




Speech By
Jennifer Howard

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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MATTER OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Ipswich Electorate, Federal Budget

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.41 pm): Two weeks ago the Morrison government handed down a disappointing budget that yet again failed Ipswich. Considering COVID's impact on the economy, this budget could have been a great opportunity to pump some much needed funding into the Ipswich region to support transport infrastructure, housing or public hospitals. Instead, the Morrison government opted for a stingy budget that short-changed our community. The federal Treasury estimated that Queensland will gain 84,600 new residents over the next four years. Most of those new residents will end up in South-East Queensland and a sizeable number of them will move to Ipswich. Over the past six months I have seen almost 1,500 people move into my electorate of Ipswich. Many of them are moving into the rapidly growing suburbs of Ripley and Deebing Heights. A week ago the Ipswich City Council reported that during the 2019-20 financial year 7,000 people moved into the Ipswich local government area and just under 3,200 people moved to Ipswich in the second half of 2020. Ipswich is growing at an unprecedented rate, but the federal government's budget has chosen to ignore us yet again.

The Palaszczuk government has instead been left to do the heavy lifting while the federal government delivers most of their infrastructure funding to New South Wales and Victoria—states that are losing just as many residents as Queensland is gaining. Ipswich is crying out for rail and road infrastructure that will keep up with our growing population. The Ripley Valley is the fastest growing PDA in the state, with an estimated 120,000 people living there by 2040. Without a rail line between Ipswich and Springfield, catastrophic congestion on our roads will cost the economy millions.

Before the state election last year the Palaszczuk government committed a million dollars towards a strategic business case for the Springfield to Ipswich rail line and sought a matching co-contribution of a million dollars from the federal government and \$500,000 from the Ipswich City Council. Earlier this year the Ipswich City Council committed \$500,000 towards the strategic business case subject to the federal government stumping up a million dollars, but that million dollars was nowhere to be found in Morrison's budget. This was despite the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael McCormack, coming to Ipswich and seeing for himself the massive growth underway in the Ripley Valley. I thank the Ipswich City Council for hosting our Deputy Prime Minister and stressing to him the importance of the Ipswich to Springfield rail line. Unfortunately, Mr McCormack's thoughts—if he has any—must have been elsewhere that day, because he certainly did not deliver that message to Morrison.

The federal coalition government have been in power for eight long years, and each time they hand down their budget Ipswich is ignored, forgotten and taken for granted. There were also hopes that the Morrison government might stump up their fair share of funding towards the desperately needed Cunningham Highway-Yamanto interchange to Ebenezer upgrade, but again this was ignored. The Cunningham Highway is a National Highway and the section from Yamanto to Ebenezer is a key

interstate freight corridor that sees 2,700 heavy vehicle movements a day. Congestion on the road has become so bad that it is costing our economy an estimated \$45 million a year. An increasing number of vehicle crashes are leaving a devastating human toll.

Mr Krause interjected.

Ms HOWARD: I suggest that the member for Scenic Rim talk to his federal colleagues if he is concerned about the congestion.

Mr Krause interjected.

Ms HOWARD: Not their fair share. The Cunningham Highway also services the Amberley RAAF base, the largest Air Force base in the country, which employs 5,000 people. You would think the federal government would care about—

Mr Krause interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Kelly): Pause the clock. Member for Scenic Rim, you are warned under the standing orders.

Ms HOWARD: A number of my constituents who live in Deebing Heights and Flinders View work at the base, and their daily commute is routinely marred by horrendous congestion. I just hope that a national emergency does not happen at morning peak hour when our service personnel are stuck in traffic. The failure to deliver funding for the Cunningham Highway upgrade is a major oversight of the Morrison government.

Another oversight in their budget is the lack of federal funding for social housing. Almost every day my office is contacted by people who desperately need social housing or who are paying over half of their income for private rentals of substandard quality. Homelessness services in Ipswich tell me that they are seeing more families calling on them for help. The Palaszczuk government has done all the heavy lifting on social housing and in Ipswich alone has committed \$103 million to build 383 social housing properties by 2022. The federal government need to recognise there is a housing crisis in this country and stump up more cash for social and affordable housing. The \$124.7 million they allocated in their budget was a pittance. On top of that, they are winding down the National Rental Affordability Scheme with no replacement in sight.

The Palaszczuk government is also doing the heavy lifting managing the increased pressure on public hospitals. We are seeing an increase in emergency admissions. The LNP love to slam us on that, but they forget that across Queensland 600 beds are being used by patients who are still waiting on federal aged-care and disability packages.