




Speech By
Hon. Mark Ryan

MEMBER FOR MORAYFIELD

Record of Proceedings, 4 December 2020

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL

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 **Hon. MT RYAN** (Morayfield—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister for Fire and Emergency Services) (2.53 pm): I rise to contribute to the debate and put on the permanent record my support for the appropriation bills. This is a very good budget, a Labor budget, which delivers for Queenslanders by continuing to invest in the front line but also supports Queensland's recovery from COVID-19. It invests in the economy. It invests in jobs. The last election shows, and this state budget proves, that it is Labor that invests in our economy, Labor that invests in jobs and Labor that invests in Queensland.

Before I touch on some aspects of the budget, I want to pick out a particular point that the Leader of the Opposition made during his budget reply. The Leader of the Opposition said that he was going to be different. If he is going to be different, he should start with consistency. One of the things he pointed out, without providing context, was the time between the delivery of the 2019 budget and the delivery of the 2020 budget. He feigned outrage. He said that the delay was too long. The context around it is that we had a global pandemic, we had to wait for the federal government to deliver their budget and we also had a state election, as every state did.

On the point of consistency, let us have a look at the scoreboard. There was a delay, as every jurisdiction around Australia had a delay. The Leader of the Opposition was outraged that the time between the two Queensland state budgets was 539 days. He said it a couple of times in his contribution. The delay between the two federal government budgets was 553 days—14 days more. I am happy to sit down with the Leader of the Opposition, channel his outrage and write a letter to Josh Frydenberg saying, 'How outrageous! How outrageous that you delayed your budget in a year of COVID-19, in a year of a global pandemic. How outrageous!' If the Leader of the Opposition wants to be different, he needs to be consistent. Already he is failing.

It is also normally the proper course during a debate on the budget for each contribution to refer to the counterpart's contribution in the debate. I note that the member for Burdekin made a contribution to this budget debate, but, unfortunately, there is a very limited amount that I can respond to. When it came to the Queensland Police Service appropriation, there were less than 200 words; when it came to the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services budget appropriation, there were less than 100 words; when it came to the Queensland Corrective Services appropriation, there were zero words. It is very difficult to have a debate when your opponent makes no contribution at all. As we saw in question time this morning, the member for Burdekin needs to get out there and work a bit harder. He has been missing all week. He needs to step up. If he is going to put in a good performance at estimates he had better start working hard, because we have not seen any great contribution at the moment.

Let us get into discussing this fantastic Labor budget. It is a Labor budget that invests in Queensland, supports the economy, supports the front line and supports jobs. Nowhere else do we see this fantastic Labor investment demonstrated better than in policing. The Palaszczuk government,

through this budget, is embarking on an historic investment in policing in Queensland. It is the biggest investment in policing in three decades. This investment will deliver more than 2,000 extra police personnel by 2025, and this investment has already begun. We already have recruits at the academy, delivering on this commitment.

This commitment supports the Police Commissioner's vision for Queensland. She asked the government for these extra resources and we are delivering. The commissioner wants the Queensland Police Service to have an enhanced capability to not just respond to crime but also disrupt and prevent crime. This government supports the commissioner, and that is why we are making this historic investment.

This budget also supports a \$300 million police capital works pipeline over five years. The infrastructure program will see the construction of new police facilities in regions right across the state. The rollout has already started. The five-year program has started with Beaudesert, Biloela, Nambour, West End, Aurukun, Pormpuraaw, Clermont, Pimpama and Warwick. Many more projects will be delivered over the forward estimates. This new investment will complement the increase in police personnel numbers, but it will also support important construction jobs right across the state.

The record police budget also supports a number of other important initiatives, including the delivery of, probably a world first, mobile police beats. People tell me that this is a world first. We are very excited to be rolling out mobile police beats. They are an innovation of the commissioner. She was very excited to introduce these. It is a means of delivering a heightened police presence in local communities. The government will deliver 25 mobile police beats over the forward estimates, which are effectively police stations on wheels that can be quickly deployed wherever they are needed. Again, I am pleased to say that we are already delivering on those mobile police beats—one for Pine Rivers and one for Buderim. We are delivering more over the years to come.

Over the next five years the Palaszczuk government will also deliver additional equipment for the front line. That includes 5,000 new QLITE iPads. For the first time ever, it also includes the rollout over the forward estimates of more than 12,000 integrated, load-bearing ballistic vests for our police officers. This initiative will boost officer safety and enhance their ability to protect others. These specialised vests are far superior to the ballistic vests currently worn by police. They are a combination of ballistic vest, load-bearing vest and reflector vest to deliver the best protection. The integrated, load-bearing ballistic vests would be sourced from a Queensland supplier where possible, sustaining local jobs and supporting local businesses. The Palaszczuk Labor government will also deliver over the forward estimates extra body worn cameras as well as extra police vehicles.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the professionalism and dedication of our police during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have kept Queenslanders safe. They have been on our borders, in our airports and at quarantine hotels. They have been on the frontline and they have been the first line of defence against COVID-19. Well done to our police. Their efforts are nothing short of remarkable.

