labor government.

I will now outline the commitments that the Palaszczuk Labor has made in the 2018-19 budget. There is \$17.1 million over three years from 2018-19 for bail support and advocacy services to help reduce remand of children and young people in custody. There is \$10.2 million for 84 additional positions to enhance operations at Queensland's two youth detention centres. There is \$6.5 million to continue to implement the government's response to the recommendations of the independent review of youth detention in Queensland. There is \$2.9 million to continue the Community Youth Response initiative in Townsville. There is \$2.5 million to continue the Transition to Success initiative.

In my maiden speech I also said that protecting the rights of ordinary Queenslanders would be a guiding principle for me in my time in this parliament. I said that it had been a fundamental driver of my professional career to the point of my election to the state parliament and it has continued since my election. I referred to the other states that have introduced a charter of rights or bill of rights. Once introduced, a charter will provide protections for the rights of ordinary people and give government officials clear and unambiguous guidelines under which to operate. Therefore, I was hearted to see that in the Palaszczuk 2018-19 budget there is an allocation of \$2.3 million, honouring an election commitment to the introduction of a charter. That will be a spend of \$616,000 over four years to support the operation and administration of a human rights act for Queensland. In addition, the Palaszczuk government's 2018-19 budget provides \$200,000 over two years for the office and system enhancement required to support the operation and administration of a human rights act.

The statutory body that will oversee the charter of rights is the Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland. During 2018-19, the service summary for the Anti-Discrimination Commission will focus on protecting human rights. It will also promote human rights; organise, promote and facilitate Human Rights Month; conduct and participate in public forums; analyse proposed legislation; make submissions to draw attention to human rights issues; and provide information about human rights using a variety of platforms. The Anti-Discrimination Commission will also focus on understanding human rights by maintaining high-quality training and information services and preparing the implementation of human rights legislation.

I will now turn to the funding that has been provided in the 2018-19 state budget more directly to my electorate of Toohey. I would like to thank the Minister for Education and Industrial Relations for the support that has been provided in the 2018-19 budget. I would like to highlight some of that funding. It includes: \$570,000 of the \$650,000 spend to construct the stop, drop and go facility at MacGregor State School; \$300,000 to refurbish block A classrooms at Salisbury State School; \$200,000 to refurbish block A classrooms at Coopers Plains State School; \$150,000 for an outdoor learning area at E block at Moorooka State School; \$120,000 for an outdoor learning area for the early years at Eight Miles Plains

State School; \$100,000 to refurbish block A classrooms at Eight Mile Plains State School; \$679,000 allocated across 14 schools for maintenance in schools throughout the 2018-19 financial year; and \$304,000 allocated across 14 schools throughout the 2018-19 financial year for minor works in schools.

Additionally, I would like to thank the Minister for Transport and Mains Roads for his commitment to my electorate of Toohey. I will now deal with some of the funding provided to ease congestion and enable people in my electorate to use public transport and thus help ease congestion. The funding includes: funding to undertake planning for upgrades on the Pacific Motorway from Eight Mile Plains to the Logan Motorway, at a total cost of \$10.7 million; \$1 million to complete construction of a new multilevel carpark at Mains Road park-and-ride; and \$4.05 million to commence the upgrade of Salisbury station park-and-ride at a total cost of \$14.5 million. Last but not least, there is funding for the Coopers Plains level crossing. When I was first elected I said I would lobby to get this crossing fixed. There is \$500,000 to continue the development of a business case for the Coopers Plains level crossing.

In closing, I would like to congratulate the Premier and Deputy Premier and Treasurer for delivering a great Labor budget. I commend the bills to the House.