



Speech By  
**Jonty Bush**


**MEMBER FOR COOPER**

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

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 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (5.18 pm): I rise to speak in support of the appropriation bills and start by congratulating the Treasurer and his team on their tremendous efforts. It is inspiring to see a budget that will, in my opinion, provide confidence to Queenslanders during a time of great uncertainty. This is a budget that Queenslanders should feel a part of and should feel proud of. It is only through the efforts of our people that we have been able to deliver a budget that strikes a balance between stimulus and fiscal constraint.

In October, Queenslanders delivered their verdict on the government they wanted to navigate us through the health and economic recovery. This budget is a reflection of the trust they put in us, with an unashamed focus on jobs and ensuring that our frontline services are maintained and strengthened, including a record investment of \$21.8 billion this financial year in Queensland's health system. As we move through the health crisis, Queenslanders will want the certainty of employment in jobs that offer meaning and continuity.

There are nearly 2,500 small businesses in my electorate across a range of sectors including finance, construction, health care and retail. These businesses bore the brunt of the COVID-19 downturn. In his budget speech the Treasurer stated that adversity drives innovation, and we have all witnessed that innovation across Queensland, but particularly from our business sector. Business owners are resilient and creative and during this time of adversity they have quickly found ways to adapt their service delivery. Eat-in restaurants like Naim in Paddington—one of my favourites—quickly developed a takeaway option that, thanks to swift regulatory reform, could also include a takeaway bottle of wine.

I spoke to many people right throughout Brisbane who changed their spending patterns with a focus on shopping local and eating out more to support local business. Many said to me, 'If I'm able to work through this and keep my job, I feel a sense of duty to support those who are struggling to stay open.' We have lost businesses in Cooper—there is no denying that—and my heart aches for those owners, their families and customers. That is why it is critical to get the support for small business right in the budget not only in this financial year but throughout the remainder of our term.

Queensland was the first Australian jurisdiction to provide wideranging payroll tax relief at the onset of the global pandemic, supporting more than 16,500 Queensland businesses affected directly by the impact of COVID-19. We backed small business with \$1 billion in 12-month interest-free loans, with more than \$1.3 billion in payroll tax and land tax relief and close to \$200 million in small business grants. I have had the pleasure of meeting with local business owners and recipients of these grants.

Bree from Paddington Pups, a wildly successful dog-minding and grooming service, successfully applied for a COVID-19 adaptation grant to provide targeted business coaching for her team—coaching that will have a lasting legacy on this business and any other future endeavours Bree turns her mind to.

Minister Fentiman, in her capacity at the time as minister for small business, and I met with John from Milk cafe in Ashgrove—a family owned business that has developed and manufactures its own soft-serve ice cream that is used solely in its milkshakes and thickshakes. John used the grant funding to replace and upgrade kitchen machinery, expanding its output and setting it up for future growth.

These are two of the over 220 stories of Cooper businesses that have already accessed this grant funding. It is investments like this that give the business sector the confidence to grow their business and employ additional staff. The appointment of a dedicated Small Business Commissioner will enable us to work even more closely with business, assisting them and us to identify and seize new opportunities to both innovate and to expedite any regulatory reforms that will better support this sector.

As I outlined last week in my first speech, the people of Cooper are spoilt for choice in terms of the high performance schools we can choose to send our children to. Many of these schools will benefit even further with over \$1 billion invested—a record investment for Queensland—over four years through the Great Schools Great Future commitment which will see the construction of new classrooms, school halls and administration buildings in addition to funding for infrastructure renewal in schools.

Students in Cooper will benefit through over a \$10 million investment for the Ithaca Creek State School for a new building with six new classrooms and two specialist learning centres, along with a further \$450,000 to upgrade the school's swimming pool amenity block which will benefit not only the students of this school but many students in surrounding schools who access this pool, as do the members of our fantastic Ithaca Sharx swimming club.

We are committing \$10 million for the building of 12 new classrooms at The Gap State High School and a further \$500,000 for tuckshop upgrades, an important refurbishment that will enable The Gap State High to increase its own revenue and fundraising. We will provide \$1.8 million for a new building for Petrie Terrace State School, adding an additional four classrooms.

There is a \$200,000 investment to modernise and upgrade existing classrooms at Ashgrove State School; \$200,000 to renovate the Hilder Road State School prep classrooms, which is great news for our preppies; and \$156,000 for St Joseph's Primary School in Bardon for a new playground and tennis court resurfacing.

This equates to a funding envelope of over \$23 million in schools throughout my electorate and I know our students, their families and members of the broader community who access these facilities will celebrate that. But of course the creation and upgrade of learning spaces is only half the story. Our budget is also prioritising funding to frontline services, including 6,190 new teachers and over a thousand new teacher aides across Queensland. As a mother of four daughters, two of whom are still in school, I am really excited to know that this government is committed to providing a world-class education system.

We know that growing our economy and protecting our environment is not a zero sum game, that it is possible to achieve both outcomes. The Palaszczuk government is committed to protecting the environment and the jobs that rely on it. Our economic recovery plan continues our commitment to Queensland's natural wonders like the Great Barrier Reef and local icons like the Walkabout Creek Discovery Centre in my electorate. We have a strong track record of protecting Queensland's environment, and that is why we are investing \$989 million this financial year to support our natural assets and drive economic growth.

Something that I know my electorate will care about is our government's commitment to our war on waste and we are taking the next steps to ban single-use plastic items, starting with straws, cutlery, plates and stirrers. We are also asking Queenslanders to have their say on including polystyrene containers in the ban.

Locally in my electorate we are investing \$974,000 to upgrade visitor infrastructure in D'Aguilar National Park as well as \$250,000 to upgrade visitor infrastructure and wildlife facilities at the Walkabout Creek Discovery Centre at the Enoggera Reservoir. Both commitments form part of the \$8.9 million national parks works. We know that if we can attract more people to visit these wild spaces then more people will see and appreciate them and care about their future protection, and I look forward to welcoming visitors to this area.

In his budget speech the Treasurer said that budgets are always about choices. The Labor government, through this budget, has made the choice to invest in Queenslanders at this time when we all need it most, and I commend it to the House.