



Speech By  
**Hon. Meaghan Scanlon**


**MEMBER FOR GAVEN**

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Record of Proceedings, 18 June 2021

## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

### **APPROPRIATION BILL**

 **Hon. MAJ SCANLON** (Gaven—ALP) (Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef and Minister for Science and Youth Affairs) (3.20 pm): I rise to support the appropriation bills. This is a budget that delivers for the environment, investing over \$1.4 billion. Before I detail where that investment is focused on I wanted to respond to some of the comments made by the member for Bonney yesterday. I was looking forward to his speech because on social media he was showing happy snaps of him writing his speech in the Botanic Gardens. He probably needs to go outside of this chamber because we know that any good ideas on the environment are certainly not welcomed in this place by those opposite. I was not surprised to hear that there were no new ideas, no real commitments to climate change or protecting our rich biodiversity, from those opposite.

I want to address a few particular points, starting with our protected area estate. I did a bit of research and, in fact, our national park overall spending is up 24 per cent since 2015 after the Newman government cut 500 jobs within the Department of Environment and Science. It is one thing to grow the protected area estate, which of course we are doing through a \$60 million strategy, but they also have to be managed—to have planned burns, to control pest plants, install and maintain park infrastructure—and all that is pretty hard to do when you sack the very people who are working on the front line in our national parks.

The second point I wish to respond to is in relation to the waste levy. Who could forget that it was those opposite who made Queensland become the dumping ground of the country when they scrapped the waste levy. We saw dump truck after dump truck drive here from Sydney and other states clogging up our roads and throwing their rubbish into our landfill.

**Mr Krause** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Bush): Member for Scenic Rim, I will ask that you stop interjecting. If you have a point of order you are welcome to make it, otherwise I ask that you stop interjecting across the chamber.

**Ms SCANLON:** Since then we have implemented sensible reform and waste from interstate and from construction and demolition has fallen by 65 per cent. Over the last couple of days there has been a lot of scaremongering about this section of the budget from the LNP and, frankly, it has been disappointing. I want to be very clear that the government remains committed that there should be no impact on households as a result of the waste levy. We are continuing the 105 per cent advanced payment—around \$160 million—in the 2021-22 financial year. There is another year's worth of funding that takes us up to next year's budget. In the meantime we will be undertaking a review of the levy as prescribed in the legislation. I know those opposite do not like reading very much, but it is section 73E. For future reference, there is this great trick called control F on your computer that can make sure that you find it online if those opposite are wanting to look for it.

We are very proud to be delivering in the resource recovery space in this state which is helping us reduce emissions, create three times as many jobs as compared to if we put waste into landfill, whilst also protecting our environment. Through programs like our Food Rescue Project, which I announced recently with the member for Toohey, we have provided \$200,000 to OzHarvest to purchase two new trucks, one that will be based in Brisbane and the other in Townsville, to help them feed hungry bellies, as well as \$200,000 to FareShare to help them purchase more coolrooms so that they can produce more food for vulnerable Queenslanders.

Recently I had the privilege of announcing a number of food and garden organic trials to be delivered in partnership with councils. I look forward to updating the House with further initiatives very soon. Unlike those opposite, who saw a 43 per cent increase on electricity bills and slashed \$60 million from council grants and subsidies, we will actually work with local government, our community and industry to drive down the amount of waste that is going to landfill while creating more jobs in more industries.

To conclude I will turn to the Carbon Reduction Investment Fund. I do not know how we can be more clear on this fund. I am happy to bring some crayons to the next sitting to explain it in detail for the member for Bonney. To be fair, we know that acting on climate change is a bit of a foreign concept for the LNP. They seem to be struggling with it. I am incredibly proud that we have set up this \$500 million fund that provides continued certainty for land restoration carbon farming across this state which was a flagship project that was developed by this government and that the Commonwealth is now copying.

