




Speech By
Brittany Lauga

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

Record of Proceedings, 17 June 2021

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (9.45 pm): It is great to hear the member for Hinchinbrook and Katter's Australian Party talking up the Palaszczuk government's record education budget in this place.

Ms Grace interjected.

Ms LAUGA: I take that interjection from the Minister for Education. This is the first time that I have risen in this place since our good friend the member for Stretton passed away. Duncan was a good bloke. He was a friend to many of us in this place. He was taken too soon and I am still grappling with his passing. It feels like he is just on a holiday or something. I am sure that in the future many of us will have more to say about Duncan and his work. We miss him terribly. I offer my condolences to Duncan's parents, brothers, friends and family.

Given the way that those opposite talk in this budget debate one would think that Queensland is falling apart. Those opposite say that Queensland's roads are falling apart, the hospitals are falling apart and the schools are falling apart. It is all drama and negativity. They are so negative. They actually sound like the used car salesman I dealt with when I traded in my first car, my beloved Betty, the white Holden Barina. The salesman said, 'The wheels are falling off, there are dings in the body, the paint is chipped, the brakes don't work and it is not worth much at all.' Just like those opposite, he talked down my car. He talked down the care and maintenance that I had given to it. He looked for every opportunity to give me the lowest price possible. He sounded just like those opposite as they talk down our great state. There are always lots of hidden fees when you are trading in a vehicle with a used car salesman—or hidden cuts, as the LNP like to say. There are lots of hidden fees, lots of hidden cuts and lots of fine print in the contract. They said that there will not be any cuts, but then the Leader of the Opposition says, 'But it won't be savage.' There is always fine print when it comes to the LNP and their promises.

I looked after my car, Betty. It did not miss a service. It had clean oil that was regularly topped up. The tyres and brake pads were newly replaced. I looked after my Betty Barina just as the Palaszczuk Labor government is governing with care and attention. All of us on this side have a great love for our state of Queensland, but those opposite are talking down this state—our state—like a used car salesman. They are talking down the economy, our future and the prospects of our great state for their own benefit.

I would not want to be anywhere else in the world right now and that is only because of our Premier, our Chief Health Officer, our Deputy Premier and the nurses, doctors, healthcare workers and all Queenslanders who have worked so hard to keep our state safe from the global pandemic. Now our economic recovery is underway. Our economy has rebounded and the latest labour force data shows that unemployment in Queensland has dropped to 5.4 per cent, which is lower than before COVID. In Keppel the hotels are booked out. In fact, the owners of Oshen tell me that they could book out their

hotel twice every night. The restaurants are full and tourism is booming. This budget demonstrates that Queensland's COVID-19 economic recovery plan is working. The budget invests in jobs, infrastructure, services—including in health and schools—and growth right across Queensland.

In Keppel, this budget delivers on our election commitments. It delivers a record health budget with a \$691 million investment in our Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service. This budget delivers the funding for the finishing touches on the \$14.3 million, 42-bed detox and rehab centre in Rockhampton. It delivers funding to start work on the cardiac hybrid theatre at the Rocky hospital so local people can get the stents in their arteries that they need without having to travel to Brisbane. It delivers the funding to refurbish and expand the mental health unit at the Rockhampton Hospital so more local people can get the mental health treatment they need close to home.

I am incredibly proud to be Assistant Minister for Education in a government that is yet again delivering a record education budget, the Palaszczuk government's seventh record education budget, a record \$15.3 billion state education budget investment in school and early childhood education which will deliver for Queensland children, students, teachers, teacher aides and tradies from Far North Queensland to the Gold Coast.

Almost \$1.9 billion in infrastructure spending will maintain, renew and build new facilities, including 10 new schools and other facilities supporting more than 4,100 jobs across the state. This continues our proud record of giving every child a great start and engaging young people in learning, no matter where they live.

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*.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Walker): Member for Keppel that has been approved for incorporation.

The speech read as follows—

The budget also includes \$202.9 million invested over four years and \$64 million in ongoing annual funding to support the continued provision of universal access to kindergarten for Queensland children.

This means funding for kindergartens for 2021-22 of \$187.1 million.

That's going to mean Queensland families will continue to be able to access affordable, quality kindergarten programs no matter what their life circumstance.

Setting our students up for success begins before they start school and our early childhood, education and care networks play a vital role in supporting young Queenslanders.

