



Speech By  
**Rob Molhoek**


**MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT**

---

Record of Proceedings, 17 June 2021

## **APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

### **APPROPRIATION BILL**

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (10.08 pm): I rise to speak in respect of the appropriation bills before the House. Before I get into some of the detail, with the indulgence of the House, I would like to send a shout-out to all of those Gold Coast businesspeople and community members who are sleeping out in the cold at the Cbus Super Stadium. This would have been my sixth year as an ambassador and a participant but, unfortunately, I need to be here for budget week. I particularly want to acknowledge Colin Wheeler, Lorraine Lovatt and Karen Phillips—my co-ambassadors—and also Kris Martin and Tanya Mahoney from St Vinnies on the Gold Coast for the incredible work they do. More importantly, I want to thank my team who are parading around the event this evening with a corflute cut-out of my head with a beanie on it. They are sending me regular updates.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr MOLHOEK:** I am not taking those interjections.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr MOLHOEK:** In fact, I take offence at those comments from those on the other side of the House!

I am particularly proud of the team. Team Southport, who set a goal of raising \$28,500, have exceeded that goal. I want to put on the record my thanks to John Cutler, who is parading around as a stunt double for me this evening, and also to Sheila Ponting; Chris Smith, the officer in charge at Southport Police Station; Jackson Hills; Logan Walker; Liam Ginn; and Leana Marquet, who are all part of the team down there representing my electorate.

The other thing I need to say—and I know I need to get on to the appropriation bills—is that this is a record result for the Gold Coast sleepout. At my last glance at the website, they have raised \$575,000 from some 4,000 contributions. That is the most we have ever raised. Every cent of that will go towards building more crisis accommodation at Arundel at the Families Back on Track facility that St Vincent's on the Gold Coast has developed over many years. That money will go towards the cost of building another apartment or two for elderly women on the Gold Coast in need of crisis accommodation and support.

I would also like to pass on my condolences to friends and family of Duncan Pegg. I had the pleasure of attending a number of functions with him at Sunnybank, at Landmark, Golden Lane and a few other venues, over the years. He was an adored and greatly loved local member. I did hear one member on the other side of the House make a comment about the progress he was making learning Mandarin. I think they may have misrepresented that slightly. I am not sure that he was making much better progress than I was learning Mandarin. He was probably a little better than me. It is certainly very

challenging. It is incredibly sad to have lost him from this House. I know that all of us, political differences aside, certainly value the hard work that each of us do and the contributions we make in our communities.

While the Minister for Education is still in the House, I want to thank her for the spreadsheet I received today outlining funding commitments that perhaps were not identified in the Capital Works Program for schools within my electorate—but I need to say, Minister, it is not enough.

**Government members** interjected.

**Mr MOLHOEK:** I am not taking those interjections. The \$3 million that has been committed—particularly for Bellevue Park State School, for infrastructure improvements at Ashmore State School, for sports courts shade sails at Benowa State High School and the extra money towards the construction of a gym at Keebra Park, is certainly appreciated. About \$3 million is coming into my local schools. I actually have 18 schools in the electorate of Southport and some 20,000 young people attending schools across the electorate.

My wish list, which I have spoken about at great length in the debate on the last appropriation bills, totals \$31 million. I have about 10 per cent of what we need to meet the needs of growing schools in the fastest growing city in Australia. Also, as a result of COVID, we have seen extraordinarily high growth on the Gold Coast over the last 12 months. A lot of that growth has come into the electorates of Bonney and Southport via the games village and a lot of the high-density development that has happened through Southport as a result of the PDA. All of the schools are either at capacity or very close to reaching capacity. There is a real need for some significant capital works expenditure on additional classrooms and facilities right across my electorate.

I have spoken about this previously but, in terms of the overall capital works budget, the Gold Coast has yet again been bypassed. With something like 14 per cent of the total population of the state of Queensland, the Gold Coast will receive only 8.5 per cent of the total capital budget—about \$1.1 billion out of a total state budget of \$12.6 billion. Sadly, that trend is reflected in so many areas of vital infrastructure.

There are still no dollars in the budget for the realignment of the Southport Nerang Road from Queen Street through to Kumbhari Avenue, although I am pleased to see the department acquired one of the properties on that route and had it demolished because it was at risk of becoming a problem with vagrants and homeless people and was not a particularly safe location for that. I pass on my thanks to the regional manager of the Gold Coast TMR for expediting that demolition fairly quickly.

