




Speech By
Peter Russo
MEMBER FOR TOOHEY

Record of Proceedings, 24 June 2022

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr RUSSO** (Toohey—ALP) (11.58 am): I rise in support of the 2022 appropriations and revenue legislation amendment bills. I want to start by thanking the Premier and the Treasurer. It is as a result of their strong leadership that we in this chamber can step up with confidence knowing that Queensland has weathered a major worldwide pandemic that has brought some governments to their figurative knees. I thank them for their leadership and dedication to our great state of Queensland. We are still a great state and I am pleased to be standing here representing my electorate as a member of the Palaszczuk government.

My electorate is genuinely remarkable. It is a true microcosm of the multicultural diversity we see across Queensland and, indeed, across our great country. We are many united nations in Toohey. We have a vibrant, enthusiastic and diverse community that is more robust and better for its diversity.

I congratulate the Treasurer, Cameron Dick, for once again providing for and looking after all Queenslanders' future. I am excited to stand here today to reflect on how this budget will help and grow not only my electorate of Toohey but also Queensland. Last year in 2021 I was able to speak to the budget promises for Toohey, so I would like to do a run-down on those promises.

We are strengthening our education system writ large. Our teachers, parents and carers want to know that we will look after the wellbeing of students who have faced disrupted learning due to the COVID pandemic. My school communities were promised over \$8.2 million for upgrades, refurbishment and maintenance. I know that the Warrigal Road State School was thrilled to welcome the Minister for Education on 25 November last year to open their newly completed building, block 10, which provided the school with much needed space and learning centres. This was a great outcome for my community.

The implementation of the Cooler Cleaner Schools Program introduced air conditioning to schools across Queensland. I know how difficult the hot classroom temperatures were for students and teachers alike, with some of the classrooms in my electorate recording over 40 degrees over summer. The program was supplemented by the \$168 million Advancing Clean Energy Schools Program, which focused on installing solar panels on school rooftops. Over half a billion dollars was invested in improving the learning environment for students across Queensland.

Just last week I was meeting with a representative from an independent school that is making plans for some of their campuses in my area. The representative raised and spoke with me about the heartless and thoughtless actions of the former LNP government when they closed schools to sell off assets and infrastructure. She had protested at the closure of those schools across the south side. She told me she would not forget.

I cannot speak highly enough of the programs on offer to help students at risk or struggling or those students who are just lost about what to do with their future. I introduced the Minister for Training and Skills Development, Di Farmer, to the fantastic team at Sunny Futures just a few weeks ago.

Mr Deputy Speaker, my budget speech has been reviewed and approved for incorporation. I ask that the remainder of my address be incorporated into the *Record of Proceedings*.

The speech read as follows—

The Sunny Futures program is a Year 13 program the Sunnybank State High School designed and implemented to assist students in finding a pathway to a career, further study, or employment. Any of the esteemed members in this chamber who would like to hear more about the fantastic results this program has achieved, I am inviting you to speak with me later as I would be happy to arrange a time for you to visit the school and to see, in person, the stellar results the school has been able to achieve.

One of last year's commitments was the development of seven new satellite hospitals. This announcement included a commitment for one of the new satellite hospitals for the south side, in my electorate of Toohey.

On 14 February this year, I was pleased to welcome the Premier, Deputy Premier, Treasurer, and the health minister, to my electorate to Levington Rd, Eight Mile Plains, where it was announced the site had been chosen for the south side satellite hospital.

The satellite hospital will be a health care facility incorporating outpatient community-based health services with virtual healthcare opportunities to serve the local community. Services offered could include simple day therapy services such as chemotherapy, complex wound management, renal dialysis, and care for minor injuries or illnesses.

The project alone is planned to support 75 full-time equivalent construction jobs over the project's life and will further support local small businesses, building material suppliers, plumbers, and other tradespeople.

I was delighted about the increased commitment from the Palaszczuk Government to the Boundary Road level crossing removal in Coopers Plains. I campaigned on this issue back in 2015 when I was first elected. The \$133 million commitment will accelerate the work to remove the level crossing, making it safer for residents and commuters, and cutting travel times. We must remove the level crossing for both the broader rail network and the local road network.

Community and stakeholder consultation providing the opportunity for feedback has been undertaken, with two options being made available to address the deterioration of the transport networks in this area. This level crossing is the responsibility of local, state, and federal governments, so the funding for its removal should be split three ways.

The state government and the Federal Labor Government have shown their commitment to fixing what has been described as one of Queensland's worst traffic black spots. We need to see the Brisbane City Council properly commit to the project.

The 2022-2023 Budget builds on the impressive work from last year's budget. This year's budget realizes a record investment in Queensland's transport infrastructure. This investment is vital as we start work on building a legacy for Queensland that will be left over from the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Work is underway on the Cross River Rail, integrating with roads and bus services. The project enables a turn-up-and-go transport system for the whole of South-east Queensland. Cross River Rail will provide high-capacity train stations where they are needed most.

Cross River Rail is working on rebuilding the Moorooka, Rocklea, and Salisbury stations in my electorate. The upgrades to the stations will make them easier to access and improve connections to the surrounding suburbs.

Station accessibility will be boosted with an additional third platform, new overpasses, and new canopies on the media to improve weather protection and lifts. I could tell you about the amount of feedback I have received from older residents, people with disabilities and parents with prams, or even parents traveling with young children looking forward to not having to struggle with stairs at the stations. Kiss 'n' ride infrastructure and bike facilities will be included in the new package of works.

It is exciting to see the upgrades being rolled out. Commuters and residents understand the disruptions they may face during the construction phases will be far outweighed by the results!

I look forward to seeing the new stations in my area completed and checking out the planned and improved disability access, allowing more Queenslanders and visitors to travel across southeast Queensland and down to the Gold Coast.

