




Speech By
Ali King

MEMBER FOR PUMICESTONE

Record of Proceedings, 18 June 2021

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Ms KING** (Pumicestone—ALP) (2.58 pm): I want to briefly place on the record my sadness at the passing of the member for Stretton, Duncan Pegg. I and other new members may not have had the time we would have liked to get to know Duncan well, but I respected him very much as a brilliant political mind and somebody who had the respect of members right across this chamber. I reflect what a valuable and impressive thing that is and only hope at the end of my time in this place I, too, could achieve that.

I love Queensland and it is the greatest honour of my life to have been elected to work hard for the people of Pumicestone every single day and for the people of Queensland. On this side of the House we are all proud of our communities, proud of Queensland and proud to serve our great state. The last 18 months have seen Queensland's greatest challenge of COVID-19. Because we do care about our communities and about Queensland, when COVID-19 hit we did not call 64 times for our borders to be opened. We did not put big business first; we put Queenslanders first and we followed the health advice. We kept Queenslanders safe and we protected our economy. Those choices were the best possible choices for Queensland's economy, and the positive impacts of those choices show in our 2021-22 budget.

I sat through the opposition leader's budget reply and I heard nothing of inspiration—no values, no vision. He said that he wanted to give Queenslanders hope, but then he proceeded to repeatedly talk down Queensland. I realised from that that the member for Broadwater does not like Queensland very much. He does not believe in our state. I could add that members of the Greens political party, whom we heard from earlier in this debate, also do not seem to like Queenslanders very much, or Queensland for that matter. They do not like people outside their own bubble. They certainly do not seem to like or value our institutions of parliament very much. It does make you ask why they bother to take up two seats in this place.

On the Labor side, though, we know that at heart the LNP and the member for Broadwater have only two main policies—only two things they care about: talking down Queensland and our world-class health system and sniffing around for jobs and services they can cut, whether you call cuts 'tough love', like the member for Chatsworth did, or 'trimming the fat', like Lawrence Springborg once did. Then we have the member for Clayfield, who boasted about his shrunken capital program. As Campbell Newman once said of his heartless decision to sack 14,000 Queenslanders—

... many people often thank me for giving them an opportunity to start a new business or new career.

I wonder if they are thanking the former LNP premier now! On Wednesday we got to hear the LNP's brand new cuts formula, announced by the member for Broadwater himself: cuts, but not savage cuts. Of course, one of the first cuts the member for Broadwater announced when he started his new

job as Leader of the Opposition was his \$3 million cut to a replacement Bribie Island Bridge. I ask the member for Broadwater now: does cutting support for a replacement Bribie Island Bridge count as a savage cut? I suspect that the people of Pumicestone would say that it does.

I return to the all-important issue of health for my constituents in Pumicestone. Because Labor does love Queensland and Queenslanders, because we back Queenslanders, we have delivered another record health budget: \$22.2 billion in 2021-22. I will repeat those three words: record health budget. The LNP does not like that phrase much because, goodness knows, it never delivered a record health budget. Its health budgets meant one thing: cuts. There were cuts to services and facilities, like when it closed the Barrett centre with tragic results, and cuts to health workers, like the 732 nurses who were marched out the door in my local health area. One after another, opposition members have stood up in this House and talked down our world-class health system. As part of our record health budget, I am so proud—the member for Southport is going out the door—

Mr LANGBROEK: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: I can pre-empt what you are going to say. Member for Pumicestone, there is a convention in this House that we do not—

Mr Langbroek: It is extremely disorderly.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I do not need instructions.

Ms KING: I apologise. I did not intend any reflection on the departure of any member.

Mr Langbroek: Remember the rules.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Member for Surfers Paradise. That really was unnecessary. If that continues, you will be warned.

Ms KING: Our new satellite hospital on Bribie is just what the doctor ordered for our ageing community. I was delighted this week to be able to stand with the Premier and announce that we now have a site. The site is the perfect place for our satellite hospital to be built. It is well located. It is close to public transport. It is the next step for our community to get more health care closer to home. In this budget we see \$15 million dedicated to the beginnings of construction of our satellite hospital. I could not be more delighted. I will keep working hard to keep our satellite hospitals, both on Bribie and in Caboolture, on track. I cannot wait to see them delivered in 2023.

The 2021-22 budget also has \$121 million dedicated to continue our massive redevelopment of Caboolture Hospital. I recently visited with our minister. Caboolture Hospital is looking to be doubled in size under the commitment of this government. We are adding 130 new beds, a new cardiac unit, a new NICU, a bigger and better emergency department and a whole range of new services.

I remind those opposite that, while they have stood in this place and purported to advocate for people in Caboolture, it was only three years ago that they likewise stood in this place and said that our massive redevelopment of Caboolture Hospital was a political stunt and that it was not necessary. It is quite extraordinary to me that on the one hand you say that you are advocating for people to get better health care while on the other hand you claim that a really important piece of local health infrastructure, Caboolture Hospital, does not need a desperately needed upgrade. It is absolutely extraordinary.

