




Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath

MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 4 December 2020

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL

APPROPRIATION (2020-2021) BILL

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (6.10 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the debate on the appropriation bills introduced by the honourable the Treasurer on Tuesday of this week. At the outset I commend the Treasurer, Queensland Treasury and all the departments and ministers on the tremendous work they have put in to delivering the budget for the people of Queensland so quickly after the 2020 election. This was a promise we made before the election and this week we deliver on that promise. This election saw the people of Queensland put their faith in the Palaszczuk government and the people of Redcliffe put their faith in me as their representative for another four years.

The year 2020 has been a year like no other. The presence of COVID-19 has meant that we have all had to adapt to new ways of life and work. I believe that Queensland and Queenslanders have done a tremendous job, but this was no accident. It is not luck; it is leadership. Our success in Queensland has been by design. It has only been possible because we have a strong health system in Queensland and the best people in Australia giving advice and recommendations to government on how to handle COVID-19. This has been led by our Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young. I know that all members—at least government members—will join me in thanking her and her team for the marvellous work they have done keeping Queenslanders safe. Every day I had someone in my community coming up to me and saying, 'Please say thank you to Dr Young and please say thank you to the Premier for keeping us safe.'

It is our collective actions which have enabled our collective achievements. Locally, we went to the election with a positive agenda for our community. I am proud to have the privilege of delivering that agenda over the next four years. This includes over \$19 million in this year's budget for ongoing redevelopment works at our mighty Redcliffe Hospital. I am proud of our Redcliffe Hospital as the member for Redcliffe, and I am even more proud of the hospital as Queensland's new Minister for Health and Ambulance Services. I am looking forward to attending the Redcliffe Hospital this Saturday to catch up with the staff and also to check out the new MRI machine. Redcliffe residents would have seen before the election that I posted a time lapse video of the new MRI machine being installed. I am very excited to hear that it is already fully operational, having scanned the first patient on 17 November 2020.

Under the Palaszczuk government's state budget, we will also see more than \$3.5 million invested in our local Redcliffe schools for refurbishments, maintenance works and enhancements to outdoor learning and play equipment. I am passionate about education and I am pleased that the Palaszczuk government is continuing to invest in our schools right across Queensland. The announcement to extend our free TAFE and apprenticeships to up-to-25-year-olds is very exciting. It is such an important time to be getting young people into a trade when so many who had left school last

year have found themselves unemployed because of COVID. A trade is as valuable as a university degree, in my view, and it is wonderful that this opportunity will be given to these people thanks to the Palaszczuk government.

As promised in the election, we are supporting our frontline police with additional resources to our local policing district including a mobile police beat which the people of Redcliffe will see out and about soon. We are also investing in sporting infrastructure, ensuring our community can stay healthy and we can attract major sporting competitions to our community. Not least is the \$2 million for the lights at the Dolphins Stadium, Redcliffe, which will strengthen our NRL bid even more. I am looking forward to continuing to work with all ministers to deliver on our election commitments over this term of parliament on behalf of the people of Redcliffe.

As Minister for Health and Ambulance Services, let me say that the budget delivered by the Treasurer on Tuesday is a clear and emphatic reaffirmation of the Palaszczuk government's commitment to deliver quality health services to the people of Queensland. The record \$21.8 billion allocated to the provision of health and ambulance services includes an operating budget for Queensland Health of \$20.199 billion. This represents an increase of 9.5 per cent on the budget allocation to health in 2019-20. The investment made in health says a lot about the government's priorities and everything about its values. This year's record allocation acknowledges the primacy of health and health services in our economic recovery plan.

A strong ongoing health response to COVID is critical to our economic recovery. It also reflects our government's recognition that access to affordable and readily available health care is a key to a strong and healthy society. The delivery of quality health care, irrespective of personal background and individual circumstances, serves not only the clinical imperative of our sense of social responsibility but also the moral tenets of our aspiration as a civil society. This commitment to those values is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the health capital budget, which has doubled this year to \$1.625 billion. That means new hospitals and the expansion and refurbishment of existing hospitals, to ensure Queenslanders have access to a standard of care amongst the best in the world.

