




Speech By
Jonty Bush

MEMBER FOR COOPER

Record of Proceedings, 18 June 2021

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Ms BUSH** (Cooper—ALP) (12.49 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill 2021 and start by congratulating the Treasurer and his team. There is a lot to celebrate in this budget. It is a traditional Labor budget with record spends and investment in health, education, infrastructure, jobs and renewables. This budget is about maintaining a strong Public Service and a traditional workforce while creating policy settings and investing in emerging industries. As we have already heard from the Treasurer, Queensland is in an enviable fiscal position and leads the nation across a number of indexes. This year, Queensland's economy will grow by 3¼ per cent, which is more than double the national growth and 13 times faster than predicted. It is predicted that over the next four years 200,000 jobs will be created. Over the same period unemployment is projected to be down by five per cent.

I am not sure about other members in this place, but as the Treasurer was speaking earlier this week I felt a real sense of pride for being part of a Palaszczuk Labor government that is delivering such an outstanding budget. I am also really proud of the people of Queensland because without their respect for what is going on globally and certainly locally we would not be in a position to deliver a budget such as this. I was overwhelmed by that feeling as well as a real sense of hope for our future and the direction of this state.

I know this is my first budget proper and I might need some expectation management, but I was a little disappointed to see some of the strategies used by those opposite to destroy confidence in the government. Obviously, the LNP has taken a look at the budget and, frustrated with how fantastic it is, thought, 'How are we possibly going to destroy confidence in this budget? I know! We will come up with a one-liner. Let's go with "don't trust Labor". Well, we can't do "don't trust Labor" because we have done that before and unfortunately it didn't work at the polls. They were returned with an even stronger majority so we won't do that. Let's go with "smoke and mirrors" and perhaps that will help to dampen the enthusiasm of people.'

They also realised that they probably needed some kind of gimmick to distract people. They asked, 'Where would we get some kind of gimmick from? I don't know. We're all pretty sensible people in here, but don't fear: we've got the member for Kawana who has something special just for this occasion.' It was some kind of chook-raffle swinging-game thing. I have never seen anything like it outside of a bingo hall. I do not know where it came from—presumably the back seat of his car. He was waiting for the perfect occasion on which to use it and to also use some of his scrapbooking techniques. Members opposite have hopped on social media—those who know how to use it. I have looked at photos of members of parliament—desks stacked high with budget papers—looking forlorn or confused about what is going on in this budget.

Unfortunately for them and despite their best attempts, none of that has worked. As we have heard from the Premier and the Deputy Premier this morning, there has been broad support for the budget from QCOS, Micah, AgForce and the list goes on. I have spoken on the phone with people in my electorate and I can tell the House that they are excited about what the budget offers not only to them locally and across the Brisbane city area but also across the entire state.

Not willing to give up easily, the LNP obviously got on the phone and called up their friends in the Greens political party. I have taken a look at posts from those opposite. I thought the member for Maiwar did a reasonable job of trying to unpack the budget and what it means for his electorate. Not all of us get everything that we wanted and I thought he did a reasonable job of particularising that. However, I was disappointed to see that unfortunately the member for South Brisbane had drunk the Kool Aid and was picking up the LNP's smoke-and-mirrors message. Initially she was happy with the budget, but unfortunately she changed tack and went with smoke and mirrors.

That really should not surprise us because the Greens political party would know all about smoke and mirrors. After all, they are the party that went to the election with the mantra that they do not accept corporate donations; however, only a few years ago accepted the largest single political donation made by a corporation in Australia at that time—but let's not tell the voters about that! The entire campaign strategy of the Greens political party is one of smoke and mirrors. They are right: it is politics done differently; it is done with less transparency, less accountability and less integrity. However, I digress.

As I was saying, there is a lot to celebrate in this budget, including a \$50 billion infrastructure guarantee to ensure that vital infrastructure and job-creating projects will go ahead. We are giving permanency to Skilling Queenslanders for Work and Back to Work programs to help address the current labour shortages that I know are being faced right throughout the state, including in my electorate of Cooper. There is \$2 billion for commercial renewable energy and hydrogen projects to help provide cheaper, cleaner and reliable energy to Queenslanders while driving down carbon emissions.

