



Speech By
Joseph Kelly


MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Record of Proceedings, 24 June 2022

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (11.08 am): *The Canterbury Tales*, Mozart's *Requiem*, *The Brothers Karamazov*; I ask members: what do all these have in common with the Leader of the Opposition's budget reply? They were all unfinished works. But we could not describe the Leader of the Opposition's unfinished work as a masterpiece. This is my eighth budget debate. To describe the Leader of the Opposition's reply as underwhelming would be a compliment. It was an uninspiring contribution with a finish so flat I thought it was just a pause, but then I realised it was actually over.

I saw on social media before his reply speech the Leader of the Opposition touting the fact that he was going to deliver positive plans for Queensland. I heard plenty of complaints, but I did not hear any solutions. I certainly did not hear or see any vision whatsoever. I have heard that seven times before from various LNP opposition leaders. They get stuck pointing out problems, take no account of changing situations and completely lack any real solutions.

This caused me to reflect on what the Palaszczuk government has achieved with successive budgets in relation to health. Initially it was all about repairing the massive damage done by the Newman government—damage I am well aware of because I was there when it was being done. Thankfully, the Premier and the Minister for Health listened to now Governor Jeannette Young and rebuilt our capacity, particularly in population health—an area absolutely destroyed by the Newman government. This was a key part of how we got through the pandemic.

Then we turned our minds to other reforms like safe nurse- and midwife-to-patient ratios, establishing nurse navigator positions, building new hospitals and rolling out proper digital hospitals. These were all important reforms. We did not stop there. We tackled some of the big and difficult issues that have been around for a long time in health care. Medicinal cannabis, termination of pregnancy, and end-of-life care, including voluntary assisted dying, were all difficult and divisive issues, but the community demanded that we debate and deal with them in this parliament. This government had the courage to do that. Not everyone, including me, agreed with all aspects of these issues. However, this government listened to the community and led these important debates in a respectful manner that gives these reforms a chance to be enduring.

Then the Premier and the Chief Health Officer led our community through the COVID-19 pandemic. The then health minister—the Deputy Premier—and the Treasurer took the difficult decisions to steer Queenslanders safely through the pandemic. There was a key focus on using the budget measures to keep Queenslanders safe. The first economic response was the health response. That is what set our economy on the great trajectory we see continuing to this day.

During the last election the reforms kept rolling with satellite hospitals to deliver care closer to people's homes. COVID-19 has impacted and changed our healthcare system and our society significantly. The government has taken the opportunity to hold three inquiries: an inquiry on the impacts of primary health care, allied health care, NDIS and aged care on the hospital system; an inquiry into social isolation; and an inquiry, that I had the privilege to lead, into the opportunities to improve the lives of people impacted by mental health issues and alcohol and other drug issues.

These inquiries show that the Palaszczuk Labor government is a forward-looking, visionary government when it comes to health—and a government with a hospital and health plan. This plan has been backed up in this budget. It was been backed up with a sustainable revenue plan. Those opposite now need to make a choice. The choice is between more mental health beds and services for new mums or having mums not supported at this crucial time. The choice is between more detox beds or letting people continue on a path of destruction. The choice is between new regional hospitals in Toowoomba or Coomera or telling regional Queenslanders that you just do not care about their health. The choice is between properly funding neighbourhood centres to reduce social isolation or letting people languish. It is a choice between rolling out more co-responder models to support people in crisis or allowing them to continue to struggle along.

The Greens also need to make a choice. They have had billboards up all over Brisbane saying that we should tax billionaires and put the money into health care. Sadly, instead of backing Labor's plan to develop a sustainable revenue stream to fund health and mental health services, the Greens have chosen to play strange semantic games trying to wriggle out of doing the right thing. With both the blues and the Greens rejecting a sustainable revenue plan for funding mental health and AOD services, Queenslanders will know that it is only Labor that will deliver on these important issues.

When it comes to health care, with the LNP and now sadly also with the Greens, the people of Queensland get parties that lack vision, have no credible policy, are prepared to play political games rather than solve problems and have a track record of voting against successive reforms like nurse-to-patient ratios, transparency measures for aged care and abortion reform. Now the LNP have been joined by the Greens in opposing the next big reform of sustainable funding for the mental health and AOD services.

When it comes to health care, with Labor the people of Queensland get vision, significant reforms, funding, action, courage and outcomes. I congratulate the Premier, Treasurer, Deputy Premier, health minister and all other ministers on a great budget. It delivers good jobs, better services and a great lifestyle.

Over the last 12 months leading up to this budget I have been championing for the budget big six for the people in my electorate. These are the big six issues: jobs, schools, public transport, social housing, clean energy and mental health. This has been truly a big six-budget. Planning will start to fix the Coorparoo rail crossing. We will have another velobridge built over O'Keefe Street, keeping cyclists safe. I am proud that Whites Hill College and Holland Park High School will see the biggest ever investment in new classrooms, manual arts blocks and other facilities since they opened.

Construction is almost complete on the new social housing complex at Steele Street. There will be more coming with \$132 million being invested in Brisbane. The new battery testing facility and the \$48 million put towards pumped hydro at Borumba Dam complement the 50 large-scale renewable projects completed or underway. The \$1.6 billion in dedicated funding over the next five years for mental health and alcohol and other drug services will see Queenslanders lead better lives.

Of course, if we invest in schools, public transport, social housing, clean energy and mental health services, we are going to create jobs. Thanks to free TAFE and the Skilling Queenslanders for Work programs from past budgets, we are going to have workforces ready to step into these new jobs. This is truly a big-six budget. For the people of the Greenslopes electorate, it will mean a future that is better, safer and brighter. I commend the budget to the House.