



Speech By  
**Hon. Craig Crawford**


**MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER**

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Record of Proceedings, 3 December 2020

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL**

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 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (5.40 pm): Madam Deputy Speaker Lui, I must say how impressive it is to see our first First Nation Queensland MP sitting in the Speaker's chair. It is an impressive sight and one that I am very proud of given you come from my patch or I come from yours.

Today is the International Day of People with Disability and this year's theme is 'Building back better: toward a disability inclusive, accessible and sustainable post COVID-19 world'. On this day I ask all Queenslanders, especially members of this chamber, to think about how we can make Queensland more inclusive and accessible for people with disability.

I rise in support of the Palaszczuk government's 2020 state budget. This year has brought not only unprecedented challenges and changes but also opportunities. We have all been impacted in some way by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Palaszczuk government's 2020 state budget is paving the way for our economic recovery. The budget delivers a solid plan to create jobs and deliver infrastructure. However, just as important is our commitment to support the emotional recovery of Queenslanders and to help our state's communities to thrive. This is a budget that is about empowering people and communities, promoting local leadership and decision-making, and investing in the infrastructure and services that Queenslanders need.

In 2020-21 my department's total budget is more than \$2.8 billion which will go towards supporting people with disability, seniors and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to thrive. Throughout this budget we are providing funding that will enable Queenslanders of all ages, abilities and locations to participate in our state's vibrant economic, social, community and cultural life. The budget recognises the important cultural contribution and invests in supporting the needs and aspirations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

This budget supports the Palaszczuk government's commitment to reframing the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Our new way of working with First Nation peoples through meaningful, community-led solutions is supporting real change and real outcomes at local, regional and statewide levels. We have risen to the challenges of the global COVID-19 pandemic, including by keeping remote communities safe, and we have reached historic milestones such as legal recognition of traditional Torres Strait Islander child-rearing practice through the bill that you introduced into this chamber, Madam Deputy Speaker.

This year's budget is about ensuring that even more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, children, families and communities can access opportunities to thrive. We recognise that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples must play the lead role in the decision-making that affects

their lives and communities. That is critical to closing the gap across whole-of-life outcomes. The state budget includes \$9.3 million over four years in support of the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, including investment in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled sector.

A further \$6.6 million in additional funding over two years, including \$3.5 million in 2020-21, will be invested to implement the Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa (Torres Strait Islander Traditional Child Rearing Practice) Act 2020 to legally recognise Torres Strait Islander traditional child-rearing practice. Additionally, there is \$3.4 million over three years, including \$1 million in 2020-21, to continue work on Path to Treaty to support self-determination and promote healing and reconciliation, with the ultimate aim of treaty making with First Nation peoples. I am proud that, through this budget, my portfolio is leading whole-of-government efforts towards reconciliation through responsive and community-centred programs and policies.

Although the state's role in disability service has changed significantly since the NDIS rolled out, our commitment to support Queenslanders with disability is as strong as ever. We have an important role in providing advocacy for people with disability and oversight of the NDIS. The 2020 state budget enhances safeguards for people with disability, with \$8.9 million to implement a nationally consistent NDIS worker screening system. There is \$1.974 billion for Queensland's estimated cash contribution to the NDIS to provide essential supports and help build the economic and social wellbeing of people with disability. There is additional funding of \$2.6 million to continue services that support people with disability. That includes support for All Abilities Queensland, NDIS performance monitoring and approvals for guide, hearing and assistance dogs.

We want to ensure that Queensland's seniors can live their lives free from physical and emotional abuse, financial abuse and scams. That is why we have invested \$5 million to raise awareness of elder abuse, and assist victims and at-risk seniors. That investment supports 11 seniors' services across the state, including legal and support services, seniors' financial protection services and the Elder Abuse Prevention Helpline.

Lastly and significantly, the state budget includes \$449 million for energy, rates and water concessions and rebates that are primarily aimed at supporting seniors and eligible Queenslanders to manage the cost of living. I am pleased that around 89 per cent of eligible older Queenslanders have a Seniors Card, which helps them access a range of concessions and business discounts. The 2020 state budget is creating more opportunities for all Queenslanders, including people with disability, seniors and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders.

I am also proud that this budget is delivering for locals in my electorate of Barron River. This year's budget provides \$42.4 million to help complete the Smithfield Bypass project. The project, together with other significant investments in local road projects across Barron River, demonstrates how seriously the Palaszczuk government takes our commitment to improving local roads in Far North Queensland.

In this budget I have also secured funds towards the \$60 million needed to duplicate the Cairns Western Arterial Road from one to two lanes between the Redlynch Connector Road and Kamerunga Road. I am also delighted to see \$2.9 million allocated for the Cairns Ring Road to improve traffic flow from Smithfield to the Cairns CBD. I thank the Premier for delivering upon her commitment to upgrade the Barron River road network, to free up congestion and improve commute times to and from work for my constituents.

The budget is also delivering significant investments in our local schools for new buildings at Smithfield High School as part of its new state-of-the-art facilities for students. There is also \$1 million for the Young Animal Protection Society, YAPS, which is an incredible local not-for-profit organisation that cares for animals. Our local community is very passionate about that cause. Ecotourism plays a big role in the Far North and it is fantastic to see \$9.2 million in funding for the construction, which will help to continue to support local jobs. That investment sends a clear signal to our local tourism operators that Far North Queensland tourism is coming back bigger and better than before, thanks to the support of the Palaszczuk government.

This budget is a win for Cairns and Far North Queensland. It is a budget that will deliver fantastic new infrastructure and capital works projects estimated to support around 4,000 jobs in our region, including projects such as work on the Cairns University Hospital, the expansion of the Cairns Convention Centre, funding for the Ellis Beach Surf Life Saving club and the expansion of our important Indigenous land and sea ranger programs. Through this state budget we will continue to build upon our efforts to support communities right across Queensland. From the Torres Strait to Cape York, Cunnamulla and Coolangatta, we want all Queensland communities to thrive.