




Speech By
Jason Hunt

MEMBER FOR CALOUNDRA

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL

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 **Mr HUNT** (Caloundra—ALP) (11.23 pm): This evening I rise very proud of the fact that our state has so comprehensively outperformed the other large eastern seaboard states, but then given the quality of our health response and the titanic effort of the people of Queensland this should come as no surprise. I congratulate the Premier and the Treasurer and indeed all members of cabinet for putting us in such a commanding position relative to the rest of Australia. The fact is that the COVID-19 virus did not discriminate or play favourites but rather how each state and territory responded led each down a very different path—the oft-cited road to recovery—and it looks very much better for Queensland than for our nearest neighbours. Queensland is in a far better position than anyone on the east coast, and that is not down to luck.

On a personal note, I was delighted to see \$100 million in place to start the construction of the southern Queensland correctional precinct—a large, publicly owned facility that will go some way to addressing the overcrowding issues in Queensland’s correctional centres. This will create a healthier facility for the prisoner demographic, particularly with its therapeutic element built into its operations, but more importantly it will deliver a safer workplace for the men and women who work in those most dangerous of environments—custodial correctional officers. Correctional centres of this magnitude are gigantic economic drivers. They sustain jobs in the construction phase but, more than that, they become very large providers of permanent employment in every region they are located. This facility will provide a very significant flow-on economic stimulus to the region’s small business community for years to come.

I am also pleased to see that this government’s strong commitment to continue its support for the small business community remains on track and on target. I am personally aware of a number of small businesses in and around Caloundra owned and operated by people of all ages and across the entire retail spectrum that did not just benefit from this government’s COVID response initiatives; they were saved by them. Their doors are still open and they are still trading today thanks to the grants, loans and relief provided by this government. The Big Plans for Small Business strategy will continue this good work and help sustain our local small business community in the near future.

This government’s continued prioritisation of education, particularly in Caloundra, will be most welcome news to communities right across the electorate. Beerwah State School’s rejuvenated junior playground will mean not only a better and safer area for those children but also a more shady and sun safe one. A further investment in Baringa State Secondary College will only build on and enhance the learning potential of this very impressive school as it nears completion, ready to receive its first two year levels in 2021. It is already on track to be an extremely modern school with state-of-the-art facilities and this boost will keep it in that position. But it does not end there. There is yet more money for education in the new state school in Caloundra South. The residents of Nirimba will watch as a further \$26 million

is injected into the ongoing construction of our new primary school. That completes the education trifecta for Caloundra. Thanks to this government, there has been three large schools in three years—a first in the history of the electorate.

I, like the residents of Caloundra, am very happy with the government's continued investment in the widening of the Bruce Highway—\$53 million worth of happiness to be precise. This is a measure that will help alleviate some of the traffic concerns between Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. I am also excited to go back to my community and talk about \$38 million worth of funding to upgrade sections of the north coast rail line. In truth, I am most pleased and most proud of the \$35 million that this government has committed to the Bells Creek Arterial Road. This road is quite simply 11 kilometres of good news for Caloundra.

This road will provide a welcome measure of relief from the traffic on Caloundra Road. It will give the township of Caloundra direct access to the Bruce Highway via a second entry point for the first time in its history. It will link Caloundra to the hinterland communities of Landsborough and Beerwah via Roys Road in the most direct way possible. This glorious stretch of road will sustain up to 850 jobs in the short and medium term.

The original announcement by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads was barely 48 hours old when large retail outlets began making enquiries about the completion date of the road. This road will provide traffic relief, unlock investment and provide for significant commercial infrastructure. I will be talking about this road for a good long while and look forward to it opening some time in the next two years.

Last Saturday, 28 November, I was invited to an athletics carnival hosted by the Caloundra Little As. Almost 450 children and adolescents from as far afield as Toowoomba and Northern New South Wales converged on Caloundra. It was a magnificent event and a credit to all concerned. The Caloundra Little Athletics club shares a facility with the Caloundra AFL club, the mighty Caloundra Panthers. To be able to go back to Caloundra and tell both clubs that our commitment of up to \$550,000 for replacement lighting poles, upgrades to the toilets and coaching boxes is now a reality will be a genuine honour for me. The entire Sunshine Coast will be excited to hear that the first \$5 million of a \$20 million commitment will be making its way towards the provision of a Sunshine Coast stadium as continued evidence of this government's solid support for sporting amenities on the Sunshine Coast.

Finally, in the spirit of more good news for Caloundra, I can confirm that over \$1.4 million of the \$1.7 million required has been committed to the upgrade of the Beerwah community meeting place. This will provide extra meeting places, an outdoor meeting room and green arcade and even a small kitchen for community use in a hall that provides a venue for such diverse activities as tai chi, music recitals and an incredibly large table tennis community. These upgrades will be most welcome, as indeed this budget will be most welcome in Caloundra.