




Speech By
Cynthia Lui

MEMBER FOR COOK

Record of Proceedings, 10 September 2020

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Ms LUI** (Cook—ALP) (12.15 pm): I rise today to speak on the Appropriation Bill 2020 and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2020. The Palaszczuk government wasted no time when it came to protecting Queenslanders in the face of this global pandemic. This state Labor government acted swiftly and decisively to strengthen our health system to prepare and build service capacity not just in my electorate of Cook but in communities right throughout the state. In the Cook electorate fever clinics were set up at multiple sites and hospitals and the vast network of primary healthcare centres worked in collaboration with the local disaster management group throughout the electorate. My communities stood up to work in partnership with the Queensland state government to develop local plans to get communities COVID ready and implement local strategies to mitigate risks of COVID-19 entering communities in Cook.

I want to commend and thank our Premier for all of her hard work. While our Premier stood up for the health of Queenslanders and was working hard on our health response to flatten the curve, the Leader of the Opposition and the LNP were calling for the borders to open. I am glad that we did not listen to the Leader of the Opposition or the LNP because, if we did, we would not be in any position to talk economic recovery today. It is the strong leadership of our Premier and the Palaszczuk Labor government that has put Queensland on the road to recovery by making strong health decisions on the border and starting to deliver Queensland's economic recovery plan.

There is no doubt that the economy is taking a hard hit with COVID-19 and right now our communities need certainty. They need more than lip-service from those opposite. They need a government with a solid economic recovery plan to get us through these challenging times. This government is getting on with the job of helping communities unite and recover because we want to protect jobs. We want to keep people in jobs. Most importantly, we want to keep dollars in the pockets of families.

Local councils in my electorate benefited from \$22.5 million in COVID-19 Works for Queensland grants for shovel-ready projects, from the Torres Strait Islands to Cape York, to Mareeba shire and to the Douglas shire. This demonstrates the government's strong commitment to supporting communities no matter where you live. Works for Queensland has always been widely received by my local councils. The new COVID-19 Works for Queensland funds highlight this government's commitment to support the local economy.

I can confidently say that the decisions made by this government to support communities in my electorate through these challenging economic times are seen at the community level. Whether it is replacing the roof and electrical upgrades at the community canteen and continuing refurbishment at the arts and cultural centre in Kowanyama or the development of the cultural precinct and upgrades to the football field in Lockhart or the installation of smart water meters across the Douglas shire and

upgrades at the Port Douglas wastewater treatment plant, these are only a few examples of the 14 councils in my electorate who received COVID-19 Works for Queensland funds to support shovel-ready projects and sustain local jobs in regional and remote communities.

That is not all. The Queensland government recently announced over \$9.7 million for schools in the Cook electorate to go towards a mix of upgrades and new projects. In Cape York, Aurukun State School will receive \$220,000 to create better teaching walls in the teaching block, replace windows and create cross-flow ventilation across the upper classrooms. Cooktown State School will receive \$136,000 for the upgrade of the prep playground, and the Hope Vale campus of Cape York Aboriginal Australian Academy will receive \$340,000 for a new amenities block.

Those are not all of the schools in the Cook electorate. The Kowanyama State School, Lockhart River State School, Mossman State High School, Mossman State School, Wonga Beach State School and Tagai State College in the Torres Strait, with upgrades at its Malu Kiwai, Mer, Poruma and Saibai Island campuses, will all benefit from critical investments to build and refurbish vital infrastructure and support local jobs.

For big projects like the Wangetti Trail, construction was brought forward by six months to create jobs. We are investing \$3.5 million into the Mareeba Industrial Park expansion, stage 3, which will make heavy industrial zoned land available for large-scale development. When it comes to roads, we announced \$313 million to accelerate work on local roads, including: the Peninsula Development Road, the Kennedy Highway and the Bourke Development Road in my electorate. When I see all of the road activity in my electorate I know that we are supporting families, putting food on the table and roofs over people's heads.

In relation to Small Business Adaptation Grants, 140 small businesses in the Cook electorate have been successful in winning more than \$1.2 million in grants as part of the Palaszczuk government's COVID-19 economic recovery plan. I had the pleasure of visiting some of these small businesses: Just Jase Hair, the Sorella Hair & Beauty Studio in Mareeba and the Driftwood Cafe in Cooktown. It is clear that the Palaszczuk government's stimulus support package is providing much needed funds for small businesses to keep them afloat through these tough economic times.

The electricity rebate of \$500 million to provide relief for households and small businesses with electricity and water bills is another example of how this government is working to support households and businesses throughout my electorate. Our Land Restoration Fund, \$43 million for five projects, will create over 300 jobs.

COVID-19 is putting a lot of pressure on families and, as such, incidents of domestic and family violence were on the increase. This government recognised the impact of COVID-19 on breaking families and, with the Commonwealth government, injected vital funds into community organisations to provide intervention support for vulnerable families. I am pleased that 10 community organisations in my electorate were successful recipients of domestic and family violence funds.

I had the opportunity to speak directly with Cooktown District Community Centre manager Kaz Price and Mura Kosker Sorority about the amazing work they do to support vulnerable families. The Palaszczuk Labor government has a strong plan to unite and recover the state's economy. Queensland's plan for economic recovery is well and truly underway, and together we will get through these challenging times. I commend the bills to the House.