




Speech By
Kim Richards

MEMBER FOR REDLANDS

Record of Proceedings, 9 September 2020

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Ms RICHARDS** (Redlands—ALP) (4.47 pm): I rise in this House to support the appropriation bills for COVID-19, the Appropriation Bill 2020 and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2020. 2020 has been a year like no other. COVID-19 has impacted communities around the world. With the strong leadership of our Premier, Anastacia Palaszczuk, our government has led the health response, enabling us to manage the economic response and to unite and recover Queensland. Our strong health response has meant that we are able to have a stronger economy, recovering from the impacts of COVID going forward faster than anywhere else in Australia.

We are investing in future industries such as renewables and we are backing publicly owned infrastructure as we continue to create Queensland jobs. Our ongoing plan for economic recovery includes an additional \$1 billion for commercial business projects, building on the \$7 billion we have also announced. There is \$500 million for the Backing Queensland Businesses Investment Fund to support businesses and create jobs. There is \$500 million for the Renewable Energy Fund to increase public ownership of commercial renewable projects and support infrastructure. We are also providing \$249 million of COVID tax relief to Queensland small businesses in payroll tax waivers and exemptions, land tax rebates and rent relief.

Our Queensland government, under the careful stewardship of our Treasurer, is adopting the same approach to that of the federal Morrison government and other states by forecasting for two years rather than the usual four. That is prudent given the uncharted waters that economies across the nation and across the world continue to experience because of the uncertainties resulting from COVID. We know that when there is unprecedented disruption such as the coronavirus has delivered, and with the impacts that it is having on the private sector, governments must step in to help, which is exactly what our Palaszczuk government is doing. In the Redlands, not only now with COVID but also throughout my term, we have seen significant economic investment and the acceleration of projects. The Works for Queensland and COVID stimulus packages have benefited my region, with \$2.5 million for the Southern Moreton Bay Islands green sealing projects brought forward.

We have contributed an additional \$15 million to the duplication of Cleveland Redland Bay Road, taking that to \$60 million for the first stage; \$34.1 million to Southern Moreton Bay Islands ferry terminal upgrades; \$5 million to the Old Cleveland Road Gateway on-ramp upgrade; \$30 million to the Eastern Transitway on Old Cleveland Road that I had the good fortune to turn the first sod on; and \$19 million to the Beenleigh Redland Bay Road upgrade. There is so much work going on in the roads and infrastructure space out my way. That is exactly what good budgets deliver for their communities.

In the education space, we have accelerated the installation of air conditioning and solar in schools in the Redlands. We have seen Bay View get theirs underway. I know that Victoria Point State High School has its underway. At the high school, where we had seen not a lot of investment, we have invested \$1 million to upgrade the library and \$2 million for the hall expansion that is about to be

completed next week. That has created fantastic jobs. We have the design work underway for the Thornlands State School administration refurbishment; \$500,000 for Macleay Island State School admin and library—that is about to get underway; and \$9 million in the Redland special school learning precinct. This school is close to my heart, and it is fantastic to see that level of investment in a new learning precinct.

We have had new classrooms delivered. Redland Bay took \$1.6 million just over Christmas. Bay View State School got \$700,000 worth of new classrooms. I also had the good fortune to open the new classrooms and flexible learning precinct at Cleveland State High School which was fantastic. A lot of my constituents' children attend that high school. There is lots of great work going on in the education space, not to mention the work at our TAFE. TAFE is absolutely going gangbusters in the Redlands. Our \$15 million upgrade will support more jobs in our area—nurses and the plumbing centre. They are looking spectacular and are not too far off being ready for opening. We have the free TAFE program that has been part of these budgets, covering the costs of apprenticeships and traineeships. This is so important to make sure we are positioned to create jobs of the future, particularly in these uncertain times.

Last week at Redland Hospital we committed \$62 million for work set to get underway for a new intensive care unit with a 32-bed ward. That is on top of last month's announcement of \$50 million for a new multistorey car park. That is fantastic news. It will create hundreds of jobs for our local area. Earlier this year we also opened the \$1.7 million emergency department expansion and new birthing suites. Last week we also committed, with the announcement of the intensive care unit, \$6 million for the business case, following on from the master plan, for a full expansion of the Redland Hospital into the future. We also have additional paramedics that are operating out in the Redlands, particularly across Macleay Island.

