



Speech By  
**Julianne Gilbert**


**MEMBER FOR MACKAY**

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Record of Proceedings, 10 September 2020

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

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 **Mrs GILBERT** (Mackay—ALP) (5.18 pm): I support the bills as it is a sensible approach during an international pandemic. It is the health response of the Palaszczuk government that has allowed our government to bring our economy out of COVID-19 hibernation and begin to get us back into a pattern of growth for business and strong employment.

My region is an area of growth, the resource sector is healthy and the METS sector supporting this industry is powering ahead. Many of the businesses and the engineering sector in my area are employing people and they are putting on apprentices. A modern transport supply chain is vital for the movement of commodities from pit to port.

Last Saturday our community celebrated the opening of the Mackay Ring Road, a nearly \$500 million project—one of the largest road projects that our region has ever seen. This joint state and federally funded project employed over 1,800 workers who were inducted onto the site. This road takes trucks and heavy vehicles out of the centre of Mackay, which makes it very safe for private vehicles and trucks. The \$110 million Northern Access Road into Mackay has begun to provide a further pipeline of work for locals in road construction with a massive upgrade of additional lanes on roads, bridges and overpasses. The \$120 million Walkerston bypass is due to go out to tender, and this project is expected to commence next year. This important piece of infrastructure will enhance the transport supply chain and make Walkerston a much safer place to live. The road projects that have either just been started or completed make up about \$1 billion worth of development across my region.

Students in my region are attending school so they can reach their full potential. They are working in modern, well-kept classrooms and laboratories. The students at Pioneer State School will benefit from a \$1 million upgrade to science laboratories, robotics laboratories and their learning and storage areas. Faith based and private schools are also building in my area, and when they do it gives families in my area an opportunity to have a real choice about their children's education. Catholic education is going to build a brand new secondary school in the historic sugar research building on Nebo Road. A Palaszczuk government grant of \$12 million will get this project off the ground, and it will be open for its first students in 2022. A new \$12 million performing arts centre will be built at Sarina State School, and this will allow students south of Mackay to engage in learning in state-of-the-art facilities so they can reach their full potential while they study closer to home.

Health is something that we cannot take for granted. When our health takes a turn for the worse, we want to know that we have the highest quality of care right in our backyard. The Palaszczuk government will contribute \$16.5 million to rebuild the Sarina Hospital on a brand new site at Brewers Road. This modern facility will support all of those residents south of Mackay, which in turn will take pressure off the Mackay Base Hospital and staff. It is also planned to open in 2022. The Mackay Base Hospital now has a dedicated orthopaedics ward with specialist trained nurses and health professionals,

which means high-level care for locals with hip and knee replacements and people who have had accidents. The Mackay Base Hospital now has a 24/7 heart catheter laboratory, which means that locals no longer have to travel to Townsville for heart stents. This facility will better care for patients, take stress off families and save local lives.

Small business is important to our side of the government, and we are assisting with a huge number of grants. We are cutting taxes to make sure small business gets the support it needs to save local jobs and ensure businesses survive. Ultra Coral Australia grows and exports live corals, and they have just been awarded an economic recovery Market Diversification and Resilience Grant. Tourist operators across Mackay and the Whitsundays can apply for adaption grants to offset their reliance on international visitors.

Two of our really popular festivals, Rumble on the Reef and Beach Motorcycle Races, will receive grants of \$25,000 each. We want to see our festivals back up and running so we can bolster tourism numbers. Small businesses have been hit hard, and over 285 small businesses across Mackay and the Whitsundays have applied for adaptation grants. In addition, \$11 million will go to the Mackay and Whitsunday councils so they can deliver local projects and infrastructure and keep locals in jobs.

The Mackay Resources Centre of Excellence is only in operation because the Palaszczuk government delivered the first grant to get this project up off the ground. This centre is training our miners of the future. It also conducts innovation, research and development. It is this side of parliament that has a plan to recover, and it is this side of parliament that is looking after regional Queensland. I commend the bills to the House.