In supporting their efforts, this budget has also allocated an extra \$360 million this financial year to assist with the delivery of the government's COVID-19 response plan. This funding is available to Queensland Health, the Queensland Police Service and Queensland Fire and Emergency Services to support their COVID-19 work. With this budget and those that follow, the Palaszczuk government is ensuring that the Queensland Police Service has the personnel and resources to do what they do so exceedingly well—that is, keep the community safe.

Another frontline agency that keeps Queenslanders safe is Queensland Corrective Services. They too have stepped up during the pandemic. We have seen around the world the loss of life that follows when COVID-19 gets loose in a prison or custodial environment. Queensland Corrective Services was quick to see the very real danger the virus posed and implemented a response plan that could quickly escalate to meet the threat level. I pay tribute to our Queensland Corrective Services staff, custodial officers and community corrections personnel for their excellent work during these tough times. Because of their hard work, today our corrections network is COVID free.

We are also investing in the infrastructure our corrections network needs. It is undergoing another historic transformation. In addition, one of the two privately operated prisons transitioned this financial year—on 1 July 2020—to public operation. By the middle of next year—on 1 July 2021—the last private prison in Queensland will transition to public operation. This has been an extremely complex process, but Queensland Corrective Services continues to manage this challenging process extremely well. The transition to public operation of all facilities in Queensland—there will be no privately operated prisons in Queensland anymore—reflects the findings of Taskforce Flaxton which observed that a hybrid corrections network with a mix of public and privately run correctional facilities was suboptimal. In addition, the evidence also demonstrates that publicly run corrections facilities deliver superior outcomes, especially in relation to staffing and prisoner safety.

The safety and security of Queensland's prisons will be even further enhanced during this financial year with a range of significant investments to boost capacity. The government allocation for the department reinforces the government's commitment to the safety of Queenslanders and reducing the rate of crime in the community. Significantly, this budget provides more than \$100 million to kickstart construction on the Southern Queensland Correctional Precinct stage 2. This project is the second largest Queensland government building project in the state after Cross River Rail. Building works will begin next year and on completion this \$654 million piece of infrastructure will be world class and will have supported hundreds of construction jobs each year during construction. Once completed there will be approximately 500 full-time, permanent jobs to operate that connectional facility. We will also finish the Capricornia Correction Centre over the next financial year. That is investing not only in jobs in the regions but permanent jobs once the prison is operational.

We have seen on Fraser Island just how important a role our firefighters play in keeping the community safe. Like police and corrections staff, our firefighters are right there on the front line keeping us safe, looking after people, looking after property and looking after the environment. The Palaszczuk government will always ensure Queensland Fire and Emergency Services has the personnel and resources to do their job. This budget supports the recruitment of an extra 357 firefighters over five years. New facilities and new vehicles are also funded.

Our marine rescue workers are also on the front line supporting community safety. These tireless volunteers go out every day keeping the community safe and helping people in need. They too will be supported over the forward estimates with a multimillion dollar investment for replacement vessels. Looking at the La Nina flavoured forecast for a severe weather season, all of our frontline emergency staff will be very busy.

Day in and day out Queenslanders know they have an elite front line when it comes to community safety and a front line that they can always rely on. That is why the Palaszczuk government invests in these heroes to support them and the good work that they do.

When it comes to the Morayfield state electorate, again it is a Labor budget that delivers for the Morayfield state electorate and again it is a Labor budget which delivers for the Morayfield community. It would be remiss of me not to highlight the significant investment in infrastructure and services for the community that I represent.

When it comes to education, I note that the Caboolture Early Years Centre will receive a \$1 million refurbishment. Stage 2 of the Lee Street State Special School, which includes a brand new hall, will also kick off. Morayfield East State School will get something that they have been wanting—a new security fence. Morayfield State High School will get a new school hall. They are very excited about that. That is something that I have been working on for a number of years.

We will also see improvements to bus station infrastructure as well as spending on the Bruce Highway really gear up. Minister Bailey, you would be excited about this. Some \$52 million will be spent on upgrades north of Caboolture, which is very exciting. There is also investment in TAFE infrastructure. The new Caboolture watch house will also be finished in the next financial year. There will also be significant investment in public housing. We see some additional accommodation units being delivered as well as also the provision and further support of domestic violence services, something which is very important in the community.

Finally, I want to highlight significant investment in health infrastructure. We will see the major redevelopment of the Caboolture Hospital really kick off in this financial year. We have more than \$70 million being spent locally, kickstarting that infrastructure project. This is a massive redevelopment. The jobs that it will support during construction, as well as the delivery of an improved health facility for our community, will be well received. In addition, there is money in the budget to support a new satellite hospital at Caboolture.

This is an outstanding Labor budget that delivers on all our priorities and keeps the community safe. Well done, Labor.