




Speech By
Hon. Stirling Hinchliffe

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2018

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

 **Hon. SJ HINCHLIFFE** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Local Government, Minister for Racing and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (4.26 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate on the appropriation bills before the House. In doing so, I reflect that this is a budget that is delivering on the election commitments that we, the Australian Labor Party, made to the people of Queensland—including in my own electorate of Sandgate.

The Premier and Treasurer have unveiled another step in Labor's economic blueprint for Queensland in this budget. They have spelled out a plan that seeks to deliver inclusive growth while continuing the restoration of front-line services and investing in critical infrastructure. In my portfolio areas, this includes investing in job-creating infrastructure through our \$600 million Works for Queensland program in partnership with councils; in multicultural affairs, by delivering record funding of \$15.5 million in 2018-19; and by injecting an extra \$55.4 million into country racing, bringing the total amount invested in the country racing support package to \$70.4 million over four years.

We went to the last election with a commitment to introduce a point-of-consumption betting tax in Queensland, and that is exactly what the state budget and the bills before the House deliver. The 15 per cent tax will apply to the net wagering revenue of betting operators licensed in Australia from bets placed in Queensland. As the Treasurer said, the government has delayed the implementation of the tax until 1 October to allow for further consultation with the industry.

We still do not know whether those opposite will support the point-of-consumption betting tax. It is a simple question: do they believe that corporate bookmakers should pay their fair share or don't they? There is no each-way betting on this one—either you support the tax or you do not. This is about levelling the playing field, and it is not unique to Queensland. All Australian states and territories are introducing, or have introduced, a point-of-consumption betting tax.

Importantly, there will be no tax payable on a betting operator's revenue up to and including \$300,000 in a financial year. This means smaller betting operators, including many on-course bookmakers, will not be subject to the point-of-consumption betting tax. Let me make it very clear: Queensland's racing industry will be no worse off as a result of this new measure.

I am often guided by the principle that, when it comes to financial or taxation matters, you cannot always believe what you read in the papers. You cannot rely on the rhetoric trotted out by commercial interests in the mainstream papers. However, there is generally one exception to this rule, and that is when you read about it in the *Financial Review*. When you read about these types of matters in the *Financial Review*, you can just about bet your bottom dollar that it is well grounded in fact. What did we read in Thursday's *Financial Review*? We read that Macquarie is predicting that Sportsbet's earnings could slump from \$141 million to \$79 million as a result of the PoC tax being introduced throughout

Australia, but it had one very important proviso. As reported in the *Financial Review*, the Macquarie report then conceded that its modelling was somewhat—

“an unlikely outcome given that the cost could be partially passed on to consumers through reduced marketing [and] promotions and/or lifting yields”.

What does that tell us? It tells us that, despite the crocodile tears of those opposite, the PoC might not be the worst thing in the world. In fact, it might even be capable of delivering tangible benefits to Queensland’s racing industry. I reiterate that the government will consult with industry during the lead-up to the commencement of the PoC tax, including on any measures to provide support for the industry. These measures and these issues were set out in the budget papers and I encourage all members to look to those.

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

Leave granted.

Mr Speaker, the age-old Labor prioritisation of investment in education and quality school facilities is again on display in this budget. This is particularly evident in my electorate of Sandgate.

There’s \$665,000 worth of funding for critical maintenance and other minor works across nine public schools in the electorate of Sandgate.

The State Budget also includes \$150,000 to refurbish the Block B classrooms at Shorncliffe State School. It also provides \$13,720 to deliver the First 5 Forever family literacy initiative in Sandgate.

Mr Speaker, I’m pleased to say that the Palaszczuk Labor Government’s fourth Budget also delivers on a key local election commitment. Namely, a \$1.5 million contribution for a replacement Fire and Rescue Station at Bracken Ridge—part of a \$6 million overall project.

There’s also funding to enable ongoing support for vulnerable children, young people and women in Sandgate. The State Budget locks in more than \$5.25 million in funding over the forward estimates across the Child Safety, Youth, Women and Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence portfolio.

I also welcome over \$1.2 million of disability assistance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Sandgate residents.