Under the 2022-23 Budget, an additional amount will be allocated to design an upgrade for the Moorooka bus rail interchange. The planned improvements will improve the commute to and from the city, so workers get home quicker and spend more time with families and loved ones.

Some of the chamber members may know I am interested in cycling. I enjoy every chance I get to get into my gear and onto my bike. In 2018 I travelled to Taiwan, where I participated in a Ride to Conquer Cancer fundraising event for QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute in Herston. The ride was planned for across Taiwan, and it was a remarkable experience that I look forward to doing one day again.

My reminiscing about cycling is because one of this year's Budget commitments is planning for the missing piece of the cycleway from Balham Road at the western edge of Toohey and Logan Road has been included.

Riding a bike is undoubtedly fun, improves physical and mental wellbeing, and is convenient for getting around locally and environmentally friendly. There are so many reasons why riding is suitable for people, and I welcome the implementation of these active pathways across Brisbane.

I applaud the continued investment in education. Our future will be healthier, have higher rates of economic stability, lower crime, and greater equality when we invest in education.

The individual also personally benefits from the education they receive through higher incomes when employed, career advancement, skill development, and employment opportunities. A lack of access to education is a key to ongoing poverty, which can be reversed when access to education is provided. Indeed, you can't be what you don't see.

A record \$16.5 billion in school and early childhood education was included in this year's state budget. Hundreds of infrastructure projects to improve schools from the Gold Coast to the Cape will be given the much-needed investment.

Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said another five new schools would be opened in 2025 and 2026 while existing buildings would be expanded and improved thanks to more than \$1.9 billion in infrastructure investment supporting thousands of jobs.

In Toohey, my schools will benefit from the ongoing allocations of monies for maintenance and minor works, and Salisbury State School will be boosted with a refurbishment of five of their learning spaces in Block C.

MacGregor State High School will benefit from funding for a site renewal. MacGregor State High School is one of two state high schools in my electorate. Combined, the schools have over 1800 full-time students.

Like many schools, MacGregor State High School and Sunnybank State High School need renewal. Existing facilities are outdated, and some are worse for wear.

This year's budget has allocated just over \$4 million for site renewal across high schools. This is good news for students and the school communities.

Sunnybank State High School has also been allocated funding for a security fence, additional classrooms, and new skills development and training facilities.

The team at the school is very excited about this outcome, and I look forward to watching the projects develop and come together.

The Sunnybank Special School is also included to receive additional classrooms in this budget. This is an exceptional school in many ways. It is always an absolute joy to visit with the students, teachers, and parents. The enthusiasm and joy the students express are infectious, so this is another valued addition to the school. The teachers are excellent. They are passionate about their work and fiercely dedicated to achieving the best possible outcomes for the students in their care.

We all know community centres across the state have been doing it tough. The Covid pandemic stretched their resources to the extreme. The centres are where people come together, seeking a friendly and supportive environment. They provide social interactions to those who are vulnerable and alone.

The community centres across my area were particularly hard hit this year after the flood event in February. The volunteers were overwhelmed by the needs of flood-affected residents.

The St David's Neighbourhood Centre in my electorate will benefit from a significant increase in operational funding, almost doubling to \$250 thousand a year over the next four years.

This will be life-changing for the Toohey locals who seek assistance at the very busy St David's Neighbourhood Centre every year. These are people who might be experiencing domestic and family violence, people at risk of or experiencing homelessness, First Nations people, people with disability, people impacted by disasters, and families under financial stress.

I know Kelly and the team at St David's will appreciate the support and recognition of the work she and her team have done so selflessly for many years.

The Palaszczuk Government will deliver the most significant investment in new hospitals and beds in Queensland's history, with the 2022-23 State Budget providing additional funding of \$9.78 billion over six years.

The new hospitals and expansion projects announced in the State Budget will deliver 2509 extra beds across Queensland over the next six years.

My electorate of Toohey means a \$465 million expansion that will deliver around 112 additional beds.

New initiatives to improve patient outcomes are vital to transforming our health services. We need to ensure they operate as effectively as possible. This means supporting patients to access hospital and health services when needed and then transitioning them home or to other appropriate settings when ready.

I welcome this hugely significant investment in the health and well-being of Queenslanders across the state that has been designed to meet the needs and demands of an ever-growing population.

The Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan shines a light on patient quality, safety strategies, and alternative models of care by expanding virtual care and working more closely with the primary care sector to care for people in the community.

A comprehensive outlook is what is needed. We need to provide better outcomes for all of us, no matter at what stage of our lives we may be or when we engage and interact with Queensland Health.

This significant investment in services across all levels will help ensure we can best support the ongoing health and wellbeing of all Queenslanders.

The 2022-23 State Budget will deliver more for health, education, and transport, and there will also be an investment of more than \$2 billion in large-scale storage, renewable energy projects, and generation and transmission investment.

This significant investment will power more safe and reliable jobs in more industries across the state. This will ensure Queenslanders maintain a stake in their energy future through publicly-owned energy corporations, with the retained dividends supporting continued renewable energy, storage, and strategic network investments for the benefit of all Queenslanders at a time when it has never been more important to do so.

Renewables create jobs, lower power prices, and help our state reduce emissions.

I am very proud of the Palaszczuk Government.

This is a government that tackles the significant issues head-on. We plan for a future post Covid pandemic, post-floods, and other natural disasters. We look for harsh economic measures that benefit the many, not just a few. We address the cost of living pressures, and we look for and weed out inequality.

We are planning. This Budget reflects planning. It considers what is likely to happen or what may be needed in the future.

We do this because we are a part of our local communities. We're in this with family, our friends, and our neighbours. We do this together for a better future for all Queenslanders.

I commend these bills to the House.