




Speech By
Hon. Leanne Linard

MEMBER FOR NUDGE

Record of Proceedings, 17 June 2021

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Hon. LM LINARD** (Nudgee—ALP) (Minister for Children and Youth Justice and Minister for Multicultural Affairs) (3.32 pm): I rise to speak on the 2021-22 state budget. I start by acknowledging the Treasurer for this his second budget and by thanking him, the Premier and my colleagues for the investments contained in this budget that will improve the lives of people in my electorate and across my portfolio. These are some of the most vulnerable children, young people and families across Queensland.

I also acknowledge Duncan Pegg, our colleague, like so many others have. Budget week was always his favourite. We always enjoyed his contribution. He took particular pleasure in having a spar in the chamber with the member for Clayfield. I am sure the member will equally miss him this budget sitting, as we all do. Duncan, we think of you and your family at this time.

This is a budget with record investment in the areas that touch on the lives of nearly every Queenslanders. This is a budget that puts Queenslanders first: in health, in housing, in education, in small business, in skills, training and employment. This government is investing a record \$22.2 billion into health services for extra frontline staff, new health infrastructure, cutting back waiting times for emergency and surgical services and continuing the wonderful work that has been done in the past 18 months to protect Queensland from COVID-19. Our commitment also means thousands more nurses, hundreds more doctors and again hundreds more allied health professionals. A record \$15.3 billion investment in the education budget will deliver not just for our children but for the tradies who will maintain and improve our schools and other education facilities. Ten new schools will be delivered for Queensland families and more than 4,100 jobs across the state. It is not the first time that we have cracked the record in education funding, or the second time, or the third time. This is the seventh record investment in education under our government.

As the Premier said on Tuesday, this budget is a downpayment on Queensland's future. We all know small business is the engine room of our state and a major employer. My electorate of Nudgee has a wealth of small businesses and I know firsthand that our small business owners have been hit hard by the pandemic. They have told us what they need to continue their economic recovery and we have listened. On the weekend we launched the \$140 million Big Plans for Small Business Strategy, which includes a business investment fund of \$30 million to increase the skills and capacity of our small businesses and making the role of the Queensland Small Business Commissioner permanent. We are also investing more than \$31 million to extend the 50 per cent payroll tax rebate for apprentices and trainees to June next year. Our state budget has allocated \$460 million for job skills, training and a program to help businesses hire the unemployed. That includes funding for our highly successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work program and our Back to Work program. It was a great pleasure to have the Treasurer and the minister in my electorate of Nudgee at the North Star Football Club to make those announcements.

It is at the grassroots level where I am always proud to deliver and that is in my wonderful electorate of Nudgee. For my community education is the big-ticket item and I am absolutely thrilled to be able to announce some great news for our schools. Earnshaw State College will receive \$87,000 to upgrade its tuckshop; Boondall State School will receive \$388,000 of \$500,000 to increase its outside school hours care capacity; while Virginia State School will receive \$10,000 of \$150,000 to complete its new preppie playground. In addition to education, it is wonderful to see the Banyo train station accessibility upgrade I committed to at the election included in this budget, with an allocation of \$2.4 million.

In respect of my portfolio areas of children, youth justice and multicultural affairs, this year's budget recognises two of the most important jobs that our government has: protecting the community and keeping vulnerable children safe. This year's budget continues to place a heavy focus on programs and services to keep children safe and to keep the community safe. The \$1.86 billion budget for the Department of Children, Youth Justice and Multicultural Affairs represents increased funding across all three of my portfolio responsibilities and includes an extra 154 frontline child safety workers; an additional \$282.6 million for out-of-home care; a new 10-bed residential drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility for young people in partnership with the Noffs Foundation; \$5 million to establish a short-term remand centre; \$5.7 million for a business case to investigate additional long-term youth detention capacity; and \$2 million annually for the asylum seeker and refugee assistance program to continue providing the basic necessities of food and housing as well as other support services for asylum seekers and temporary protection visa holders. We will always invest in our frontline workers across child safety and youth justice, we will always invest in the programs, services and infrastructure needed to reduce offending and reoffending to keep our communities safe and we will always champion a Queensland that is united, harmonious and inclusive.

The Speaker has reviewed and approved my budget speech for incorporation and as such I ask that the remainder of my speech is incorporated into the *Record of Proceedings*.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Having had that reviewed by the Speaker's office and indicating that it be incorporated, that will be so.

The speech read as follows—

There is no doubt the past 18 months have been tough for most of us—but particularly for those families already facing difficult and vulnerable times before the onset of COVID-19.

We also know that as a result of the pandemic more families are under more pressure, which, in turn requires our Government to respond and support them.

We have ... and we are.

Next financial year, we will spend a record \$1.55 billion on the delivery of child protection services, in recognition of the increasing pressure and demand in the system.

This record spend will see the continued delivery of early intervention programs and support to help prevent families coming into the child safety system.

