



Speech By  
**Charis Mullen**


**MEMBER FOR JORDAN**

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Record of Proceedings, 17 June 2021

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (12.03 am): I am very proud to speak on the appropriation bills and acknowledge my strong support for the 2021-22 state budget delivered by the Queensland Treasurer this week. When I reflect on 2020, I reflect on the hardest times for our communities. Some of our actions to keep Queenslanders safe were difficult: the lockdowns, the border closures, social distancing and mandatory mask directives. They were disruptive to the economy and challenging for so many in our communities, but our communities did not waiver. As the Treasurer said in his budget speech, 'in facing down COVID-19, everything that was asked of Queenslanders, they did.' By protecting the health of Queenslanders, economic confidence has been maintained and we are seeing the economic benefits of our decisive actions.

I want to particularly acknowledge our Premier, who faced incredible pressure and, frankly, relentless bullying by those opposite and the Prime Minister of this country. We will not forget the relentless calls to open borders, the undermining of the Chief Health Officer and blaming the states for quarantine and vaccine rollouts despite this being the clear responsibility of the federal government. As has been stated in this House, it has been shown that both globally and domestically economic outcomes have been more favourable in jurisdictions and countries where control of the virus and health outcomes have been better. As a result, we are now seeing Queensland returning to economic growth sooner and more strongly than other economies. Backed by our clear COVID-19 economic recovery plan, through our focus on creating jobs and working together, we are ensuring Queensland's future prosperity. These results can clearly be seen in my own electorate of Jordan—a high-growth electorate benefiting from opportunities but also facing the challenges of our strong interstate migration.

I am proud to be part of a government that understands the importance of resourcing our health system properly. Like all states across our country there are challenges to the Australian health system, but in Queensland we are rising to these challenges. This year's budget has a record investment of \$22.23 billion in health services and infrastructure. I was so very proud to stand with the Premier, the Health Minister and the Queensland Treasurer to announce that we would be investing in a new public hospital in Springfield. Since being elected the state member for Jordan in late 2017, I have been relentless in my commitment to see increased health services for our region. Greater Ipswich is projected to grow by 37 per cent in the next 10 years, and an extra 100,000 people will live in the Greater Springfield-Ripley Valley area in the next five years.

For our elderly residents, for those with chronic illnesses and for our young families, I have been advocating strongly for health care closer to home because I know just how important this is. Our government has listened, and in partnership with Mater Health Services we have confirmed in the state budget an initial funding contribution of \$177 million for the new 174-bed public hospital in Springfield. The hospital will have a much needed emergency department, intensive care unit, maternity services

and increased interventional spaces such as operating theatres and an endoscopy suite as well as increased clinical capability of the service, meaning more complex care can be treated locally. Over the next decade this partnership with Mater will mean more than \$1 billion in investment by our government. It will also mean an economic and jobs boom for the region, with the project expected to create more than 1,000 frontline health positions as well as more than 700 jobs during construction. Our community has warmly welcomed our commitment. I have been overwhelmed by the many positive messages I have received, and we will work as quickly as we can to ensure we have the new public hospital operational by 2024.

The growth we are experiencing is not limited to our health services. With so many young families moving into our region, we are seeing an explosion in student numbers as well. From our record \$18.3 billion for education and training in 2021-22, I was pleased to see \$913.7 million for 10 new state schools. For the Jordan electorate this includes: a new primary school for 2023 to be built in Augustine Heights that will cater for increased growth in Greater Springfield and Redbank Plains; and a new primary school in Bellbird Park for 2024. The commitment will also see a new secondary school for Greater Springfield in 2024, which is so important as our wonderful Springfield Central State High School has seen incredible growth over the last few years. During the election we also announced planning for a new secondary school in Greater Flagstone. I know this is something that is very important, particularly for families living in Greenbank and New Beith. Our existing schools have not been forgotten, and I am pleased to see: \$9.3 million for new classrooms at Springfield Central State School; \$7.5 million for new classrooms for Flagstone State School; and funding of \$2.25 million for the expansion of our WesTEC Trade Training Centre at Woodcrest State College.

Through this budget we have announced that over the next four years the value of the Palaszczuk government's capital works and infrastructure program will be \$52.2 billion. For the Jordan electorate we are seeing this investment through the delivery of our \$44.5 million Springfield Central park-and-ride, which is currently under construction, and our government's contribution of \$18 million towards the new Brisbane Lions AFLW stadium, which is also under construction. We will see it through the much anticipated upgrade of the Centenary Highway-Logan Motorway interchange. This \$15 million project is currently at the detailed design stage, and I look forward to sharing the plans with our community soon before we progress to the construction phase. There is also some longer term planning underway for the Centenary Highway to future-proof the highway with more lanes, new interchanges and off-ramps to address to increasing population growth.

