




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR JORDAN

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Federal Budget

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (2.52 pm): Tonight the Morrison government has the opportunity to fix a very serious problem and that is the federal LNP's continued underinvestment in and complete lack of understanding of what is happening in Queensland. Tonight's federal budget will be a real test on what the Morrison government really thinks of voters in Queensland and whether their frankly useless Queensland federal members deserve to be further rewarded despite their lack of advocacy for the people they represent—and there are a whole lot more people to represent in Queensland.

Last week's data released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that Queensland is definitely the place to be. In 2020 more than 30,000 people from across Australia moved to Queensland and, as the Treasurer has said, that is more than 80 people choosing to become Queenslanders every day. In comparison, close to 19,000 people left New South Wales and more than 12,000 people left Victoria in 2020. But to be fair, South Australia did have some positive movement and I am sure those 98 people are really happy with their decision to move there.

We know that the population gains that we are seeing in Queensland are positive and will support our economic growth, but it also brings the challenges that I recognise in a growth electorate, namely, keeping up with housing, health, education, roads and infrastructure. I had hoped the federal government had also seen the data and recognised that, as Queensland is the fastest growing state in all of Australia, it needed to support Queensland with commensurate funding.

On Sunday the Treasurer outlined what I believe are reasonable requests for Queensland: a list of vital funding measures that we need to see in this evening's federal budget. In housing we need to see a continuation of the National Rental Affordability Scheme to ensure vulnerable Queenslanders have access to affordable housing. I am sure the voters of Forde and Petrie would like to see that. Or perhaps the \$1 billion over the next 10 years to address overcrowding in remote Indigenous housing. The federal government has completely abrogated its responsibility in this space, which is just shameful.

How about resourcing primary healthcare support where appropriate for NDIS participants and aged-care residents in public hospitals to ease demand pressures on the Queensland health system. I am sure the voters in Longman would like to see that. Or perhaps ongoing, targeted support after the expiry of JobKeeper for Queensland's regions and businesses, particularly the international tourism sector. I am sure the voters of Leichhardt would like to see that.

What about crucial funding, or really any real funding, under the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility to support major projects and to create jobs. I am sure the voters of Dawson would like to see that, although happily they are seeing the back of George Christensen so that is something. Perhaps even match the Queensland government's investment of \$40 million for the Wellcamp Entertainment Precinct. Groom voters might be keen on that.

Where is the Queensland LNP in all of this? Their only contribution today has been to quote from a report issued by Infrastructure Partnerships Australia saying we need more money for infrastructure. This is the same body that keeps calling on Queensland to sell its assets. Clearly this is where the Queensland LNP is heading—selling assets—and they are bringing back their chief architect of asset sales, Campbell Newman.

We have had some early announcements, or, as the Australian *Financial Review* put it, ‘Another year, another round of eye-watering pre-budget news releases aimed at producing splashy headlines’. This is something the Prime Minister is certainly known for: making splashy headlines but then drowning in the delivery. This year is no different, with the Morrison government announcing plans for an extra \$10 billion over the next decade—I will repeat that: over the next decade—for infrastructure across Australia.

Deputy Prime Minister Michael McCormack spruiked that they were ‘backing Queensland jobs’, ‘backing Queensland businesses’, ‘backing Queensland to keep being its best self as the state helps drive our economic recovery’. I thought, ‘Yes, Queensland, you be you! You be your best self!’ But it turns out our best self is only worth around \$1.6 billion while low-growth states like New South Wales and Victoria are worth \$3 billion each. So really we are only half ourselves. Even South Australia with its 98 new residents is getting \$2.6 billion, and that is all for one project.

Do not get me wrong, that \$1.6 billion announced by the Morrison government will be very helpful to help fund key infrastructure projects in Queensland, but it is clearly not enough. Queensland deserves more. We have led the country’s economic recovery, we have led the country’s health response to COVID-19 and we deserve our fair share in tonight’s federal budget.