If the investment in health is a statement about our values, it is worth considering what the LNP's record says about what they think is important. In the member for Broadwater's budget reply, a speech he stated would serve as a declaration of the values and priorities for his opposition team, there was only one reference to health, when he said—

Government must ensure that Queenslanders have access to the best possible health care ...

That is it. So much for vision! The Palaszczuk government's record investment in our health capital program stands in stark contrast with the performance of the LNP when they last sat on this side of the House. In their entire term, they did not build or plan to build a single hospital.

This budget, framed in the shadow of COVID-19, builds upon the Palaszczuk government's formidable record in delivering quality health care to the Queensland people, no matter where they live in our great state. The resilience and capability of our health system was evident in the strength and conviction of our health response to the unforeseen arrival of the COVID pandemic. That response, led so capably by the Chief Health Officer, was a testament to the extraordinary diligence and professionalism of our frontline health staff who, particularly in those early uncertain months, put themselves in harm's way in the service of their fellow Queenslanders. We will always back our frontline health staff, a pledge that finds clear expression in this budget.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Deputy Speaker has reviewed and approved my budget speech for incorporation and, as such, I ask that the remainder of my speech be incorporated into *Hansard*.

The speech read as follows—

Having restored the health workforce after coming to government in 2015, this budget continues to fortify the front line in the face of increasing demand by employing over 2,800 additional health staff. I referred earlier to our record capital budget, which includes \$265 million for the construction of an additional seven satellite hospitals in South-east Queensland to alleviate some of the demand pressures on our tertiary facilities by offering services in areas such as chemotherapy, dialysis and prenatal care.

This year's budget will also see major upgrades and expansions of the Gold Coast University Hospital, Ipswich Hospital, Proserpine Hospital, Cairns Hospital, Townsville University Hospital, Logan Hospital, Caboolture Hospital and Redland Hospital. Each of these projects will deliver local construction jobs in each of these communities, as well as continuing operational jobs once they are complete.

This year's budget will see investment to expand renal dialysis across regional, rural and remote areas of the state. This will mean more treatment spaces for renal dialysis patients across new and expanded services. We will inject \$33.5 million to establish 41 additional renal dialysis treatment spaces across regional, rural and remote areas of Queensland. This means care closer to home for even more patients. Patients requiring renal dialysis often spend hours a week receiving lifesaving treatment. This will make a real difference to those people who spend so much time travelling for care, meaning less time on the road and more time with their family and friends. It will also divert some demand from nearby major hospitals.

In this year's budget we are investing an additional \$171 million in palliative care funding to ensure Queenslanders get the highest quality care at the end of their lives. Care at the end of life is one of the most important responsibilities a government could have. Demand for palliative care continues to increase with our population aging. This is the single biggest injection in palliative care funding in Queensland's history. We will invest \$102.5 million to employ more frontline palliative care staff and \$54.8 million for community based service providers to deliver home based hospice care. This means more Queenslanders will be able to have their wish of spending their last days at home.

The funding will also expand after-hours services run by our public hospitals and improve digital services and telehealth support for staff, patients and their families. This budget also backs our hard-working paramedics, delivering a record budget of \$933.9 million which represents an increase of 5.4% on the 2019-20 allocated budget, and 48% since we came to office. There is an axiom in politics that says if you want to know what a government stands for, look at its budget.

The year 2020 has been one of the most challenging and difficult years in our history, but fortunately for Queenslanders, they had a government that has been up to the task. This year's budget reaffirms in the most emphatic terms the clear priority of health care for the Palaszczuk government. I look forward to working with my department and our network of hospital and health services as we continue to deliver quality health care to all Queenslanders in all parts of our state.

I commend the appropriation bills to the House.