




Speech By
Jennifer Howard

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (2.32 pm): I rise today to give my support to the 2021-22 Queensland budget. I want to thank the Premier and the Treasurer for their hard work in delivering this budget and putting Queensland on the road to recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic. The Palaszczuk government works hard every day to invest in projects that deliver jobs for every community across Queensland. The 2021-22 budget builds on our strong economic plan to invest in increased services, more infrastructure and more jobs for Queenslanders. It is a budget that is meeting the demands of a changing economic environment. It invests in our people with record health and education spending and a massive boost to infrastructure and vital frontline services.

Ipswich is looking to move on from COVID-19, and there are optimistic signs that we are getting back to normal. Last month we saw thousands of visitors flock to Ipswich for the Ipswich Show and the Gathering Celtic Festival. Just last week thousands of visitors came to Ipswich to attend the Winternationals at Willowbank Raceway, and this weekend thousands more will turn up for the annual Ipswich Cup race. These events, which were all cancelled last year, show that Ipswich is a resilient community that can take a few knocks and quickly get back on track. On top of the enormous challenges we faced over the past year and a half we have also had to deal with rapid population growth in our region, with around 10,200 people moving to the Ipswich local government area in the period from July 2019 to December 2020. The challenge in the immediate future is facing this rapid growth head-on by investing in infrastructure and services that will drive local economic growth and job creation.

One of the biggest areas of investment will be in health, with the Queensland government committing \$22.2 billion statewide for our hospitals and health services. In Ipswich, our health system is not only facing enormous challenges brought on by the rapid population growth but also an ageing population which has increasingly complex health needs. That is why I was so pleased to hear the Treasurer announce that in this budget a \$2 billion Hospital Building Fund for Queensland will be established to help address growth pressures across our health system.

In Ipswich, health infrastructure spending is already well underway with stage 1 of the \$166.9 million expansion and upgrade of the Ipswich Hospital. This budget will deliver a massive \$101.6 million to continue this upgrade, which includes construction of the new acute mental health facility as well as the new 26-bed hospital ward which is due to open in September. I also want to assure Ipswich that our government is responding to growing demands on our local emergency services, with the announcement made late last year that we will invest \$11 million to expand the Ipswich Hospital emergency department.

In this budget I am pleased to see an investment in health infrastructure for the Ripley Valley PDA with \$5 million being delivered to kickstart the new \$40 million satellite hospital which, I am pleased to announce, will be built in Ripley. This satellite hospital, along with the new public hospital to be built

at Springfield, will alleviate growth pressures on the Ipswich Hospital. In previous speeches in parliament I have spoken about the record growth we are seeing in the Ripley Valley and the need to invest in public services and infrastructure in this area. Building the new satellite hospital in Ripley will ensure that people living in this major growth suburb will be able to access quality health care close to home. The construction of the satellite hospital will also support 166 full-time jobs.

In this budget I am pleased to see an investment of \$2.5 million towards the construction of the new \$5 million Ripley ambulance station, which will operate 24/7 and improve ambulance response times in Ipswich.

These investments in health care are what Labor governments do best because we understand that protecting the health of Queenslanders, no matter where they live, underpins a successful economy. We saw that with our government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We understood that protecting the Queensland population from COVID-19 meant a faster return to normal and a faster economic recovery. It also means more jobs and improved frontline services for Ipswich. Our track record speaks for itself. Since 2015 the Palaszczuk government has delivered an extra 596 nurses.

This budget's record \$2.9 billion investment in social housing and homelessness in Queensland will ensure affordable housing is accessible for all Queenslanders. I am pleased to see that \$1.9 billion of that investment will be spent on building more social housing and building the capacity of our homelessness support services across Queensland. I was really pleased to have the Minister for Housing visit my electorate recently and open the social housing units that were completed at the end of last year. We have named that building after a really important figure in our community: Aunty Jill Davidson. It was a fabulous event that was enjoyed by all. This is the kind of thing that Labor governments do, and I am really proud to have that in my electorate.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Speaker has reviewed and approved my budget speech for incorporation, and as such I ask that the remainder of my speech be incorporated.

The speech read as follows—

Communities

Speaker, at our core, Labor Governments understand that building housing and infrastructure also builds communities.

In our new residential suburbs, it's even more important to build infrastructure that brings communities together.

As I mentioned earlier in my speech, one of the fastest growing suburbs in Ipswich, Ripley, will be the site of a new Satellite Hospital and a new Ambulance Station.

But it will also be the site of a new \$25 million Police Station, and in this budget we will be investing \$500,000 to kickstart the planning of that facility.

Further, I welcome the \$1.27 million delivered in this budget to kickstart the building of the new \$4.1 million Ripley Neighbourhood Centre.

In our new suburbs, it's so important to have public, non-commercial spaces that give people a sense of belonging.

I can't wait to see the new Ripley Neighbourhood Centre open in a few years' time, and I know Ripley residents will also be excited to hear of this great budget announcement.

Our public libraries are also another great community builder, and I welcome the \$948,000 allocated in this budget to supply resources to the Ipswich Library network, and another \$171,000 in First Five Forever Grants to help the Ipswich Library supply resources and materials that will support young readers in Ipswich.

Education

Speaker, Labor Governments understand that a good quality education is the best foundation for a thriving economy and helps children from all walks of life achieve their dreams and ambitions.

