



Speech By
Barry O'Rourke


MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Record of Proceedings, 24 June 2022

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (12.02 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill 2022-23 introduced by the Hon. Cameron Dick, Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. I am pleased to be able to respond to another great jobs budget for Central Queensland. It is all about good jobs, better services and investing in our great lifestyle for Queenslanders. I feel great pride in the wonderful outcomes that this budget will bring for all Queenslanders, none more so than my constituents in the Rockhampton electorate. This is another great Labor budget for Queensland. This is an investment in Central Queensland that supports health, housing, education, skills and infrastructure. We are talking about a whole range of infrastructure projects here, from roads and bike and pedestrian pathways, Rookwood Weir, the Mount Morgan water pipeline, schools, health and also a new community neighbourhood centre—and the list goes on.

This budget again highlights the investment of the Palaszczuk government in Central Queensland and regional Queensland. This is a budget for all Queenslanders no matter where they live in this great state. This budget will be providing \$982.8 million for infrastructure spend for Central Queensland, supporting over 3,100 jobs. One of these infrastructure projects that I have fought hard for is \$40 million for the pipeline to Mount Morgan. I know that the residents of Mount Morgan deserve to have a reliable water supply. Currently, the Rockhampton Regional Council is carting water to Mount Morgan at a cost to ratepayers of approximately \$5 million per year.

Another is the \$4.55 million for the community neighbourhood centre. The construction of this new centre will improve access to community events, programs, information, and advice and referral services for the Rockhampton community, including the people experiencing domestic and family violence, social isolation and loneliness, homelessness, financial stress, people with disabilities and our First Nations people. I am so proud to be delivering this centre. As some honourable members would be aware, I am passionate about providing a hand up to those in our community who need assistance.

Again, in this health budget we will see record funding of \$753 million, up \$62 million on last year. The staff at the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service have been working under very challenging times with the impact of COVID and I thank them for the amazing work they do each and every day. I am pleased to see that we will be recruiting an additional 9,475 health staff across Queensland over the next four years. There is \$12.3 million out of a total spend of \$24.2 million to progress the cardiac hybrid theatre and the expansion of the mental health ward. Once again, I must say thank you to the amazing health staff across Central Queensland. There is also the ongoing funding for the major refurbishment of the Rockhampton ambulance station and operations centre. Again, I thank all the staff there, from the staff taking the calls to those responding in the field. They are legends.

There is assistance for small businesses through various forms of assistance like the Big Plans grants program to support businesses at various stages from new and emerging to fast growing. We will continue to contribute to the Queensland economy by providing quality skills programs and opportunities including free TAFE and apprenticeships for Central Queenslanders under 25 years of age in the priority skills area.

The Palaszczuk government is serious about training opportunities and increased workforce participation through Skilling Queenslanders for Work through funding of \$7.7 million to assist Central Queenslanders to get a job. I have enjoyed attending the graduations where participants have graduated with new skills, experience and qualifications that help them break into jobs like individual support for aged and disability care, horticulture and construction workforces or to launch their own small business.

Mr Deputy Speaker, the Deputy 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*.

The speech read as follows—

Each of these Certificate Courses build the participants' self-esteem and motivation as well as the general everyday skills that are needed in any workplace. It is great to hear these courses are fostering new small businesses, green thumbs and builders who are looking to contribute to the local economy

At one of the recent graduations there were only a couple of participants there as more than a dozen others weren't able to attend the graduation because they got a job.

The Back to Work, has provided \$35.2m to the Central Qld Region assisting 3145 employers to employ 1386 eligible unemployed jobseekers. This is a wonderful programs that assists our unemployed gain jobs.

We all know how important education is to securing better life outcomes. This investment includes a minimum of \$21,480,000 for school infrastructure across the Rockhampton electorate and supports the government's commitment to good jobs and better services.

It is essential that our schools are maintained and there will be \$1.3 million for the schools. There will also be \$1 million for Allenstown School for security fencing, Glenmore State School \$150,000 for equitable access to core areas, North Rockhampton Special school will receive \$9.7 million of a total spend of \$15.9 million for additional classrooms. Rockhampton Special School \$3.6 million of a total spend of \$9.5 million for additional classrooms and \$1.2 million to refurbish existing facilities. And one of my favourite Schools, The Hall School will receive \$2.7 million towards their new hall. Rockhampton State High School will receive \$1.5million of \$2.5 million for the new skills development and training facilities. And the list goes on.

Across Rockhampton and Central Queensland we will continue to see an investment in our road infrastructure projects like the Bruce highway between Rockhampton and St Lawrence, some intersections and bridge upgrades on the Bruce Highway, completion of the Lawrie Street duplication, as well as additional passing lanes on the Bruce and Capricorn highways and these projects are supporting local jobs and let's not forget the billion \$\$ Rockhampton Ring Road in partnership with the federal government that will be commencing next year supporting approximately 800 jobs.

We will see an infrastructure and upgrade total spend \$10.2 million on Glenmore substation and a total spend of \$11.5 million for the Gracemere substation to ensure the continued reliability of electricity supply to the local areas.

Palaszczuk Government's support of Local Government through the Works for Queensland and we have seen the Rockhampton Regional Council deliver projects like the Airport upgrade, pathways at the botanical gardens, upgrades to playground equipment, the replacement of the boardwalk along the Fitzroy River and many other projects. We have seen hundreds of jobs supported through this very important program across Rockhampton and Central Queensland communities.

Our \$2.9 billion total housing investment is the largest concentrated investment in social housing in Queensland's history.

We are investing \$1.9 billion over four years and establishing a \$1 billion Housing Investment Fund to boost housing supply.

We are increasing the supply of social and affordable housing by almost 10,000 homes over the life of our Housing Strategy, and this includes 7,400 new builds over the next four years.

In Central Queensland, we have committed to commence 113 new social homes by 1 July 2025, through a planned investment of \$39.9 million over 4 years.

This will support more than 125 full-time equivalent jobs.

This is in addition to the 48 new social homes that we have already commenced in Central Queensland since 2017.

Given my passion for the provision of housing services it is also great to see ongoing funding of \$6.8 million across CQ for specialist homelessness services.

There is so much more in the budget across other portfolios like Child Safety and our Police, Fire and Emergency services and Corrective Services portfolios and the very importantly community organisations that provide support for the residents of Rockhampton and Central Queensland. I am pleased to be delivering a good budget for the people of the Rockhampton Electorate. This budget is all about good jobs, better services and a great lifestyle for all Queenslanders, particularly those in Central Queensland.

I congratulate the Treasurer and Minister for trade and Investment the Hon Cameron Dick on a budget for all Queenslanders.

I commend the bill to the House.