




Speech By
Hon. Mark Bailey

MEMBER FOR MILLER

Record of Proceedings, 17 June 2021

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

 **Hon. MC BAILEY** (Miller—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Main Roads) (7.41 pm): I also acknowledge that, as a member elected in 2015, this is the first budget for which I have been here without the member for Stretton. I want to pay tribute to Duncan as a good friend, a good comrade, a great MP and someone who certainly would have been a future minister, and we all miss him.

This is the seventh budget of the Palaszczuk Labor government. We cannot consider this budget without considering the profound impact of the global pandemic and the management of that by this government in a world-leading fashion—something not acknowledged by those opposite. When we look at the tragedies throughout the world, Queensland led the way not just in this country but across the world. People asked, ‘How did Queensland do it?’ It came from strong, authentic leadership for a start from the Premier and from the now Deputy Premier, who was the health minister.

We declared a health emergency on 29 January last year. We were one of the first. We understood the threat. We closed the borders when we needed to against a huge amount of criticism from those opposite and from the federal government, and we stuck to our guns. We protected jobs and we protected the health of Queenslanders first and foremost, and to end up where we are is an extraordinary achievement. It is not just an extraordinary achievement because of the lives we saved in Queensland and elsewhere in other jurisdictions that understood and learnt from us; we saved jobs and we saved the economy, and the sum of that dividend is in this budget.

When we look at an unemployment rate of 5.4 per cent, a drop of half a per cent in one month, we can see the boom. What is happening? The confidence is with Queensland. We have 88 per cent of net migration. In the whole of this country in terms of all of the places that people can move to, 88 per cent are moving to Queensland. It is a vote of confidence in this state and in this state’s leadership. It was not our Premier who equated the world-leading pandemic response to putting a doona over your head and sucking your thumb like the member for Broadwater. We saw his true stripes at that point—that is, he is not a real leader, he is not authentic, he does not understand the economy and he does not understand the pandemic.

In the last few days it has been pretty pathetic to see the opposition looking more like *Hey Hey It’s Saturday* skits with its wheel of fortune. I will leave other members to surmise which one is Ossie Ostrich and which one is Daryl Somers, but with its empty cupboards and its little skits there is no substitute for content and substance. That is what we do not see. That was a low point of the opposition in the seven years that I have been here to see those pathetic stunts rather than something substantial. Those opposite said that they would be different, and they are: they are worse! At least we knew what the member for Nanango and the member for Clayfield stood for. With this current Leader of the Opposition, he flip-flops from month to month: ‘We’re borrowing too much,’ and then, ‘No, we should borrow more.’ We will see what he says next month. You cannot trust somebody who is so inconsistent and so weak. That is the truth of it.

This budget is absolutely critical. There is another record investment in road and rail across this state worth \$27½ billion. There is \$2 billion for renewables and hydrogen. There are huge opportunities in green hydrogen for this state for decades to come. We have a social housing commitment of a billion dollars, looking after people who need that help. There is \$300 million for a Path to Treaty. That is really important. It is important for the soul of this state that we have a genuine dialogue and respect for our First Nations people. I invite all members of parliament to look into the wisdom and the need for this Path to Treaty. It is something that we all will grow from. It is not a party political thing; it is something that this state needs and this country needs. I hope everybody looks at it in that light.

There is a record health budget, and not just a record health budget in some of the obvious areas. There is a new hospital in Roma. The LNP could have done that. There is a new hospital in Kingaroy. The LNP could have done that. It is actually a Labor government building new hospitals in LNP electorates, because we get it done. If we look at our record, there is 3.25 per cent growth in this budget when growth got down to 0.7 per cent under the Newman government, and it did not even have a pandemic. There was no pandemic but growth fell off a cliff because it sacked 14,000 people and botched the economy and the jobless rate surged to 7.1 per cent. Here we are, this Labor government, in the middle of a pandemic and the jobless rate is more than 1½ per cent lower than when those opposite were in office without a pandemic and growth is nearly four times higher. That is why we are here.