Importantly, it will also see greater support for our workers who are at the coalface protecting and supporting Queensland's most vulnerable children and families.

We have committed \$76.6 million for the next four years to recruit an extra 154 frontline child safety workers over the next two years.

These new jobs will support the 4600 frontline child safety workers we now have who are doing a wonderful job across the state—from Cooktown to Kowanyama, down to Burketown and Birdsville and across to Brisbane and the border.

It means our child safety officers are keeping more children safe from abuse and neglect, and have the ability to work even more intensively with families who need it the most.

Every day our child safety officers are facing increasingly complex cases.

Mr Speaker

Sadly, almost three out of every four children coming to our attention live in families with multiple risk factors, including mental health issues, domestic and family violence, and drug and alcohol abuse.

When a child or young person needs out of home care, no matter how great the demand on the system, we will always rise to the challenge.

This budget will provide an additional \$282.6 million over two years for out-of-home care.

That's a significant number but what it really means is a safe roof over vulnerable heads.

Mr Speaker

Community confidence in our youth justice system is essential and public safety is paramount.

The budget delivers a total of \$290.6 million for youth justice services to reduce offending and re-offending by young people.

We want to hold young offenders to account—but we also know the community wants programs to get young people back to school and into jobs and for them to turn their lives around.

That's why we're working hard to tackle the causes—not just the symptoms—whether it be disengagement from education, mental health issues, homelessness, family conflict, or alcohol and substance misuse.

Our support for vulnerable young people will be extended through the establishment of a new 10-bed drug and alcohol residential treatment program in partnership with the Noffs Foundation, with funding of \$7.7 million over four years.

This program provides young people with three months residential treatment, followed by three to five years follow-up treatment to prevent relapse.

Our youth justice investment also includes an extra \$92 million in funding over four years to fund practical actions to deal with serious repeat offenders and continue existing programs and services established under the Youth Justice Strategy to tackle youth offending.

It means the fantastic work of our co-responder teams, made up of police and youth justice workers, will continue in eight locations throughout Queensland.

It will also fund extended hours of supervision on weekends and at night to intensively monitor high-risk repeat offenders and deliver intensive support to their families.

Unfortunately, we still have a small number of persistent and serious repeat offenders, with 10 per cent of young offenders committing nearly half the youth crime in this state.

To complement our substantial legislative reforms this year, we will provide \$5 million in infrastructure funding for a short-term remand centre and up to \$11.4 million over four years for operations.

In addition, we are allocating \$5.7 million for a detailed business case to investigate long-term options for additional detention centre capacity.

Our investment in youth justice is important both to support our young people in making the right choices and get their lives back on track and to also maintain community safety.

Our communities deserve the right to feel safe and our young people deserve the right to be supported.

But there must also be accountability for their actions and this government has never shied away from that.

While safe communities is one of our key priorities we are also committed to building united, harmonious and inclusive communities right across Queensland.

As Queenslanders we are proud to celebrate our diversity. We are a vast state of people drawn from more than 220 countries, speaking more than 180 languages and practising more than 110 faiths.

We also know we have a responsibility to the generations who come after us to explain why this diversity is such a strength.

As part of our commitment to a united, harmonious and inclusive Queensland, we will contribute \$3.5 million to establish a new Holocaust Museum and Education Centre in Brisbane—it will not only honour victims of the Holocaust, but also enable students and the broader community to explore and understand the impact of racism.

We are also supporting refugees and people seeking asylum to fully participate and contribute to all aspects of our society.

By reducing barriers and creating opportunities for refugee and asylum seekers we not only make them feel welcomed and supported but we give them the chance to more actively contribute and feel part of their communities.

Vitality, across four years, \$8.3 million will go to Our Asylum Seeker and Refugee Assistance (ASRA) Program.

This program helps provides the basic necessities of food, housing and essential medication, as well as case management and service coordination support that is so desperately needed by our asylum seekers and refugees.

We have also allocated \$2.5 million annually for the Community Action for a Multicultural Society program and \$2 million annually for the Celebrating Multicultural Program, both of which build economic and social inclusion at a grass roots level.

And that brings me back to the total budget for my Department, which is more than \$1.8 billion (actual—\$1.86 billion).

This dollar figure represents assistance, support and care for thousands of children, young people and their families.

Hundreds of young people given the chance to turn their lives around and pursue education and employment opportunities.

And many refugees, asylum seekers and migrants being supported to establish themselves in communities across Queensland.

I'm proud of the work my department does especially the work of the frontline workers who deal with so much trauma and hurt from the clients they support.

They do so much of their work quietly and respectfully behind closed doors, in other people's homes.

I'm extremely pleased there will be more frontline workers.

I commend the Premier, Deputy Premier and Treasurer for such a great budget that supports our most vulnerable.

I thank them for delivering a budget for all Queenslanders.