Mr 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 the *Record of Proceedings*.

*The speech read as follows—*

Our Government is also supporting the Ipswich City Council with funding for the Springfield-Greenbank Arterial duplication.

And, I am very pleased to see funding for rail corridor planning—this is the most important transport investment that we can make in our region and the 2021-22 State Budget has funding for the Salisbury to Beaudesert Rail Line Business Case (jointly funded with the Federal Government) and the Ipswich to Springfield passenger transport corridor.

Housing

Speaker, we recognise housing need as a major challenge for many of our communities across Queensland. Within my electorate, this has been further challenged by last year's Hailstorms that saw hundreds of homes severely damaged.

This has led to a lack of available rental homes with many people needing to move away from the area to find suitable accommodation. This was evidenced at Springfield Lakes State School which lost 70 students from its enrolments as a result of the storms—these are families who could not stay in the local area.

Our Government has recognised the importance of housing—affordable housing, housing for vulnerable people, for families escaping domestic and family violence.

I want to congratulate Minister Enoch on launching a bold new housing plan backed by \$1.9 billion investment over the next four years and a new \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund to boost housing supply and increase housing and homelessness support across Queensland.

As the Minister has said, this is the largest concentrated investment in social housing in Queensland's history.

I was very fortunate to recently visit a couple of fantastic new houses being built within my electorate by Sandsky Developments—four-bedroom homes that will be just terrific and they are really reflective of a new age in our social housing stock.

Our Government is increasing the supply of social and affordable housing by almost 10,000 over the life of our Housing Strategy, including 7,400 new builds over the next four years under the Queensland Housing Investment Growth Initiative.

Skills and Training

Speaker, in my role as the Assistant Minister for Treasury and as the local Member, I have been meeting with many small and medium businesses who have shared with me the challenges in finding appropriately skilled staff at this time.

This challenge is not unique to Queensland—our closed borders are certainly having an impact, particularly for our agriculture and hospitality sectors but also manufacturing which is finding it challenging to find the right workers and sometimes any workers.

There is more work to be done in this space—but I am pleased to see our Government re-focussing our investment in skills and training so we can help more Queenslanders get the skills they need for jobs in emerging, growth and traditional industries.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work has been a fantastic program—I've had the privilege of speaking with young people who have undertaken this program and it really does change their lives.

The announcement by the Treasurer and the Minister for Skills and Training that Skilling Queenslanders for Work will now be a permanent program with a commitment of \$320 million over four years and ongoing funding of \$80 million each year after is certainly welcome news.

#### Jobs Fund

Speaker, our singular aim as a Government is to grow jobs—because we recognise that there is dignity in work and we want these jobs to be well paid and highly skilled in emerging and growing industries.

The announcement of our \$3.34 billion Queensland Jobs Fund is all about supporting job-creating industries like advanced manufacturing, hydrogen, biofutures, biomedical, defence, aerospace, space, resource recovery and technology.

We have \$2 billion dedicated to creating energy and hydrogen jobs through the Queensland Renewable Energy and Hydrogen Jobs Fund—not only in terms of supporting our government-owned businesses to expand ownership of commercial projects but also importantly to deliver on our 50 per cent renewable target by 2030.

The Queensland Jobs Fund will also be a vital instrument for further private sector investment in Queensland as well.

#### Conclusion

Speaker, in conclusion I would like to congratulate the Queensland Treasurer on the delivery of the 2021-22 Budget—I know just how challenging it is to meet the needs of our growing state and to ensure we are continuing to fund frontline services, to fund infrastructure and our growing health and education systems.

In turn, may I also acknowledge and thank the Acting Under Treasurer, Leon Allen and the many Treasury officers who worked so diligently and professionally to meet the Government's requirements of delivering the State Budget.

But the State Budget is more than just figures in a document—as the Treasurer said in his Budget speech, they represent workers getting paid and Queenslanders putting food on the table.

As a Labor Government, we were never going to punish Queenslanders with austerity measures at a time when they needed Government to step up for them.

We have continued to invest in Queenslanders—to meet their needs and to support their aspirations.

I commend the Bills to the House.