We are seeing electricity prices fall by seven per cent; they went up 43 per cent under those opposite. We saw infrastructure cut at every LNP budget; we are seeing another record rail and road budget from this government. That is the choice that Queenslanders have to make: this competent, contemporary Labor government that understands the changing economy, that understands clean energy, that understands technological change or the old gang over there—member for Broadwater, Newman government minister; member for Clayfield, Newman government minister; member for Everton, Newman government minister; members for Nanango and Chatsworth, almost Newman government ministers; members for Surfers Paradise and Glass House. They are all still there. Regardless of what they say, we know that if they ever got elected it would be cut, sack and sell. We know that. Queenslanders know that, and that is the truth of it.

From this government you get Gold Coast Light Rail stage 3—we built the first two and we will get the third section done as well; Bruce Highway upgrades; the inland freight route, which does not go anywhere near a Labor electorate but is good economic policy; and Cross River Rail. What an awesome project Cross River Rail is, and we are getting it done. It was cut by those opposite and then they promised to cut it a second time in 2017. How did that go for them? Got killed at the election because they do not understand infrastructure. Under this government you also get the Sunshine Coast rail duplication—another investment in the Sunshine Coast, where we have two fantastic new members; supporting the live music industry, which is finding it hard during the pandemic; the Carbon Reduction Investment Fund worth \$500 million because we believe in acting on climate change; and the biggest fall in net debt in one year in Queensland history.

There is a very clear contrast: a competent, strong budget from this government that has managed the pandemic and saved Queensland lives and jobs while those opposite have learnt nothing from all of their mistakes. The Speaker has reviewed and approved my budget speech for incorporation. As such, I ask that the remainder of my speech be incorporated into the *Record of Proceedings*.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mrs Gerber): Thank you, member for Miller. I understand that your speech has been approved to be incorporated.

The speech read as follows—

This Budget is the seventh that has been handed down under the Palaszczuk Government, and I'm proud to say that it's the sixth record QTRIP—\$27.5 billion across Queensland, supporting 24,000 jobs over the next four years.

Speaker, Queensland's strong leadership during the COVID-19 health crisis means our state is the place to be—more people are moving to Queensland than anywhere else in Australia, and it's easy to see why.

With economic growth set to reach 3.5 percent in the 2021-22 Financial Year, the Palaszczuk Government continues to deliver Queensland's plan for economic recovery.

Economic stimulus and supporting jobs remain key priorities for the government, and this is evident in our pipeline of works as part of an infrastructure boom.

We have delivered a transport budget which will drive our state's economic recovery—a \$600 million boost on last year's QTRIP.

Reliable, high quality roads and transport are critical to ensuring all rural, regional, and urban communities are safely connected in a state as decentralised as ours.

Transport services must provide for the safe movement of not only people, but also goods and services, now and into the future.

And that's what we're delivering.

We've developed a four-year investment outlook that anticipates future infrastructure demand and backs Queensland workers and businesses.

When work sites across Australia and the world shutdown due to COVID-19 lockdowns, Queensland kept building.

This budget adds more projects to the state's infrastructure program, so we don't lose momentum on Queensland's economic recovery.

Bruce Highway

Speaker, the Bruce Highway is the economic artery of Queensland—a 1,700 km route that carries freight, tourists, and commuters the length of our state.

The Palaszczuk Government is delivering additional funding to target upgrades between Gladstone and Rockhampton, Mackay and Proserpine, north of Townsville and a four-lane bypass of Tiaro.

The new funding means more than \$13 billion is locked in to continue upgrading priority sections of the Bruce over the coming decade.

Key connections

Speaker, the freight industry were key to ensure Queensland's health response to COVID—by ensuring Queenslanders had the supplies they needed during lockdown, and the Palaszczuk Government provided support to the industry to keep Queensland moving.

And our support for the freight industry is continuing in this Budget.

There's funding to move freight more efficiently across the state by improving key road and port connections.

That includes upgrades to key regional highways, with a \$237.5 million jointly-funded plan to upgrade sections of the Landsborough and Capricorn Highways and surrounding roads.

Those works will complement the \$500 million in joint funding already locked in for upgrades to the Inland Freight Route between Charters Towers and the NSW border.

The Inland Freight Route will take trucks off the Bruce Highway, create regional jobs and improve freight productivity for truck drivers, farmers and mine workers.

Sunshine and Gold Coasts

The growing communities on the Sunshine and Gold Coasts are being strongly supported.

