



Speech By
Hon. Craig Crawford


MEMBER FOR BARRON RIVER

Record of Proceedings, 24 June 2022

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. CD CRAWFORD** (Barron River—ALP) (Minister for Seniors and Disability Services and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (11.29 am): The Palaszczuk government is delivering for Queensland's First Nations people, for our seniors and for those living with a disability, their carers and their families. We are delivering good jobs, better services and an even greater lifestyle.

Across my department's portfolio more than \$330 million will be delivered through services and support in this next financial year. More than \$258 million has been invested to support Queensland seniors and people with a disability. This is on top of the \$423 million for concessions and rebates that help alleviate cost-of-living pressures for our seniors and other members of society, while the \$175 cost-of-living rebate will also help Queensland households. These investments will make a real difference to Queenslanders at a time when households will most benefit from relief of cost-of-living stress.

I am thrilled that almost 90 per cent of eligible Queensland seniors aged 60 and over now hold a Seniors Card, Seniors Card +go or Seniors Business Discount Card, but unfortunately they do not necessarily access all of the discounts they are entitled to. That is why we are providing funding of \$200,000 to support the delivery of our successful Seniors Expos across the state in the next financial year so that older Queenslanders can access information about the discounts and rebates they are entitled to. We will also provide \$710,000 for initiatives that assist us to better understand how we can support older people to connect, lead healthy and productive lives, and participate in Queensland's future. We will then enshrine those learnings in the new state seniors' strategy.

During the 2021 period the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit received 3,430 phone calls, including 2,022 notifications of elder abuse. Our seniors deserve to live their lives free of violence, neglect and abuse. That is why in this year's budget our government has committed a record \$7.7 million to prevent and respond to elder abuse. Funding for seniors legal and support services will increase by \$2.8 million per year to over \$6.6 million. This additional money will expand seniors legal and support services to Logan, Ipswich and Beaudesert and offer outreach services to older citizens in the outback and the cape and Torres regions.

In the coming year we will administer more than \$2.8 billion on behalf of Queenslanders with a disability, including over \$2.08 billion as Queensland's estimated cash contribution to the NDIS. This contribution to the NDIS ensures that people with disability can fully participate in society and that they are able to access the necessary supports required to give them quality of life. I recently attended the first Disability Reform Ministers' Meeting hosted by Bill Shorten, and can I say what an incredible

experience that was. A bit like the Premier's experience with the first ministers, we were able to have a very good conversation. We were able to get through business very quickly. It is great to work with Bill Shorten on the NDIS.

I am also pleased to see the investment in much needed support for Queensland school students with disabilities through the Minister for Education's portfolio. It is my hope that this funding will support students with disabilities like dyslexia, ADHD and FASD to focus on their abilities rather than their disabilities while at school and to realise their aspirations.

As we continue to work along the Path to Treaty and increasing local decision-making, the government is continuing to invest in First Nations people with over \$74 million, including new funding focusing on strengthening culture and helping communities to thrive. This includes social and emotional wellbeing, health, education, employment, family violence, justice, language preservation, housing and access to land and waters. In this budget the Palaszczuk government has allocated extra funding of more than \$3 million over four years to make sure we are on track to meet the target of the Closing the Gap agreement by 2031. This is in addition to our record investment across health and mental health, education and training, community safety and wellbeing, caring for country and elevating First Nations women.

I am proud to be part of a government that introduces measures for our First Nations Queenslanders such as: \$1.9 million over two years to support local employment and economic development plans in each of the 19 remote and discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; \$1.5 million in grants to support existing alcohol management plans with community-driven solutions to address community safety and sly grogging; \$16.6 million over four years to continue land administration and planning work which supports economic development, home ownership and jobs growth in the discrete remote and rural communities; and \$3 million over two years to the Office of the Commissioner (Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa), where I am pleased to report that three cultural recognition orders have been made so far, six more applications are currently being progressed, another four are prepared for lodgement, and hundreds of community members have been attending information sessions. This budget will deliver a more inclusive Queensland.

In my electorate of Barron River this year's budget has certainly been a win for my constituents. We have always fought hard to improve our roads, schools, health system and protect our pristine environment, and this budget reflects that. Over \$33 million has been allocated for much needed road upgrades, including funding for the ongoing duplication of the Cairns Western Arterial Road, where planning is currently underway for that next section. Nearly \$1.6 billion is being delivered in the Far North over four years as part of our seventh record road and transport budget in a total \$29.7 billion spend, supporting 25,000 jobs. Over 16,000 of those road and transport jobs will be in regional Queensland.

As our government embarks on the biggest expansion program ever seen in a state budget focussed squarely on health, Cairns will gain more than 100 extra hospital beds. The massive \$9.78 billion hospital and health infrastructure plan includes \$250 million for the Cairns hospital expansion to establish 96 new beds by 2026 and 45 extra beds through a leasing arrangement to expand subacute services in Cairns next year.

Water is one of the most precious commodities in the state's Far North, and \$107.5 million has been allocated over the next two years to shore up stage 1 of the Cairns Water Security program to support the growing needs of our city.

For our Barron River schools over \$9.2 million has been allocated for current and new projects. I want to give a big shout-out to: the Yorkeys Knob State School, which is getting \$1.1 million to renew their car parking and refurbish classrooms; the Freshwater State School is getting \$200,000 to start planning, design and consultation for their new school hall—they will be very happy with that; and Caravonica State School and Smithfield State High School will receive funding to install accessibility ramps.

Finally, \$1.1 million has been allocated to the Barron Gorge hydro station for the maintenance of existing assets—part of our Renewable Energy Target of 50 per cent by 2030.

This state budget is delivering good jobs, better services and even greater lifestyle for voters in my electorate and for seniors, people with disability and First Nations people all across this state who are represented by my portfolio. This budget delivers for all Queenslanders.