



Speech By  
**Christopher Whiting**

**MEMBER FOR BANCROFT**

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Record of Proceedings, 23 February 2021


**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) (2020-2021) BILL**

**APPROPRIATION (2020-2021) BILL**

**Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)**

**Appropriation (2020-2021) Bill**

**State Development and Regional Industries Committee, Report**

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (12.33 pm): I rise to commend the report of the committee to the House. I would like to congratulate the Treasurer on bringing in what we have seen is a strong budget during this COVID-19 pandemic and I congratulate the Premier as well for her strength and leadership in keeping Queenslanders safe during that time.

What we saw during our committee's estimates hearing was that, following our health response, our economic response is getting Queenslanders back to work. Our economic recovery plan is getting Queenslanders back to work. One of the things we heard during the estimates that I loved hearing about from the Deputy Premier was the outstanding COVID Works for Queensland programs that have been keeping so many Queenslanders in work. For example, in July 2020 we saw \$200 million funded into that program—520 projects supporting 4,600 local jobs. The \$50 million Unite and Recover Community Stimulus Package for South-East Queensland councils is supporting over 1,500 jobs. That of course builds on the success of the Works for Queensland program that we heard about. That is a \$600 million initiative—1,802 projects, creating or supporting 20,600 local jobs.

These programs have been a tremendous success. During the estimates process we saw what those COVID Works for Queensland programs have meant to the people in my electorate, for example. In Bancroft that money has gone to upgrade seven local parks in Deception Bay and North Lakes—playground equipment, landscaping and fencing. It has been used to do a mechanical and electrical upgrade at the Deception Bay pool. It is also funding part of the first stage of the new community facility at the old DPI Fisheries site on the Deception Bay foreshore and building a new amenities block at the Uhlmann Road boat ramp. I congratulate the Deputy Premier on that.

What we heard about infrastructure in the estimates hearing showed exactly how well our economic recovery plan is helping out this state. We heard described a \$56 billion infrastructure program over four years. That includes a \$14.8 billion infrastructure investment this financial year, supporting 46,000 jobs, and 27,800 of those would be outside Greater Brisbane.

During this process we heard from the Deputy Premier about the unprecedented infrastructure projects coming through Economic Development Queensland: \$200 million worth of projects over the next two years, 20 infrastructure projects in the pipeline that range from half a million to \$20 million. They will support 650 construction jobs and enable \$1 billion in private investment.

We heard not only from the Deputy Premier but also from the agriculture minister about how our economic recovery plan is supporting our agribusiness sector. For example, we were the first to roll out business support packages in this area, and that was before JobKeeper and JobSeeker. In March 2020 we saw \$1 billion going into the Jobs Support Loan Scheme and in June 2020 we moved to phase 2 of the economic recovery plan. That included \$12.5 million for agribusinesses in our state, including \$5.5 million for digital grants and improving supply chain projects, \$5 million for improving trade relations and \$2 million to help these agribusinesses diversify as well. Our economic recovery plan is not only building recovery in this sector—and I pay tribute to the minister for agriculture in this area; it is also helping build that potential in the agribusiness sector to help smooth that path to recovery in the future.

I want to finish by paying tribute to QRIDA. We heard during the estimates process about the excellent work that they have done. They worked right across Queensland during COVID-19 helping us recover. They ran the Jobs Support Loan Scheme, which supported 87,000 Queensland jobs. They processed over 11,000 applications in that \$1 billion program. I think this shows not only the great work that the Palaszczuk government has done during this time but also the great work that Queenslanders have done throughout our state, the way they have buckled down, got on with the job and worked together. I commend this report to the House.