We’re also getting on with the job of funding important transport infrastructure upgrades that will benefit motorists right across Brisbane’s northside road network.

The Budget includes the final \$45 million instalment needed to complete the \$1.143 billion Gateway Upgrade North project. There’s also \$1.5 million to complete the detailed design of the interchange on the Gympie Arterial Road at Strathpine Road and Hoyland Street.

And there’s \$380,000 to continue the feasibility study of the Beams Road level crossing, with \$2 million earmarked for an intersection upgrade at Biarra Street.

I’ve long campaigned for these important road projects and want to acknowledge the work of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads in bringing them about.

Train users in 4017 are also going to be winners from the State Budget, with \$4.3 million in funding for renewal work at Shorncliffe Station, returning this iconic station to its former glory.

Queensland’s number one infrastructure project, the \$5.4 billion Cross River Rail, also gets a major boost from the State Budget. With \$733 million allocated in 2018-19 to progress planning, procurement and development, this game changing project continues to gather momentum.

Cross River Rail will mean more trains, more often—and it will also help to tackle congestion on our roads, while supporting jobs and economic activity.

The Government has also allocated \$634.4 million as part of its capital works program for delivery of the European Train Control System between Milton and Northgate Stations. This will enhance passenger safety and provide capacity to run additional rail services, as the Cross River Rail project is being delivered.

Mr Speaker, Northsiders will also enjoy upgraded Cabbage Tree Creek boating infrastructure, thanks to a State Budget contribution of \$1.3 million.

I now turn to the important work in my ministerial portfolio being supported by this budget.

As part of the Government’s ongoing commitment to local government reform, \$14.1 million has been allocated over the forward estimates to support the new Independent Assessor as established in the Local Government (Councillor Complaints) Act 2018 that was passed earlier in the year. This is an important accountability measure aiming at bringing about higher standards of behaviour in Local Government.

This budget confirms a further \$200 million for the successful Works for Queensland program to date has supported more than 10,000 jobs across regional Queensland, while delivering new and improved infrastructure in partnership with local Councils.

There’s also \$20 million included in this budget to construct seawalls, drainage and groynes on five islands in the outer Torres Strait.

This important investment will strengthen these communities and assist them to tackle the risk of coastal inundation. I commend the Member for Cook being a great Champion of these initiatives in those communities—she's very clearly delivering great outcomes for her constituents.

Other initiatives funded in this Budget to deliver on election commitments include \$400,000 for an amphitheatre at Mount Archer in Rockhampton; \$1.5 million for the nature-based playground in Ayr; and \$5 million for the Beautiful Bowen town project—which I had the pleasure of opening last month.

As I said earlier, the Palaszczuk Government is a great supporter of the Queensland racing industry—as shown by the additional \$55.4 million in the State Budget to fund our Country Racing Support Package.

This honours another key election pledge, bringing our total investment in country racing to \$70.4 million over four years. And isn't that music to the ears of the 40,000-plus Queenslanders employed or engaged in the racing industry.

Our country racing package supports another of our great initiatives—The Battle of the Bush series. The final of this outstanding series will take place on Saturday week at Doomben, when 16 country gallopers compete in a \$100,000 race on a Group 1 race day. I wish all connections the very best of luck.

Mr Speaker, this State Budget also delivers a record \$15.5 million Multicultural Affairs Budget.

This includes delivering on our 2017 election commitment to double the funding available for multicultural events and projects through the Celebrating Multicultural Queensland grants program.

Funding for this program will rise from \$1 million to \$2 million each year, over the next three years—with total funding of \$6 million available.

We're also investing an additional \$4.5 million to extend the Community Action for a Multicultural Society for a further two years from 2018-19.

I'm pleased to inform the House the Budget also locks in a total of \$4.3 million over three years, to deliver assistance to vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers in Queensland including financial and material aid, housing assistance and other support.

Our funding increases reverse the savage cuts inflicted by the LNP—who slashed the funding of Multicultural Affairs Queensland by 40 per cent when in office.

Mr Speaker, this is a strong Labor Budget with strong Labor values. A Budget that delivers on health, education, jobs, the environment and frontline services.

I commend the Treasurer on her first Budget, and I commend the Bills to the House.