Speaker I'm proud to say that we'll work with the Federal Government on a \$320 million upgrade of the Mooloolah River Interchange (Stage 1).

When we came to government there had been no work done by those opposite—no business case, no gazettal, no planning.

We've done that work, and now we're going to deliver the upgrade Speaker.

The Mooloolah River Interchange will transform one of the worst traffic bottlenecks on the coast and build on the strong pipeline of works from Brisbane to the Sunshine Coast.

Works are also progressing on the \$662.5 million Caboolture—Bribie Island Road to Steve Irwin Way upgrade; and the \$301.3 million upgrade to Maroochydore Road and Mons Road interchanges and the \$164 million Deception Bay interchange upgrade.

This budget also locks in funding to start building light rail to Burleigh later this year, and we're focused on getting shovels in the ground for stage one of the Coomera Connector between Nerang and Coomera too.

Funding is committed towards three new northern Gold Coast train stations, major M1 upgrades between Brisbane and the Gold Coast are continuing, and early works have started on the Exit 41 upgrade at Yatala.

Rail investments

The Palaszczuk Government's investment in rail projects will deliver better services and support new jobs and training opportunities.

We'll keep building Cross River Rail for services to start in 2025, keep rolling out the \$371 million smart ticketing system for every Queensland commuter, and progress the much-needed Kuraby to Beenleigh Rail upgrade.

And Speaker we are bringing rail manufacturing back to Maryborough! After those opposite sent manufacturing overseas, we're bringing it back as part of our \$600 million commitment to build 20 new trains for Cross River Rail.

Train stations across south east Queensland will become more accessible under our \$500 million station upgrade program, and we'll upgrade regional stations Maryborough West and Rockhampton, as well as starting planning to upgrade Bundaberg train station.

Lives lost

Speaker, with 122 lives (as of Wednesday 17 June 2021 morning) lost on Queensland roads so far this year, we are continuing to make road safety funding a priority in this budget.

Every death on the road is a tragedy and we have committed record funding to saving lives and reducing the impact of road trauma on the community.

QTRIP includes a record \$1.69 billion investment in road safety, including prioritised safety upgrades in known crash locations, improved driver education, making school zones safer and develop policies to reduce road crashes and trauma, including next month's rollout of distracted driving cameras.

We'll continue to work with the Federal Government to deliver upgrades like better rest facilities, new road barriers, extra street lighting and overtaking lanes, audio line-marking and wide centre line treatments on high risk roads across the state.

Essential services

Essential transport services will also be maintained for Queenslanders, particularly those in regional and remote communities.

The Local Fare Scheme, which provides discounts of up to \$400 for a return airfare for residents in Cape York, Gulf of Carpentaria and the Torres Strait, will be extended until 30 June 2022.

A financial support package introduced in April 2020 to assist regional transport operators struggling with a downturn in passengers will also be extended until the end of this year, with an additional \$16.3 million

Low and no emissions

The record roads and transport budget spend ensures funding for low and no emissions travel too.

We'll keep building new and improved facilities for bike riders and pedestrians, with \$250 million allocated over four years for active transport, including \$20 million to extend the Oceanway at Broadbeach, in partnership with the City of Gold Coast.

We also expect more Queenslanders to make the switch to electric vehicles in the coming years, so we'll keep building more charging stations.

The Queensland Electric Super Highway, which opened in 2018, now has 31 charging sites between Coolangatta and Port Douglas.

This budget provides funding to add 18 new sites, taking the network out west to places like Winton, Roma, Emerald and Cloncurry to support regional tourism.

Regional investment

Our regions are powering ahead and \$17.5 billion of the \$27.5 billion Queensland Transport and Roads Investment Program (QTRIP) will be invested outside Metropolitan Region (that is, outside of Brisbane, Ipswich and Redland local government areas), estimated to support an average of 15,870 jobs.

Travel anywhere across our state, and you'll see that investment at work creating jobs and driving our economy.

We're sealing the road to Weipa, opening up Cape York's economy to new tourism and economic opportunities that were previously out of reach and supporting local jobs and training.

Roads around Cairns are being transformed thanks to projects like the \$164 million Smithfield Bypass and the \$481 million duplication of the Bruce Highway between Edmonton and Gordonvale.