Across Ipswich, families are putting their trust in public education to ensure their children get the best start in life.

This budget's \$18.3 billion record investment in education will ensure all Queensland kids can access quality learning and educational experiences that prepare them for the future.

Included in that record investment is \$6.2 million allocated for state primary and secondary schools in the Ipswich electorate including \$3.2 million for Claremont Special School to build additional classrooms, and \$700,000 for Churchill State School so that they can build an outdoor learning area, refurbish amenities, and reconfigure learning spaces.

Ipswich East State School will receive \$350,000 to make their learning areas accessible for all students, and Bremer State High School will receive \$65,000 to build an outdoor learning and play space.

Silkstone State School will also receive \$19,000 to expand capacity at their Outside School Hours Care facility.

Across the Ipswich electorate, Ipswich primary and secondary schools will share in \$1 million to help deliver maintenance and minor works.

Here in Ipswich, we have some of the oldest schools in the state. Our oldest schools come with unique challenges, and this funding will help these schools adapt to the demands of a 21st Century learning environment.

To add to the growing number of new schools across Queensland, the Queensland Government has announced in this budget an additional 10 new schools to be delivered in 2023-24 including a new primary school in Ripley opening in 2023.

This is great news for Ipswich, and will help alleviate some of the enrolment pressures placed on our older schools. It's also great news for young families in Ripley who will be able to send their kids to a school closer to home.

Employment, Skills and Training

Speaker, education is not the only building block of a strong economy. To really drive our economic recovery, we need to invest in skills and training.

When Labor came into government in 2015, we were picking up the pieces of a Newman LNP government that decimated our public services, sold off our assets, and sacked 14,000 workers.

They also got rid of the incredibly successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work program which was helping disadvantaged jobseekers with training and employment.

The Palaszczuk Government re-instated Skilling Queenslanders for Work in 2015, and since then, it has successfully helped 36,000 Queenslanders into jobs, including thousands of Ipswich jobseekers who have participated in the program.

In this budget we are investing \$320 million into Skilling Queenslanders for Work, with \$7.32 million of that funding allocated for the Ipswich local government area to assist up to 1,374 people get job ready skills to secure employment.

I'm also pleased to see in this budget \$140 million for the successful Back to Work program which has helped 25,000 unemployed Queenslanders into work and supported 11,800 employers.

\$8.7 million of that Back to Work funding will be allocated across the Ipswich local government area to help 406 employers hire 717 previously unemployed jobseekers.

Infrastructure

Speaker, our budget is spending big on infrastructure because Labor Governments understand that infrastructure grows our economy, connects communities, and creates jobs. It is also incredibly vital for our rapidly growing state.

That's why I'm pleased to see the welcome investment in hospital and school infrastructure in Ipswich, as well as the investment our government is putting into community infrastructure.

The COVID Works for Queensland Program will see Ipswich City Council receive \$1.77 million in this budget to support the delivery of new job creating infrastructure projects, maintenance, and minor works across Ipswich.

And through the South East Queensland Community Stimulus Package, \$3.35 million will be given to Ipswich City Council to support investment in new infrastructure and community assets that create jobs and drive local economic recovery.

To help support the delivery of 10,800 new homes in the Ripley Valley, we are allocating \$45 million for catalyst infrastructure to unlock local road networks. Construction of Binnies Road West is progressing following a \$7.14 million investment in 2019, and work is now progressing on the \$15.9 million Cumner Road supporting 53 jobs during construction. Construction is also soon to commence on the \$5.91 million Barrams Road.

In total, this budget is committing \$954 million for productivity-enhancing infrastructure projects across Ipswich supporting 2,900 jobs.

Transport

Speaker, investing in transport and improving urban connectivity is what drives local growth and helps make it easier for people to access to job opportunities and essential services.

In this budget, we are allocating \$6.31 million to continue work on the \$37 million upgrade for East Ipswich Train Station to improve safety and accessibility for commuters.

We are also investing in road safety with a spend of \$1.13 million out of a total \$4.8 million spend to deliver safety barriers on the Cunningham Highway between Redbank Plains Road and Ripley Road.

The \$10 million project to upgrade the East Ipswich Fiveways intersection will receive \$800,000 in this budget to continue ongoing planning.

And \$605,000 has been allocated over three years for intersection safety upgrades at the Limestone Street and East Street intersection, and the Thorn Street and Brisbane Street intersection in the Ipswich CBD.

Above all, we have not lost sight of the need to deliver the Ipswich to Springfield rail line and are allocating \$130,000 in the 2021-22 financial year to continue planning this vital piece of infrastructure.

This rail line is absolutely essential for connecting Ipswich to the fast growing areas of Springfield and Ripley, and I can assure people in Ipswich that I will continue fighting for it to be delivered.

Conclusion

Speaker, this budget highlights the Palaszczuk Government's commitment to creating jobs and investing in infrastructure and services.

In Ipswich, we face a great number of challenges brought on by massive growth in our region. However, many of us also see great opportunities.

There is growing excitement that Brisbane could win the bid for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic games, and with our close proximity to Brisbane, Ipswich is in a good position to capitalise on the wave of growth opportunities the Olympics will bring.

This budget puts Ipswich in a strong position to jump on future opportunities that benefits our community.

Speaker, I commend the 2020-21 Queensland Budget to the House.