




Speech By
Robert Skelton

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Record of Proceedings, 3 December 2020

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL

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 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (1.20 am): I rise in support of the 2020 appropriation bills. I am humbled to give a speech on the budget on behalf of the electors of Nicklin. It is my pleasure to report to the House that the good people of Nicklin are overjoyed with the member for Woodridge's budget. Reports have come to me of surprise and elation at the focus that this government has shown on our little patch of this great state.

If I may be indulged I would like to give my simple interpretation of a deficit budget. A deficit budget is like a household budget. Most people live with debt. We need to borrow to own a home or car. We need to borrow if the washing machine stops working. The needs of now must be met and, for most Australians, that means borrowing and then working off the debt. The example of the broken washing machine at home could be equivalent to a natural disaster at the state level. It is essential that we borrow. It is necessary to borrow for the things we need, such as bricks and mortar, people and skills. That is future planning. It is also prudent that we work towards paying back that debt. The state government's economic recovery package is just that.

It would be impossible and dishonest to forecast any surplus and a time frame to get it. We do not know what global economic conditions or natural disasters we might face. Unfortunately, there is no crystal ball to assist in the forecast of the future. The members opposite and their leader have the luxury of turning up with nothing and demanding the impossible as they have four long years to watch as we legislate for a better Queensland. The economic recovery is happening. The Queensland state government is getting things done. The Palaszczuk government represents responsible economic management. I note with interest that yesterday the papers accused the states of having a \$500 billion debt binge. It is worth knowing that the federal government is also borrowing at record levels, although that seems to have been omitted.

The record investment that the government is putting into the state is reflected in the seat of Nicklin. Already the farmers' and fishermen's friend, the member for Ferny Grove, has visited my electorate. He did so whilst I was still a candidate. The former member avoided him, even though he was announcing funding for the gourmet cheese factory in Kenilworth. Why wouldn't you promote the success of your region? We are getting \$6.8 million for fisheries and \$1 million for a new glasshouse at the Maroochy Research Facility. That will ensure jobs and continued support for the farmers and fishermen who live and work in my electorate and more broadly on the Sunshine Coast.

I commend the member for Miller and his department for the sterling work that they are doing and will continue to do in my electorate. A plethora of infrastructure projects will ease the burden of congestion and unblock the arteries of the Sunshine Coast so that our goods and services can get to where they are needed. There is a lot to mention and I am excited about pedestrian access in Yandina, a business case for public transport on the Sunshine Coast, and footpath and other accessibility work

around the schools of my region. The people of Yandina thank the honourable member for remembering their pleas for a pedestrian refuge on the Yandina South Connection Road. Ours is a responsible government that is getting things done.

Thanks go to the member for Morayfield for his due diligence in keeping our police officers safe. The minister has listened to the front line and has committed to better ballistic vests, body worn cameras and QLITE devices. It is important to me and to all Queenslanders that the people who protect and serve us should be likewise protected as far as possible in such a dangerous profession. Mobile police vans will allow the deployment of police capability to anywhere in the state at short notice. There will be a new police station in Nambour and additional staff. It may be said that law and order is not a problem. Our police do an amazing job and are up to any task. A responsible government aims to give them the best that we can so that they can fulfil their role safely. Regarding the opposition's continual claims of problems, they do the QPS and their communities a disservice. It is a good thing that we have a caring and responsible government that gets things done.

Much gratitude goes to the member for McConnel, who is perhaps fast becoming the teacher's pet. Nicklin will see much needed investment in our schools. Burnside State High School will be building a performing arts centre worth \$10 million. Burnside State School will receive to invest in science learning spaces. Kenilworth State School will get funding for the refurbishment of block B learning spaces. The Nambour State College is receiving multiple equitable works to assist in access for students with special needs, as will Noosa District State High School, which will also benefit from some refurbishment of block H learning spaces.

The schools of Nicklin are particularly happy to see the long-needed footpath building and refurbishment program at Nambour Special School, Burnside State High School and St John's College. The multimillion dollar refurbishment and maintenance program, spread across 13 Nicklin schools, is a great place to start, because only Labor invests in public education. Only the Palaszczuk government puts its money where its mouth is when it comes to supporting, educating and developing the children of our regional towns and villages. Investing in education is investing in the future. I look forward to working with the minister to make education a priority, as the next generation are our legacy and they deserve the best that the government can give. This responsible government is getting things done.

Kudos goes to the member for Redcliffe and the member for Murrumba for their continued support of our wonderful hospital of the hinterland in Nambour. The hospital is a sub-acute facility and is being upgraded to the tune of \$86 million. Only the Palaszczuk government can be trusted with the health of our good people, and the good people of Nicklin know that to be a fact. In addition, the state government is providing more healthcare professionals, with some coming to our region and bringing their families, making our community stronger and more resilient. Collectively, we are getting things done.