We have some of the strongest environmental protections in the nation, including a \$500 million carbon reduction investment fund. The proceeds of that fund will provide certainty for land restoration projects now and into the future. There is \$270 million over five years to maintain the Queensland Reef Water Quality Program. Last week I had the benefit of hearing from the WWF about some of the impacts that they are seeing that program deliver, particularly with local farmers changing some of their practices so that they are able to diversify and compete locally and globally. We are cleaning up water. We are cleaning up habitats. We are restoring ecosystems. It is a fantastic program.

We are continuing to set aside funding for the management of native title compensation claims in Queensland, which is an essential measure as we move towards truth telling.

We will continue to support people with disability in Queensland with \$22.7 million to support peak and advocacy services in the disability sector, which we know is vital. I have met with a number of advocates in the disability sector and I know they rely on that funding.

There is a near-record investment of \$6.1 billion in discounts, rebates, subsidies and concessions. This is about putting money back into people's hip pockets.

There is a continued focus on women's issues and safety, including \$155 million to tackle domestic and family violence and the continuation of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce.

I am particularly thrilled about our announcement to establish the \$300 million Path to Treaty Fund. I particularly acknowledge the work of the Treaty Advancement Committee: Dr Jackie Huggins, who calls my electorate of Cooper her home, Mick Gooda, Michael Lavarch and Sallyanne Atkinson. After the Treasurer's announcement I was able to spend a few moments with the minister and Jackie. She had tears in her eyes and said that she had not expected that. I think all of us on this side are really thrilled with what that announcement has brought.

People in Cooper will benefit from a number of city-wide projects. Cross River Rail is a \$6.8 billion project that is fully funded by the state government. It will transform how we move around Brisbane. The \$2 billion Hospital Building Fund will provide for an additional 174 beds in South-East Queensland and deliver satellite hospitals in Bribie, Caboolture, Brisbane South, Pine Rivers, Ipswich and the Redlands. For us, that will take the pressure off the RBWH. The \$2.6 billion Building Future Schools Program will deliver a further 10 schools, again easing the pressures on our inner-city schools. There is a \$2.9 billion total housing investment, which is the largest concentrated investment in social housing in Queensland's history. That is something that people speak to me about and we are all very passionate about making sure that we are getting vulnerable people into Queensland homes sooner.

We are continuing our investment in the arts. We are delivering a new \$175 million state-of-the-art theatre to be collocated with QPAC and we are contributing a further \$7 million to extend our support for live music venues. In my electorate a number of venues have benefitted from that. I know how vital that is, particularly for the inner-city suburbs. There is continued investment in stadiums, including the Ballymore precinct, which will undergo a major redevelopment transforming it into a home for the National Rugby Training Centre, women's rugby, the Pacific Pathways program, the Queensland Reds and Queensland Rugby Union. It is easy to imagine that a 10-year-old from my electorate who is now playing in GPS Rugby, having benefitted from this budget, could go on to represent Australia at the 2032 Olympics. This is such a phenomenal time to be a Queenslander.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Speaker has reviewed and approved my budget speech for incorporation. As such, I ask that the remainder of my speech be incorporated in the *Record of Proceedings*.

The speech read as follows—

Speaker additionally, funding for the following electorate-specific projects are guaranteed in the 2021-22 budget:

- \$7.5m investment in local Cooper schools, including
 - The Gap State High school—additional classrooms \$6m for classroom, sports and tuckshop upgrade
 - Milton State School—\$747,000 for additional classrooms
 - Upgrade to Block 1 and Prep Classrooms for Hilder Road State School
 - Ithaca Creek State School—\$221,000
- Funding to finalise the GPS Rugby and Valley's Cricket facilities upgrade and nets
- \$420,000 contribution to replace the Gresham Street bridge
- Ashgrove Advance Queensland of \$78,000
- Support for local arts sector, including \$35,000 for Blue Roo Theatre and \$62,500 for Toplogy
- \$278,871 for Bardon Community Services Grant
- Bardon Meals on Wheels \$5,289
- Home Assist Secure Ashgrove \$291,000

Overall, this budget is about delivering productivity enhancing economic and social infrastructure, supporting economic recovery and unlocking the productive capacity that will drive sustainable growth, increased employment and quality of life for all Queenslanders.

I commend this bill to the house.