I would like to conclude by saying how proud I am to be a part of the Palaszczuk government to deliver this record investment in the environment. We have the most biodiverse state in the country. I take this opportunity to thank my staff, the Department of Environment and Science staff and the many organisations and community members who all helped inform and deliver a record investment for the environment. 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*.

*The speech read as follows—*

As Minister for Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, I'm proud that this budget will invest a record \$1.4 billion for the environment as part of the Palaszczuk Government's plan for economic recovery from COVID-19.

Thanks to the efforts of all Queenslanders, we've been able to get on with the job of creating jobs and protecting some of the world's most precious natural assets.

As someone who was driven to politics as a teenager by a desire to see action on climate change – I'm honoured to be able to work with hundreds of dedicated staff from the environment department, conservation groups, the community, business and industry to drive down emissions, continue protecting the reef, reduce landfill, regenerate land, care for wildlife and create jobs.

This is the second budget of the Palaszczuk Government since COVID-19 hit our shores, and again is one that makes sure protecting our environment remains a key pillar.

Together with record investments in this budget for renewable energy through the \$2 billion renewable and hydrogen energy fund, this budget will help Queensland to meet its emission targets.

Not only that, it will drive job growth in Queensland, which already has seen employment in the sunshine state risen to 253,200 since the depth of the COVID-19 crisis in May 2020, a greater rebound than any other state or territory.

It was great news to hear today that Queensland added over 1,000 jobs each day through May – demonstrating that our plan for economic recovery is delivering for Queensland families right around our great state.

Those are figures that will continue to grow with the Palaszczuk Government's latest budget.

A budget that will also grow our environment.

A budget that confirms another \$270 million for our Great Barrier Reef to build on the \$400 million already invested by the Palaszczuk Government since 2015.

Funding that will go towards improving the water quality of this heritage-listed area, and supporting the \$6 billion economy and 60,000 jobs that rely on it for generations to come.

A budget that will establish the landmark \$500 million Carbon Reduction Investment Fund – a dedicated fund that will invest returns back into our Land Restoration Fund.

A fund that will additionally see a further \$60 million made available to partner with farmers and other landholders for land restoration and carbon farming.

That \$60 million shot in the arm also includes seed funding to co-invest in even more projects with businesses and farmers through a new Queensland Natural Capital Fund.

Adding to that, we'll also invest in more for our national parks.

We know that our national parks generate more than \$2.6 billion for Queensland's economy and indirectly support tens of thousands of jobs right across our state.

To support our job creation and tourism industry – while also making sure we protect the natural beauty of our national parks – we'll invest an additional \$8.6 million for better infrastructure, visitor experiences and to employ more First Nations rangers.

A further \$254 million from the Department of Environment and Science will go towards our war on waste.

Queenslanders have been right behind our ban of single-use plastics and have driven a recycling revolution by exchanging more than four billion containers recycled through our popular Containers for Change program.

And we've seen other state follow suit declaring they'll too ban single-use plastics.

This budget puts the pedal to the metal on waste reduction with our funding to help capture and recycle more before it gets to landfill.

As part of the government's commitment to conserve wildlife in the sunshine state, \$6 million will be provided over four years to bolster the south east Queensland Wildlife Hospital Network, with a further \$1.5 million per annum ongoing.

We'll also lock in \$3.7 million for the next four years and more than \$900,000 per annum ongoing to support koala conservation projects.

And that's just some of the highlights, to name a few.

As Minister for Science, I'm extremely proud of our scientists and health experts who have continued to steer Queensland through COVID-19.

During uncertain times we looked to the experts, the science and scientific research - decisions that have allowed us to kickstart an economic recovery focussed on jobs.

Decisions that have seen Queensland become the place to be with 33,000 people moving to our state in just the past year, while another 86,000 more expected over the next four years.

Which is why I was proud to see Deputy Premier announce as part of this budget and of our flagship Queensland Jobs Fund will invest \$20 million to ramp up the development and manufacture of vaccines.

This will accelerate development of one of the State's most important health-research precincts and ramp up Australia's capacity to develop our biomedical industry and manufacture vaccines - supporting an estimated 500 jobs over 10 years.