Respect goes to the member for Bulimba for \$5 million for our TAFE college and \$1.2 million in small business grants. The minister is devoted to getting our state skilled and getting our businesses moving. The above examples are just the start of a long and productive partnership. This government is dedicated to the TAFE system. The members opposite should draw from this budget some lessons on how best to encourage, develop and educate the citizens of tomorrow. I use my region as an example of the Palaszczuk government getting things done.

I thank the member for Waterford for the government's commitment of funds to tackle the social issues that prevail in not just my electorate but also every electorate in different ways. Nearly \$1 million and a commitment over four years to tackle domestic and family services is appreciated by many great groups. I give a shout-out to the staff of the Kyabra Community Association and Sunny Coast kids. I make special mention of the Nambour Community Centre. Through a great sense of community various not-for-profit groups offer respite and care in Nicklin and they will benefit from a more sensitive and far-sighted government. Ours is a responsible government that looks after the most vulnerable Queenslanders. It is a government that is committed to getting things done.

With gratitude to the Deputy Premier and member for Murrumba, this state government invests in the community. The beautiful rural gem of Cooroy has benefited from this government's far-sighted support of local government initiatives. An almost \$3 million commitment to the Hinterland Adventure Playground and the Butter Factory fencing has been gratefully received. The Nambour Aquatic Centre's splash pad and slide and play zone gets a go. There is an upgrade of the Yandina Cricket Club, with amenities for females and all abilities.

This tiny snapshot of the good community support that Nicklin has benefited from in this delayed but unique budget only demonstrates the commitment of the Palaszczuk government to the wellbeing of its people. The people know that only Labor can be trusted to support and nurture the basics of strong communities—their people. This is a government getting things done.

Commendation goes to the member for Sandgate. The Nambour Crushers Rugby League Club will have upgrades to the clubhouse incorporating female change rooms, kitchen, training and meeting rooms. It looks likely that not only will the people of Nicklin benefit from this refurbishment; regions and community groups across Queensland will benefit also. My office has already been contacted by a Mr Beetson—now that is a familiar name—with a view to holding a Murri Cup carnival next year. Inclusiveness, access and community are hallmarks of a government and state that have united and are recovering.

This budget has something for everyone. The ministers that I may have missed are contributing to Nicklin in an indirect way by increasing the output of their respective departments. I have provided only a brief snapshot of my region.

The economic recovery has started because of the Labor Palaszczuk government. Queensland—the hinterland and its people—is resilient and has survived the worst of the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic and global recession. The government and Queenslanders have a can-do attitude. We now have the tools to get back to work. Queenslanders are getting the training and skills they need. The strong focus on jobs and infrastructure provided by the government in this budget is exactly the way to rebuild after unprecedented disaster.

The history aficionados—I doubt any members opposite—could liken this very competent budget to FDR's New Deal that delivered the US out of the Depression. The people in my electorate are tired of the relentless negativity of the members to my right. The member for Broadwater, in his speech in reply to the budget, offered nothing but the usual doom and gloom. The opposition have no coherent plan. I know that it is a broad church, but I cannot quite find any idea or value that they have in common other than a pathological hatred of anyone who does not wear a blue tie. The people of Queensland have made their choice. They like detail; they like transparency.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SKELTON: Sorry, that is a metaphor—for you guys, just so you know.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Direct your comments through the chair, member.

Mr SKELTON: The people have made their choice. They like detail; they like transparency. They have voted for the Queensland government. Queenslanders will not be bought by cynical handouts like a \$300 registration buyback. It is a very shallow talent pool to the right.

A mayor in my region is on record as saying that they welcome change. To paraphrase the mayor of the Sunshine Coast, 'We are tired of the lazy representation and expectation of office of the current LNP members.' This was said prior to the election, and I am living proof—

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Buderim, you are on a warning.

Mr SKELTON: This was said prior to the election, and I am living proof of the people's approval of this government, this budget and this economic recovery plan.

Mr BLEIJIE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I move—

That the member's time be extended.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The question is that the motion be agreed to. Those of that opinion say 'aye'; those against 'no'. I think the noes have it.

Mr SKELTON: The Premier, the Deputy Premier, the Treasurer and the cabinet of this Palaszczuk government have led Queensland through this difficult time. It is proof of the belief that Queenslanders have in the Labor Party to lead them through tough times, as we always have historically. As the representative of the people of Nicklin, I fully support this budget and its commitment to my region and our great state.

(Time expired)