



Speech By  
**Hon. Meaghan Scanlon**

**MEMBER FOR GAVEN**

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Record of Proceedings, 3 December 2020

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

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 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (8.43 pm): I rise to speak in support of the appropriation bills. The Palaszczuk government is certainly getting on with the job of delivering our economic recovery plan for Queensland. We took a clear plan forward at the election and we were returned. I want to take this opportunity to thank the electorate of Gaven for placing their trust in me for a second term. As a born and bred Gold Coaster, I am particularly pleased to see significant investment in this year's budget for my city. I am very proud of the commitments we took forward at the election.

The centrepiece of those commitments are our M1 upgrades. This year's budget has allocated money for exit 41 at Yatala South, exit 49 at Pimpama and exit 57 and for the Pacific Motorway upgrades from Varsity Lakes to Tugun. In the last term of government we completed the Mudgeeraba to Varsity Lakes upgrades, which was a commitment I made at the previous election. Most importantly, there is funding for the Coomera Connector—a project that I have advocated strongly for over the last term.

It was interesting to hear the Leader of the Opposition's contribution to this bill earlier because it was actually those opposite who stopped this particular project from progressing. I table an article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin* published in 2014 titled 'End of the road for traffic relief plan as road corridor quietly scrapped'.

*Tabled paper:* Article from the *Gold Coast Bulletin* online, dated 25 April 2014, titled 'End of the road for traffic relief plan as road corridor quietly scrapped' [355](#).

**Mrs Frecklington:** Welcome to 2020.

**Ms SCANLON:** I thank the member for Nanango for her interjection. Over the last term of government our government was very proud to deliver M1 upgrades. This is in contrast to the member for Nanango and the LNP who, when last in government, did not spend a single new dollar on the M1. As I just mentioned, they scrapped the Coomera Connector from progressing.

The member for Broadwater, who was previously the member for Mundingburra, thought that he could move to the Gold Coast and wipe history. Just because he moves to the suburb of Runaway Bay does not mean he can run away from his track record.

We are investing heavily in this space. We are delivering a Coomera Connector that Gold Coasters have been calling for. This contrasts to the LNP's proposal which was puny, was significantly shorter and was narrower. According to advice from TMR, it would have dumped thousands of vehicles onto the Gold Coast Highway. Our project will deliver the outcomes that Gold Coasters expect and need.

I was also interested to hear the member for Burleigh's contribution earlier where he effectively criticised the demand response trial that we committed to during the election in my electorate. It is not particularly surprising that they criticise public transport investment in my electorate given that when they were last in government they cut bus services. I remind the member for Burleigh that we are significantly investing in his electorate also when it comes to public transport.

**Ms Boyd:** Is it going past his brewery?

**Ms SCANLON:** I take the member's interjection. There has been some speculation around what interests the member for Burleigh perhaps has around some proposed routes. We are very proud to be delivering Gold Coast Light Rail. It was a Labor government that delivered stage 1, delivered stage 2 and will deliver stage 3 as well. That will be from Broadbeach South to Burleigh Heads.

Our road to recovery would not be possible without a strong health response which is why it is critical that we keep investing in health care for a growing community like the Gold Coast. During the election I was pleased to announce funding for a \$40 million new satellite hospital on the southern Gold Coast and a \$105 million contribution to build a 40-bed mental health rehabilitation unit at the Gold Coast University Hospital—a project that I note the member for Bonney was also criticising despite the fact that they did not actually commit to that particular upgrade during the election.

We have also committed \$5.8 million to build a hybrid theatre to improve patient outcomes and survival in comprehensive trauma cases as well as employ more nurses, more doctors and more health professionals. There is also funding for a second CT scanner for the Robina Hospital and funding towards a new hospital and health precinct in Coomera on the preferred 13 hectares of land already owned by Queensland Health. I am very proud to be part of a government that invests in health care. I am pleased to see funding in this year's budget for our hospitals, particularly given the growth we are seeing on the Gold Coast.

I also particularly proud to see \$500,000 in this year's budget for a new Gold Coast manufacturing hub. This is something I have particularly advocated for because we know there are many full-time, permanent jobs in the manufacturing sector. My focus has been on diversifying the Gold Coast economy, with particularly a large industrial sector in Nerang.

We have also committed \$2.5 million for a reality television hub on the Gold Coast, supporting jobs in the screen industry—a sector I know the Premier is incredibly passionate about, having secured many blockbuster films for the Gold Coast to create jobs. We also know that we cannot just deliver the job opportunities; we also need to deliver the skills and training for young Queenslanders to get those jobs. That is why we have committed \$18.8 million this financial year to refurbish, upgrade and expand TAFE campuses along the Gold Coast as well as expand the free apprenticeships and free TAFE program.