In terms of jobs and businesses, the QRIDA loans scheme as part of that COVID response has had a significant impact in the Redlands. Some \$22.6 million has gone to Redlands based businesses, which are supporting over 1,700 jobs in my local communities. Round 1 of the COVID small business grants saw \$2.5 million go across the Redlands local government area supporting businesses. That is what our government is about. We are about supporting businesses and making sure we create jobs for our communities.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work is another program I cannot talk enough about. We have spent over \$2 million in supporting our islands and mainland communities and leaving a legacy. That is really important for the community. Not only are we skilling Redlanders; we are also providing a legacy to community groups like the Redlands Rugby League Club.

At the Redlands Research Facility we have an \$8 million hydrogen pilot plant underway with QUT in partnership with international investors, and a new regional jobs committee which is doing great things out our way. We have put on more police, we have new equipment—barges and jet speedboats—and we have more fisheries patrol officers. These are all jobs for our community. We have more fire appliances. We have been investing in domestic violence crisis accommodation and additional DV support work. As members can see from what I have explained, we are investing in our economy, particularly in the Redlands. That is what it is all about in uncertain times like we are currently in with COVID.

I have said a number of times in this House that track record is so important. I proudly stand on our track record and the economic investment being made out in the Redlands. I take this opportunity to remind the House of the track record and lack of economic investment in the Redlands of those on the other side of the House during their decade of representation in the Redlands. There was no investment in roads or island infrastructure. The Anita Street intersection upgrade was cancelled under Campbell Newman and they were not looking to start upgrading Cleveland Redland Bay Road until 2025, another five years away. We did not have investment in Redland Hospital. The LNP closed the Wynnum Hospital and did not think about the capacity and the needs of Redland Hospital at that time—and on top of that they sacked doctors and nurses. There was little investment in our schools and they tried to close down our TAFE. That is absolutely shameful.

Not only did the LNP try to close down the TAFE but in a similar way that was nearly achieved with our Redlands Research Facility. I have had the pleasure of visiting that establishment many times over the nearly three years I have been in this job. I can tell members that it was brought to its knees. Larry, the now retired manager, spoke about the day they were all rounded up to be told that they no longer had a job and that that facility was going to be closed. That is absolutely shameful. With the investment of the Palaszczuk Labor government, that place is now going gangbusters. We are partnering to deliver the pilot hydrogen project with QUT and international investors. That will be that translational piece that takes it from academia, through testing and then up to places like Gladstone and Mackay where the sun shines beautifully. We also have agritech out there with UQ. They are

looking at diseases. Amazing work is going on out there, and that place was nearly closed. We talk about track record. That track record is not one that would ever be in the best interests of my Redlands community and their future.

We heard today that the member for Southport spoke at a recent chamber of commerce event and said that the LNP has unfinished business. We know that they have \$25 billion in unfunded promises. They outlined no plan on how to fund these promises. We can only infer that their plan of unfinished business is that of cutting, sacking and selling. Leopards do not change their spots. We have seen no real economic plan from those on the other side of the House. If you were to describe it, you would probably say that it looks like a plan of pork-barrelling, perhaps, and an economic approach that is something akin to sprinkling pre-election promises like fairy dust here, there and everywhere.

Our Palaszczuk government's economic response to COVID has been swift, it has been comprehensive and it has been done with a focus on building projects and investing in infrastructure, creating jobs for Queenslanders. I do not like the term 'unprecedented', but we are absolutely in unprecedented times and uncharted waters economically—here in Queensland, in Australia and across the world. The work of the Treasurer and the Queensland Treasury in the most difficult of circumstances to rapidly mobilise and respond to this crisis has been nothing short of incredible.

Our plan will see Queensland continue to lead the nation in economic recovery. These appropriation bills position our Queensland government and the parliament to ensure supply through to June 2021. That will ensure we keep delivering as a parliament for the people of Queensland. I commend these bills to the House.