Members opposite talk down our health system but, when it comes down to it, there is one simple thing they could do that would make a very real difference. They could pick up the phone, speak to their federal LNP colleagues and ask them to fix the GP crisis that so many communities right across Queensland are facing. They should pick up the phone, talk to federal health minister Greg Hunt and ask him to put our communities back on the GP priority health status lists. Communities in my electorate of Pumicestone were removed from that list in 2019. Since then, wait times for GP services have blown out to up to four weeks. That is leading to a lot of the pressures we are seeing right across our hospital system. Have those opposite taken that simple step? I would suggest that they have not. I have certainly not heard a word from them about it. They are very happy to talk down our health system, but when it comes down to it what do we hear but silence? While they are at it, if the LNP actually care about Queenslanders' health they should tell Scott Morrison that his attacks on Medicare are absolutely unacceptable.

Our budget also delivers on key road upgrades that matter so much to people in Pumicestone. I worked hard to get funding for a new \$4.284 million project to upgrade the dangerous intersection of D'Aguilar Highway, Dances Road and Pumicestone Road at Caboolture. That intersection is on the list of the top 10 problem intersections in Queensland. Fixing it will make a real difference in getting people in Pumicestone home sooner and safer. I am absolutely delighted to see that work beginning in this budget.

The Speaker has reviewed and approved my budget speech for incorporation. As such, I ask that the remainder of my speech is incorporated into the *Record of Proceedings*.

The speech read as follows—

We've got real money invested in the design work for a future new Bribie Island Bridge.

There's funding for the upgrade of Regina Avenue at Ningi begins in this budget, as does our Beachmere Road upgrade funding.

We've got the Stage 2 works funding for the upgrade and dual laning of the Old Toorbul Point Rd intersection project, plus our huge job-creating Bruce Highway upgrades from the Bribie Island interchange to Steve Irwin Way.

What a contrast with the LNP, who oversaw \$13.6 million cuts to Bribie Island Road upgrades and \$1.6 billion from roads right across Queensland.

Speaker, Queensland's Economic Recovery Plan is clearly working—we're leading the way across Australia when it comes to falling unemployment.

Labour force data shows we're the first State to have improved on our pre-COVID employment figures, with unemployment now at 5.4%

That's a drop of half a percent in just one month.

Queenslanders have confidence in our great State of Queensland.

Australians have confidence in Queensland, that shows in the large numbers moving here.

But not the Queensland LNP, they don't have confidence in Queensland.

They see Budget week as nothing but an opportunity to talk down Queensland.

They talk down our surging economy, where under Palaszczuk Labor government, employment increased by more than 1,000 jobs created every single day last month.

This Budget continues the good work of backing jobs with continued investment in key local infrastructure projects.

The LNP even talking down the value of our Queensland Titles Office—but their disbelief at the independent valuation is really nothing more than a cloak thrown over their disappointment.

They're disappointed that thanks to Labor's actions they won't be able to sell off our Land Titles Office like their mates in NSW did.

Housing pressure is a very real issue in Pumicestone, and I'm incredibly proud that this Budget is delivering \$1.9 billion over four years to increase the supply of social housing by 6,365, upgrade the existing stock of dwellings, and deliver critical housing and homelessness services to vulnerable Queenslanders.

It's the biggest concentrated investment in social and affordable housing in Queensland's entire history, it's very much needed and I'm proud to have advocated on behalf of the Pumicestone community, sharing the stories and struggles they have shared with me, to help get us to this point.

A case in point is the \$633,000 in funding for the Caboolture Emergency Youth Shelter that will make a big difference to our most vulnerable.

I'm delighted by the commitment of \$500,000 to my friends at Bribie Island Voluntary Community Help Association for Home Assist and the other important community-centred services they provide to help people stay well and in their homes safely, like taking people to health appointments and to access community services.

In other positive news, Skilling Queenslanders for Work funding has now been made permanent, with \$320 million over 4 years, \$80 million ongoing each year. This program is a real driver of hope and attending graduation ceremonies where so many young people are going on to work or further training is one of my happiest responsibilities as the Member for Pumicestone.

Under Labor's Budget, Queensland is now predicted to return to operating balance in 2024-25 with a modest surplus of \$153 million, the first of the four largest economies in Australia to reach surplus.

And we've done it with no cuts to services, continued record infrastructure investment and—unlike the LNP—without sacking staff or selling off assets.

Speaker, I promised I would work hard every day to make Pumicestone better for us.

That I would work every day for the infrastructure upgrades that will enrich our community life, to deliver our satellite hospitals, build the roads we need, make sure we have strong public services, vibrant schools and good local jobs.

And Speaker, I'm proud to be able to say that's exactly what our Palaszczuk Labor Government's 2021-2022 Budget does.

I commend the Appropriation Bills to the House.