




Speech By
Barry O'Rourke

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Record of Proceedings, 4 December 2020

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL

APPROPRIATION (2020-2021) BILL

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (3.08 pm): I rise to speak in support of the appropriation bill introduced by the Treasurer and Minister for Investment, the Hon. Cameron Dick. This is a great jobs budget, and I am pleased to be able to respond to another good Labor government budget supporting Central Queensland. This budget clearly follows our COVID-19 Fiscal and Economic Review and our government's economic recovery plan which focused on protecting our health, creating jobs and working together. This budget will bring jobs for all Queenslanders—for none more so than my constituents in the Rockhampton electorate.

The Deputy Speaker has reviewed and approved my speech on the budget for incorporation. As such, I ask that the remainder of my speech be incorporated in *Hansard*.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Member for Rockhampton, in accordance with standing and sessional orders, your speech will be incorporated into the record.

The speech read as follows—

Education and Training

New classrooms, multi-purpose halls and facility upgrades will be part of a \$52.4 million investment in new, modern school facilities across Central Queensland.

The funding is included in a \$1 billion Great Schools, Great Future education policy to modernise schools and support more than 3,100 construction jobs across Queensland.

School infrastructure projects like:

- Crescent Lagoon State School, Install A Block lift
- Crescent Lagoon State School, Provide equitable access to amenities and B Block
- Crescent Lagoon State School, Hard roof shade cover to the existing Prep Play area
- Glenmore State High School, Covered STEM Amphitheatre
- North Rockhampton State High School, Provide equitable access to multi-purpose hall stage
- Port Curtis Road State School, Replace septic system
- Rockhampton State High School, School Security Fence

With the emerging aquaculture industries, I am pleased to see \$2.5 million to build a new aquaculture research facility at Rockhampton State High School to give our school leavers a boost into the jobs available in this growing sector.

As the Central Queensland Region continues to prosper, we will see over the next four years more than 450 new teachers and over 100 new teacher aides that will be employed in the Region.

We all know that the future prosperity of Queensland depends on having the right skills for the future. Over the next four years our government will provide \$200 million investment in the future skills requirement across the state. As part of this funding our Government will provide more young Queenslanders with free TAFE and free apprenticeships, under a \$21 million plan to extend the opportunity to under 25s. This is about giving our young adults the skills they need for our future.

Infrastructure

Our Government will deliver a record \$1.1 billion for infrastructure in Central Queensland. We have already seen roads and transport projects across our region, supporting more than 1,000 jobs as part of Queensland's plan for economic recovery.

We will continue to deliver fully-funded upgrades for the Bruce Highway, Capricorn Highway and create new opportunities for local business in construction, engineering and freight.

We're transforming the Bruce Highway through projects like the Rockhampton Northern Access upgrade and we will start building the massive \$1 billion Rockhampton Ring Road in 2022.

Our government will prioritise upgrades between Rockhampton and Gladstone and continue to increase its annual investment in Bruce Highway upgrades to more than \$2 billion by 2023.

Some of the current roads projects that have received part funding of the total spend as quoted (including investments jointly funded with the Australian Government) include:

- \$1.065 billion to plan and build Rockhampton Ring Road
- \$158 million for the Rockhampton Northern Access upgrade to duplicate the Bruce Highway to four lanes through Parkhurst
- \$75 million for the duplication of the Capricorn Highway between Rockhampton and Gracemere
- \$35 million for widening and intersection upgrades on Lawrie Street at Gracemere
- \$19 million for overtaking lanes on the Capricorn Highway between Gracemere and Emerald

Health

Again this budget will see record funding of \$661.3 million for Health in Central Qld. The Central Queensland Hospital and Health Services work across a large region and do an amazing work. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the staff at the Rocky base, they do an excellent job in what can be a very challenging environment. It is important you get good quality care when you use our local hospitals.

Over the next four years we will hire more frontline health staff in Central Queensland including 285 nurses, 47 doctors and 47 health professionals.

The expansion of the Rockhampton Hospital will enhance health services for Central Queenslanders and will also support local construction jobs. This will include the Rockhampton Hospital cardiac hybrid theatre, and the expansion and refurbishment of Rockhampton Hospital mental health ward.

Police

Major centres like Rockhampton will benefit from the Palaszczuk Government's historic investment in community safety by delivering an extra 2,025 police personnel across Queensland.

It will mean at least an extra 150 police personnel will be deployed to each police region across the state, including the region Rockhampton is part of.

In addition, the Palaszczuk Government will deliver 25 mobile police beats across Queensland.

At least one of these new mobile beats will be deployed to the Rockhampton area.

Browne Park redevelopment

I am pleased that funding is in this year's budget for the Browne Park Redevelopment—\$25 million—Upgrade which includes replacing the old Jack Crow stand and building a new stand with around 4000 seating capacity to cater for international level competitive matches of differing codes and multipurpose facility hosting music and similar events. This construction will support 60 local jobs over an 18 month construction period.

The Capricornia Correctional Centre will receive \$48.5 million in 2020-21 of \$243.2 million total spend for an extra 398 cells to provide additional prisoner capacity at the Centre. This funding will ease overcrowding and boost staff safety. Once completed next year an additional 232 permanent positions will have been created.

Art Gallery

The Rockhampton Regional Council will receive \$2 million out of \$31.5 million total spent to provide funding for the construction of the new Rockhampton Art Gallery. This funding was part of the Building our Regions Program. This project is due for completion next year and has supported 104 construction jobs

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Central Queensland University will receive \$8.4 million for a Rockhampton campus consolidation and a new TAFE Centre of Excellence.

Rookwood Weir

There is \$115 million in 2020-21 out of a total of \$352 million to continue the construction of Rookwood Weir. This project on the Fitzroy River will add up to 76,000 megalitres to Central Qld water supply. It will support the growth of the Agricultural Industry to allow for expansion in areas like broad acre cropping.

Small Business

We know that small business is the backbone of the Queensland Economy and employs around 42% of all private sector workers. Our Government will back Queensland small businesses to drive economic recovery with a \$140 million strategy to lift their competitiveness and resilience.

That's why we have already provided \$2.3 billion in tax relief, grants, electricity rebates and loans to support businesses to keep 334,000 Queenslanders in work through the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are delivering a \$140 million strategy to back small business.

This strategy will support:

Private investment with an initial \$100 million from the Backing Queensland Business Investment Fund. The \$100 million will be used to invest in small to medium sized businesses that have significant growth potential in Queensland and which will utilise funds to create significant Queensland based jobs;

\$30 million to improve small business skills capabilities including grants and mentoring opportunities; and

Funding for the newly established Queensland Small Business Commissioner, to help businesses evolve and advocate on their behalf.

Country Racing

Country Racing in Central Queensland will share in an overall \$35.2 million commitment over four years that will provide a purse for prize money and maintenance of tracks and facilities.

I congratulate the Treasurer and Minister for Investment, the Honourable Cameron Dick, on a budget for all Queenslanders. I commend the bill to the House.