



Speech By
Brittany Lauga


MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 3)

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BETTING TAX AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Ms LAUGA** (Keppel—ALP) (6.36 pm): I rise this evening to speak in this cognate debate in support of the appropriation bills. Firstly, I would like to say how important it is that I speak in support of these bills tonight and that I vote for these bills. One of the most important additions in this budget is the over \$60 million in capital expenditure allocated to the Rockhampton Ring Road. Endorsement of the appropriation bill in this place will set in stone the \$60 million of capital expenditure allocated by the Department of Transport and Main Roads this financial year for the early works for the Rockhampton Ring Road. I am very pleased that the early works on the primary utility plant removal are included in this budget. That is to remove the electrical, gas, telecommunications and other infrastructure that exists along the alignment of the Rockhampton Ring Road. Those early works to remove that infrastructure are budgeted for and contained within the bill.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Ms LAUGA: I am very pleased that that contract has been awarded and that this project will be proceeding.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Ms LAUGA: The meeting held in Rockhampton last week really did not need to happen considering the state government has budgeted \$200 million for the Rockhampton Ring Road, which is proceeding.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Order! Member for Buderim.

Ms LAUGA: I am proud to speak in support of the appropriation bill this evening which endorses that capital expenditure to continue to flow for the early works of this project.

I am also very pleased to speak in support of the appropriation bill with respect to the appropriation for the Department of Education and the budget allocated for the Department of Education. I am very proud to work alongside the Minister for Education, Grace Grace, and as part of a government that has delivered its eight consecutive record education budget.

Mr Mickelberg interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: The member for Buderim is warned under the standing orders.

Ms LAUGA: This is an incredible legacy for this government to have achieved. I am very proud to be working as part of this government. There really has been an education revolution in Queensland over the last eight years directly as a result of the hard work of our teachers, school staff, all of the students and school communities. This has also been supported by record budgets for education in Queensland year on year over the last eight years.

The Palaszczuk government's vision is for a great future for every Queenslander. Our purpose is to give all children a great start, engage young people in learning, create safe and inclusive workplaces, and also invest in communities for a stronger Queensland. These budget allocations seek to achieve that, ensuring that Queensland children engage in quality early years programs that support learning and development and strengthen successful transition to schools and that Queensland students engage in learning, achieving and successfully transitioning to further education and work.

The Palaszczuk government's education budget will continue to employ additional wellbeing professionals in our schools and support 50 state schools to provide free general practitioner services to secondary students at school over three years through the \$106.7 million Student Wellbeing Package. I know that a number of schools have already started employing those GPs and psychologists to work within those schools and provide that support to students on the school grounds.

We will also build on the progress made through the Youth Engagement Strategy by investing \$45.5 million over four years from 2022-23 for a range of initiatives to re-engage children and young people who have been disconnected from study or work. This lends, I think, beautifully to the debates that we have had in this place about youth crime. We are investing in engaging young people back in education and training. That we know from the research around the world is one of the most important ways of re-engaging those young people and getting them back on a happy and healthy path in life.

We are continuing to invest in delivering world-class educational facilities under the \$3 billion Building Future Schools program, with new schools to open each year from 2023 to 2026. I do not believe there is a member in this place without new work happening at schools right across their electorate. I am really proud that the department's infrastructure section has been able to really push the pedal to the metal and get new halls, admin buildings, tuckshops and classrooms built right across this state. They were completely ignored under the former government. We have invested over \$20 million in Yeppoon State High School since I was elected in 2015, but for the three years prior to that less than \$100,000 was spent at that school by the former government.

We will continue to deliver additional and renewed infrastructure in Queensland state schools. We are also improving internet access for school staff and students by boosting bandwidth at all Queensland state schools. That is something I am incredibly proud of. We have heard from teachers and students that the internet has been an issue. In partnership with Telstra, the department is delivering increased bandwidth at every single Queensland state school right across the state. That is no easy feat particularly given how rural and remote some of our schools are and how difficult it can be to deliver faster internet.

We also have a commitment to employ more than 6,100 new teachers and 1,100 new teacher aides over four years through the Great Teachers, Great Future fund. We need more teachers to work in our state schools. We need more people to consider a career in teaching. A career in teaching is a great career. If you are considering a career in teaching, you should know that you will be supported by the Palaszczuk government. We will back our teachers in and we will give them the skills, experience, mentoring, opportunities and a career in our Queensland state schools. It is a wonderful career. I would encourage anyone to consider taking up a career in teaching.

We are also supporting 300 aspiring teachers through the Turn to Teaching Internship Program—one of my favourites—by providing financial support, mentoring and paid internship employment to complete their teaching qualification and take up a guaranteed permanent teaching position in a Queensland state school, with the first cohort commencing their teacher duties next year in Queensland state schools. The Turn to Teaching Internship Program has been incredibly successful. It is great to meet some of those aspiring teachers—people who have qualifications in other fields but who have decided that they would like to take up a career in teaching. They have been supported to complete their two-year master's degree. They have been supported by way of mentoring through that but also with a paid internship and a guarantee of a full-time permanent position when they are finished.

I am also particularly proud of the Trade to Teach Internship Program, which has just been launched. It is a pilot program which I have been very proud to champion, together with the Queensland Resources Council. It came out of the need to engage more ITD teachers, industrial technology and design teachers, right across the state. The Resources Council saw the need because they were struggling to employ young people in the resources sector as a result of young people not having completed any units in ITD. They were graduating year 12 without those skills and experience because

we struggled to get ITD teachers across the state. We are encouraging people with a trade background to take up a paid internship to complete their teaching qualification and work as ITD teachers in Queensland schools. Already we have had a great interest from qualified tradespeople right across the state who are interested in taking up this opportunity.

I am also incredibly proud that we are increasing funding—\$263 million over four years and \$77 million per year—for ongoing support for the kindergarten funding reform to reduce out-of-pocket expenses for families. We are also increasing disability funding and implementing educational need funding for children attending a kindergarten in Queensland. There is a really great website which every Queensland parent can go to and put in their details to find out exactly how much they are likely to save from this investment—the single largest investment in kindergarten reform in over 10 years which I am very proud of.

There is \$80.6 million to support schools transition to a new resourcing model for students with a disability. I know teachers across the state are incredibly pleased about that because students and schools who were not previously able to access resources will now be able to under this new model. I commend the bills to the House.