We'll start upgrading the Captain Cook Highway north of the Cairns CBD later this year and we are moving ahead with planning to fully duplicate the last remaining single lane sections of the Cairns Western Arterial Road.

In Townsville, work has started on Bruce Highway safety upgrades at Black River, and early works are underway on the final stage of the \$230 million Townsville Ring Road.

Work to improve flood resilience on the \$514 million Bruce Highway upgrade south of Townsville at the Haughton River are on track to finish ahead of schedule this year.

North of Mackay, work is about to start on the \$150 million Walkerston Bypass after we finished the main construction works of Stage 1 of the Mackay Ring Road last year and start four-laning on Proserpine-Shute Harbour Road later this year.

In Rockhampton, major projects like the Rockhampton Northern Access Upgrade and the Capricorn Highway are well advanced, and next year we'll start building the \$1 billion Rockhampton Ring Road and progress upgrades on Rockhampton-Yeppoon Road.

The \$41.8 million Isis Highway upgrades south of Bundaberg we started in January are continuing, and the \$103 million Saltwater Creek on the Bruce Highway north of Maryborough will ramp up over the coming weeks.

West of Brisbane, we'll continue to prioritise Warrego Highway upgrades under the \$544 million Warrego Highway Upgrade Plan, including the Mount Crosby Interchange, and \$139.5 million to continue delivering upgrades to priority sections of the Cunningham Highway.

We'll continue to support western Queensland communities too, with more than \$980 million locked in the budget over the next four years for western roads and highway upgrades.

That investment will support about 1,180 jobs, with many of those projects contracted to councils so the work is delivered by locals, for locals.

The Palaszczuk Government has also maintained funding for councils through the successful Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme, with \$280 million over four years.

We know that funding is vital for councils to deliver projects for their communities that improve safety and address congestion, so we're pleased to continue our strong transport funding arrangements with them through that scheme.

Public transport/COVID response

As part of our COVID response in the public transport sector, we supported essential workers and maintained all services, as well as increased cleaning and sanitisation, which continues.

We introduced cashless payments and rear-door boarding to support safer trips for commuters and drivers.

We added 105 train services added to the network to support social distancing and that has become a permanent fixture.

The freezing of public transport fares in 2021 has been well received by the public and patronage levels, which were down to 20 per cent at the height pandemic, have steadily increased to about 70 per cent.

To ensure that Queenslanders' expectations can be met now and into the future, the Palaszczuk Government is committing significant funding in 2021-22 to ensure the availability of transport services.

In 2021-22, the government is providing:

- \$2.074 billion for rail services to be delivered by Queensland Rail
- \$658.3 million for bus services in rural, urban, and regional Queensland
- \$33.9 million for ferry services
- \$16.6 million for air services in the more remote areas of the state

\$206.7 million for the School Transport Assistance Scheme to assist parents in meeting the cost of students

Marine infrastructure

Marine infrastructure projects are crucial to not only creating new local jobs during construction, but delivering the facilities needed to make our regions an even better place for locals and visitors.

\$183 million is provided for maritime infrastructure in QTRIP 2021-22 to 2024-25 such as boat ramps, pontoons, jetties, floating walkways and dredging across Queensland.

Marine infrastructure projects include implementation of the Spit Master Plan at Southport, Yarrabah Jetty, and a boat ramp and floating walkway at Yorkeys Knob and Casuarina Creek.

We are also investing in better facilities for local boaties and tourists accessing the southern Great Barrier Reef and the Keppel Islands, with this investment upgrading the Rosslyn Bay Boat Harbour with improved in-water facilities.

The War on Wrecks program continues to be a success story with Maritime Safety Queensland co-ordinating the removal of 816 wrecks and derelict vessels since launched in 2018, and the funding for that program to ensure safer, cleaner waterways will continue

Conclusion

In summary, the 2021-22 State Budget shows the massive investment this Government is delivering in roads and transport infrastructure to drive our state's economic recovery

We are moving into uncharted territory, post COVID, but I am confident we are setting up a strong and healthy future for Queensland.

While there may be challenges ahead, the priorities this government has already built into its vision for the future will guide and power our economy to the benefit of all Queenslanders for generations to come.