I am also very proud to see funding for Pacific Pines State High School in my electorate—a \$10 million contribution in this budget out of a \$26 million commitment for new classrooms. The northern Gold Coast is growing and growing. This is one of many election commitments for schools in my patch. We have Nerang State High School, Nerang State School, Worongary State School and William Duncan State School which will also be receiving upgrades over this term of government, as well as air-conditioning every state school classroom, staffrooms and libraries by 2022, and putting solar panels on school rooftops ensuring that we are not only driving down power bills but also lowering our carbon emissions.

The Palaszczuk government is investing \$989 million this financial year to protect our natural assets and drive economic growth. I want to acknowledge the member for Algeester, who was the former minister for environment, for the work she has been doing in this space. A key part of our agenda is the delivery of our climate action plan for the next decade. This will be developed in consultation with stakeholders to reduce emissions, make our economy and communities more resilient, and create jobs in growth industries such as renewables and hydrogen.

In this year's budget we are also providing additional funding of \$1.5 million for grants to local councils for climate change adaptation work—something I know the LGAQ have very much welcomed. It is good to see two levels of government taking action on climate change even in the federal government's absence. Our flagship Land Restoration Fund will also continue to invest and grow Queensland's carbon farming sector. So far we have already committed close to \$93 million across 19 projects from the first investment round, creating sustainable local jobs, supplying premium carbon credits and delivering social and environmental outcomes.

Those are just some of the ways our government is tackling climate change to reduce the impacts on the Great Barrier Reef, which we heard some reports about this morning. The reef is an icon to Queensland. We have a responsibility to protect this natural wonder. This year we will be investing a

further \$27 million to improve reef water quality and support local communities and industry to reduce threats to marine wildlife. We have also provided new funding of \$10 million through our Reef Assist program to support 11 projects that will deliver on-the-ground environmental outcomes and generate 130 regional jobs in North Queensland.

We will be continuing our path forward to make Queensland a zero-waste society by investing in increased recycling through our \$100 million Resource Recovery Industry Development Program partnering with businesses to increase the number of jobs we have in the recycling industry. We are doing this because it is not only the right thing to do but we know that by recycling we create three times as many jobs than if that waste went into landfill. We also made an election commitment to develop and organise a waste strategy for Queensland. We will deliver on that.

When it comes to protected areas, as custodians of the environment, the Department of Environment and Science plays a critical role in managing more than 13 million hectares of protected areas and forests, with 346,000 square kilometres of Great Barrier Reef and state marine parks. Our government has released a new Protected Area Strategy for Queensland. This strategy will pave the way for the next 10 years to expand our protected area estate and double the number of Indigenous land and sea ranger jobs. This work will begin with \$15.8 million for the strategic acquisition of properties across the state to grow protected areas.

As part of Queensland's economic recovery plan, we are investing \$10.9 million for new visitor infrastructure in our national parks, including a \$3.1 million contribution to continue the construction of the multi-day walking track in the Whitsunday Islands National Park. This is in addition to our investment of \$8.9 million in our National Parks Works and Jobs Boost Program. This will deliver a range of local projects including the new co-designed mountain bike trails in the Nerang National Park in my electorate, renewable energy upgrades at the Mon Repos Turtle Centre and infrastructure upgrades in parks and forests across Queensland.

When it comes to science, this year, in the face of the pandemic, we have relied on science more than ever. It is fitting that this budget also builds on the strengths of Queensland's scientific excellence. Science gives us the tools to make informed decisions to seize opportunities to build a stronger future. That is why we are expanding the air quality monitoring program across the state, with a \$1.4 million investment to help protect Queenslanders from bushfire smoke. The scale of the 2019-20 bushfire season was unprecedented and the exposure to bushfire smoke created serious public health concerns. This investment will support air quality monitoring that is critical to the health of all Queenslanders.

The Palaszczuk government is also committed to youth engagement and supporting young people to thrive and participate in Queensland's economy and society. We want young people to look to the future and see endless possibilities. Youth engagement is not just about giving young people a voice. It is actually about listening to them as well. It is about actively and genuinely seeking their ideas and input into decisions that affect them.

We have already achieved so much with the Queensland Youth Engagement Panel, comprising 11 young people from across the state who came together to help shape government policy; the Queensland Youth eHub, the safe electronic platform for young people to have their say on matters that affect them; and youth forums emerging right across government. The YMCA Youth Parliament, in its 25th year, and the Queensland Indigenous Youth Leadership Program, which is about to commence, will be providing valuable platforms for young people to raise issues and ideas for change with government.

The Palaszczuk government's budget is committed to supporting the environment and backing jobs on the Gold Coast and all across Queensland. I commend the bills to the House.