I also want to touch briefly on law and order. Southport has been for some time known as something of a hotspot. It is often misrepresented. It is the largest policing district on the Gold Coast. Geographically as a result of that, when the statistics come out there is always more of everything, but in pro rata terms it is comparable to the rest of the city. There is certainly a great need for more police.

I note that in the Service Delivery Statements there is reference to about an extra 1,000 police in the 2021-22 budget for Queensland. I hope Southport gets a good share of those. We could use at least an extra 20 or 30 police based at the Southport command to deal with the ever-growing challenges around domestic violence, support for families and managing some of the homelessness issues that we have seen in Southport and in other population centres up and down the length and breadth of the Gold Coast.

This morning I had wanted to ask a question of the health minister. Perhaps I can pose it now, not that the health minister is here to reply but hopefully she will hear of the question and we will get a response.

**Ms GRACE:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Not referring to whether a member is in the House or not is a standing order that is usually observed. I know the member may have made an error, but it should not be referred to in that manner.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Mr Walker): I will take advice. Member for Southport, it is against convention to mention members who are not in the House. You need to be mindful of that.

**Mr MOLHOEK:** Thank you, Mr Deputy Speaker, I accept your guidance on that. The issue that I particularly want to draw to the attention of the House is, in reviewing the Service Delivery Statements of Queensland Health and in looking in particular at the budgets for all hospital health services across the state, there is a discrepancy—and at some point I would like to hear a response to this.

We have heard talk of this being a record health budget. In fact, the minister has stated in this House that every hospital and health service in Queensland will receive extra funding, but the reality is that across all health services in the current budget as proposed there is actually a drop of \$74 million

in budget terms over actual expenditure for the current year. Of particular concern, \$51 million of that is just on the Gold Coast, so it does raise significant concerns. I understand that yes, last year there was over-budget expenditure in some hospital and health services like Cairns, the Gold Coast and some of the metropolitan services as a result of extra expenditure due to COVID. It does concern me that on the Gold Coast the department is forecasting a \$51 million drop in expenditure over the current year; the Sunshine Coast will apparently be \$16 million down; and Cairns will be some \$25 million down on actual expenditure for the year just gone. Even at the children's hospital here in Brisbane there is a decline of about \$7 million, and a number of the other metropolitan health services also see an actual decline. That is in the direct spending of the health services themselves.

In looking at the capital works budget for Queensland Health, it also concerns me that there does not seem to be any significant amount of money allocated for additional hospital beds. While there is some money there, there is not a lot. If I reflect on my time as deputy chair of the Health and Environment Committee, the Queensland Audit Office recently made a presentation to us on planning for sustainable health services. They raised significant concerns about the lack of forward planning.

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr MOLHOEK:** Mr Deputy Speaker, I am not taking those interjections. What concerns me about this health budget and the capital works budget particularly, and some of the loose terms that we have heard about these new hub hospitals or whatever they are called—

**A government member:** Satellite hospitals.

**Mr MOLHOEK:** Satellite hospitals—is that there is not enough detail. As a member of the health committee, it is incredibly frustrating not to be able to share some of the information that has been presented because so many of our briefings have been in private, which goes very much against the fundamental principles of establishing the parliamentary committee system. It was actually Judy Spence who, a number of years ago, stood in this very House and said that on every occasion possible the work of committees and the proceedings of committees should be in public unless there is a clear reason for a meeting to go into private session. There are many concerns I believe that need to be highlighted and explored further in respect of planning health services across the state.

In conclusion, I want to raise concerns—as the member for Everton, the member for Hill and many other members in the House have done today—in relation to the underspend on public housing. While I heard the minister's announcement about a \$1.9 billion commitment, I note that it is over four years. My real concern again is that, if you look at the budget for this year, the Gold Coast in terms of capital works for acquisitions, upgrades and new housing will only receive \$32.9 million, which is about six per cent of the total budget. Again that is a significant shortfall, given that the Gold Coast has 14 per cent of the state's population. If you look at that in terms of the last decade, it represents an annual shortfall of around \$25 million to \$30 million, so almost \$300 million of underspending over the last 10 years. There is a lot of catch-up that is required on the Gold Coast. I implore the minister and the government to roll out the proposed housing program a lot quicker than what has been foreshadowed in this budget, because there are many families in crisis, and no less so on the Gold Coast than anywhere else in this state.