In this budget, we will also see Queensland's scientific capacity bolstered with a further \$7.7 million over three years for research into disaster management, water quality modelling and sediment management.

This almost \$8 million in additional funding will support the 300-plus scientists who work tirelessly in the pursuit of scientific excellence.

And as Minister for Youth Affairs, I'm equally as proud to see this budget focus on supporting the next generation of Queenslanders.

As I speak with young people they have made their voices clear that they want to have the opportunities they need for a good education and a stable job, and access vital services.

This week, the Palaszczuk Government delivers a budget that focuses on ensuring young people can achieve those goals, and that they are a central focus of Queensland's economic recovery.

This budget ensures that from the moment a young child enters school, they're supported with a record \$15.3 billion investment in school and early childhood education.

With \$1.9 billion of that going towards new and upgraded infrastructure like school halls, it also means hundreds of young tradies and apprentices will be able to cut their teeth with meaningful work.

That'll be joined permanent funding for the successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, with ongoing funding of \$80 million each year.

This shot in the arm will give young Queenslanders the key to unlock new skills and traineeships that will lead jobs at a time when we need them most.

Already we've seen more than 36,200 participants go on to receive employment or further training thanks to this program – and I have no doubt, even more young people will benefit from this announcement.

I'm pleased to hear that it'll also be complemented by a \$140 million injection for a revitalised Back to Work program.

This package will provide wraparound support through mentorships and assistance in obtaining things like a driver licence and blue card.

We'll also see free TAFE and apprenticeships for Under 25s continue under this government alongside \$100 million for vital TAFE infrastructure.

The TAFE priority skills fund will help young people go into new and emerging industries with \$32 million, while \$25 million will be invested in the pre-apprenticeship support program.

But this budget goes beyond equipping our young people with the skills they need.

Speaker, as Youth Affairs Minister, young people have told me that one of the biggest issues for them continues to be housing affordability.

It's why I'm working with the Housing Minister develop a Youth Homelessness Policy.

Young Queenslanders – and Queenslanders a whole - will see \$2.9 billion committed to build more affordable housing.

That's \$1.9 billion to increase social housing stock, and \$1 billion for the Housing Investment Fund.

It's hard to finish your studies or hold down a job, if you don't have a safe, secure home – which is why this funding is so important.

I've been fortunate to see the benefits of this government's investment into affordable housing already with the Gold Coast Youth Foyer.

And I look forward to this record investment benefitting thousands of young Queenslanders moving forward.

I also look forward to seeing this government focus on mental health – another key issue that has been raised with me in speaking with young people.

This budget will see ongoing funding towards mental health services that are just so vital to helping young Queenslanders who need that support.

And of course Speaker, I'm especially proud as the Member for Gaven that this budget invests more into our community, into local jobs, vital services like health and into education:

That includes:

- \$24 million for more classrooms at Pacific Pines State High School
- \$300,000 for Gaven State School for shovel ready projects
- \$591,000 for Nerang State High School to upgrade the existing hall facility
- \$350,000 for Nerang State School –for the prep playground upgrade and last night I had the privilege of sharing the good news with Belinda the School Principal that this budget will also provide \$1m through our School Infrastructure Enhancement Program
- \$700,000 for William Duncan State School for shovel ready projects

In TAFE:

- The revitalisation the Marine Centre of Excellence at Coomera
- The revitalisation of the Plumbing Tower at Ashore TAFE
- TAFE for our Future – New Robina Campus Fitout

In health:

- Funding for the delivery of a new Satellite Hospital
- Upgrades for the Gold Coast University Hospital, including a new secure mental health unit

And that's only just a portion of what we're investing in our community.

Speaker, Queensland's economic recovery will be driven by young Queenslanders, by science, by the hardworking local of Gaven and by continuing to protect our environment.

And this budget proves that it's the Palaszczuk Government that will continue to back them with record investment.