




Speech By
Barry O'Rourke

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Record of Proceedings, 17 June 2021

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (5.12 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill 2021-22 introduced by the Hon. Cameron Dick, Treasurer and Minister for Investment. This is another great Labor budget for Queensland and I am pleased to be able to respond to another great jobs budget for Central Queensland. I feel great pride in the wonderful outcomes that this budget will bring for all Queenslanders, none more so than my constituents in the Rockhampton electorate. It is interesting that there was an article just a few weeks ago wherein the Brisbane Lord Mayor was complaining about the spend per head on infrastructure in Central Queensland. In Central Queensland we have been above the state average in terms of infrastructure spending for the past few years. A couple of years back it was about \$4,200 per person and now it is up to \$4,700, which is 66 per cent above the state average.

We are talking about a whole range of infrastructure projects here: Rookwood Weir, the Gracemere Highway duplication, the correctional centre, the Rocky art gallery, roads, roads and more roads, and the list goes on. This highlights the investment the Palaszczuk government is making in regional Queensland. I am pleased to say that 61.2 per cent of infrastructure spending is outside the Greater Brisbane area. This budget will be providing a \$973 million infrastructure spend for Central Queensland, supporting over 3,000 jobs. In the health budget we will see record funding of \$691 million, up \$30 million.

The staff of the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service have been working under very challenging times with the impact of COVID-19 and I thank them for the amazing work they do each and every day. There is \$11 million to progress the new drug rehabilitation centre, the cardiac hybrid theatre and the expansion of the mental health ward. I must again say thank you to the amazing staff of the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service who do a wonderful job in our community. There will be \$1 million towards the North Rockhampton ambulance replacement and \$5.5 million for the Rockhampton ambulance station and operation centre as part of a major refurbishment. I thank the staff there too. Whether they are the staff taking the calls or those responding in the field, they do an outstanding job.

We all know how important education is to securing better life outcomes. It is essential that our schools are maintained. There will be \$1.88 million for the schools in the Rockhampton local government area. There will be \$80,000 for the Allenstown State School for a shade structure over the playground. Glenmore State School will receive \$250,000 to refurbish the covered area. Gracemere State School will receive \$300,000 to upgrade their amenities, \$295,000 to provide the combined netball and tennis courts with a shade structure and also \$400,000 for perimeter fencing. North Rocky Special School will receive \$7.95 million for additional classrooms. One of my favourite schools, the Hall State School, will receive \$1.6 million towards their new hall. Rockhampton State High School will receive \$500,000 of \$2.5 million for the new skills development and training facilities—and the list goes on.

Our \$2.9 billion total housing investment is the largest concentrated investment in social housing in Queensland history. We are investing \$1.9 billion over four years and establishing a \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund to boost housing supply. We are increasing the supply of social and affordable housing by almost 10,000 homes over the life of our Housing Strategy and this will include 7,400 new builds over the next four years. In Central Queensland we are committed to commence 113 new social homes by 1 July 2025 through a planned investment of \$39.9 million over four years. This will support more than 125 jobs. This is in addition to the 48 social housing homes that have been already commenced in Central Queensland since 2017. Given my passion for the provision of housing services, it is also great to see ongoing funding of more than \$3 million for specialist homelessness services.

Across Rockhampton and Central Queensland we will continue to see investment of more than \$120 million in road infrastructure projects like the Bruce Highway between Rockhampton and St Lawrence; completion of the Northern Access Road; the Gracemere Highway duplication which is nearing completion; the Lawrie Street duplication; as well as the additional passing lanes on the Bruce and Capricorn highways. These projects are supporting approximately 1,300 jobs. Let us not forget the billion dollar Rockhampton ring-road that will be commencing next year.

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

The speech read as follows—

We will see an infrastructure and upgrade spend of \$8.8 million on Bouldercombe substation and \$2.4 million for the Gracemere substation to ensure the continued reliability of electricity supply to the local areas.

There is assistance for our small businesses to help them enter new international markets or looking at opportunities to explore new export markets. This is good for business and good for jobs growth.

The Palaszczuk Government is serious about training and apprentices with Skilling Queenslanders for Work assisting up to 1119 people to get job ready skills through funding of \$5.9 million in the Central Queensland region

I enjoyed attending the graduations and saw participants had graduated with new skills, experience and qualifications that would help them break into jobs like Individual Support (Aged and Disability) care, horticulture, construction workforces or launch their own small business.

Each of these projects built up participants' self-esteem and motivation as well as the general everyday skills that are needed in any workplace. It is great to hear these projects are fostering new small businesses, green thumbs and builders who are looking to contribute to the local economy

At one of the recent graduations there were only a couple of participants there as more than 20 others weren't able to attend the graduation because they got a job.

The Back To Work, has provided \$34.4m to the Central Qld Region assisting 1308 employers to employ 2,937 previously unemployed jobseekers.

Palaszczuk Government's support of Local Government through the Works for Queensland has seen the Rockhampton Regional Council deliver projects like the Airport upgrade, pathways at the botanical gardens, upgrades to playground equipment, the replacement of the boardwalk along the Fitzroy and many other projects. We have seen hundreds of jobs supported through this very important program across Central Queensland communities.

There is so much more in the budget across other portfolios like our Police, Fire and Emergency services and Corrective Services areas and very importantly organisations that provide support for the residents of Rockhampton and Central Queensland. I am pleased to be delivering a good budget for the people of the Rockhampton Electorate.

I congratulate the Treasurer and Minister for Investment the Hon Cameron Dick on a budget for all Queenslanders.

I commend the bill to the House.