The education budget also includes:

- More than 240 new teachers and more than 80 new teacher aides
- \$14 million in 2021-22 towards a \$100 million, three-year student wellbeing package to provide every Queensland state school student with access to a well-being professional and to pilot GPs in 20 state secondary schools
- More than \$23 million to deliver on the 2020 election commitment to build and upgrade training facilities at schools

Mr Speaker, the planning, delivery and condition of our roads will always be a touchstone in every electorate, and mine is no exception.

As I have already stated, the population growth driven by this government's sound economic policies, has seen centres such as Rockhampton, Yeppoon and Emu Park grow—particularly in the past two years as many miners base themselves on the Coast.

Two key roads in the Keppel electorate will now be significantly boosted thanks to this Budget with a total spend of \$12 million and a focus on road safety.

The increasingly busy 45km Rockhampton—Emu Park Road is set to receive \$2 million for upgrades in the next financial year, including overtaking lanes and other priority safety and capacity improvements.

This is a pre-election promise of mine which will now be delivered.

Another of my promises now being delivered thanks to this Budget, is \$10 million in the 2021-22 financial year towards the \$80 million upgrade of the Rockhampton—Yeppoon Road.

This is a significant step towards eventually expanding the second part of this road to four lanes, providing commuters with a world-class driving service for the 42.5km journey.

In February 2021 Transport and Main Roads announced its survey had found traffic volumes on this section of the Rockhampton-Yeppoon Road range between 10,700 and 11,600 vehicles per day, which includes 1000 heavy vehicles.

The Rockhampton-Yeppoon Road was also receiving \$4.4m for strengthening pavement.

To follow Treasurer Cameron Dick's drive to "Boost the Bruce" Highway, I'm pleased he has allocated \$5,290,340 to improve various locations and intersections on this State's busiest highway.

HOUSING: The pressure on our housing market and rentals, and the needs of those without accommodation, is typical in most regions across Queensland.

I receive scores of emails relating to our housing market each week, and my staff work closely with constituents, private agents, and not-for-profit groups to help people find permanent homes.

Mr Speaker, I'm pleased this government has moved to put in place policies which will go some way towards addressing this issue, including a \$1.6 billion investment to build more social and affordable homes.

It's the largest investment in social housing since World War Two, and Keppel is one of the electorates to benefit from this.

I recently visited, with our Federal Labor leader Anthony Albanese and Senator Murray Watt, a \$2.1 million social housing construction site in Frenchville, North Rockhampton.

This project, due for completion very soon, is part of an unprecedented social housing construction expansion in Central Queensland aimed at delivering 60 new homes over 5 years.

Work on two new homes and nine apartments in the Keppel electorate is helping the Palaszczuk Government keep pace with an increasing demand for social housing in the region.

These include:

- Five x 1-bedroom and two x 2-bedroom apartments in the Frenchville project.
- 2 x 2-bedroom duplex units in Norman Gardens (completion date 2021-22),
- 1 x 4 bedroom detached house in Emu Park (2021-22), and
- 1 x 4 bedroom detached house in Norman Gardens (2021-22).

The Palaszczuk Government knows that while social housing can help, it is not the only answer, which is why the department works with customers to connect them with services that address their immediate housing needs, including accommodation in the private market.

I turn now to TOURISM which, like Housing, Education, Resources etc., equals jobs.

And that's what this government is all about, Mr Speaker—creating jobs and laying the economic platform for the future to help Queenslanders to help themselves to a better life.

I am pleased that Central Queensland and the Capricorn Coast has been well promoted in the government's Tourism budget, helping to create and guarantee jobs such as operators, tradies, services and hospitality staff.

Promoting our region in national campaigns, and I'm proud to say with the wonderful work by CQ locals Tom Busby and Jeremy Marou, is helping drive more visitors to our neck of the woods.

Tourism operator and wildlife sanctuary Cooberrie Park has been given \$800,000 in the Budget to develop their exciting plans for a dinosaur park.

I met with Kieron from Cooberrie Park onsite earlier this month and his plans are exciting to add another dimension to our tourism matrix.

There's money too for Rosslyn Bay boat harbour which is an extremely popular facility for local boaties.

Central Queensland is well placed to benefit from the \$10 million to be invested over two years to start rebuilding aviation connectivity as part of the Palaszczuk Government's Economic Recovery Plan.

We acknowledge that getting flights in the air is an important investment in helping the tourism industry rebuild.

So far some \$860 million has already been committed by the Government to support the tourism and events industries through the global pandemic.

That support is vital in a decentralised state like Queensland spoilt for first-class visitor destinations like the Capricorn Coast, and aviation access is critical.

Mr Speaker, I commend this historic State Budget to the House which, I believe, paves the way for an exciting future.