



Speech By  
**Robert Skelton**

**MEMBER FOR NICKLIN**


---

Record of Proceedings, 23 June 2022

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL**

**APPROPRIATION BILL**

**REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (8.32 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Queensland state budget 2022-23 as expressed through the Appropriation Bill 2022, Appropriation (Parliament) Bill 2022 and Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2022 handed down by the Palaszczuk Labor government. This is an excellent Labor budget. Congratulations to the Treasurer and his department for getting things done.

There have been challenges to our state this year. There is the ongoing pandemic and pressure on the health system. We have faced national disasters and there are issues overseas such as the war in Ukraine which have all impacted on the state's finances. This is a budget that is focused on addressing the needs of every Queenslander. This is a budget that is carefully measured and considered. This is a budget that delivers for the electorate of Nicklin. This government builds, backs our services, procures Queensland products, supporting our businesses and creating jobs. This is a government committed to getting things done, a government of which I am proud to be a member.

I would like to acknowledge this traditional grassroots Labor budget by sharing a story that embodies the sentiment expressed therein. One of the first constituents who came to see me after I was elected was Ms Allison Bunney in her role as president of the Yandina State School P&C. I was aware that many of the older schools in my district were in poor repair but still taking more and more students. I visited the school and looked at its state. Initially, the only thing I could do was purchase a new basketball hoop out of my electorate allowance. At least the children would have something to do on their breaks.

Meeting with Michael Cookman, the principal, to understand the needs of the school and formulate a plan where the whole school community and their member would advocate through every available network, now some 19 months later we see the results of all of us working together. Yandina State School will have a new multipurpose building they can configure to meet the needs of their students to the tune of over \$9 million. They will also get \$200,000 to start planning for a new school hall, which will replace the current small undercover area that currently serves that purpose. In addition to this, the senior playground will be upgraded with \$158,000.

I want to thank Ms Rohan Geppert, one of the magnificent educators who kept me constantly informed and on track to meet this community need. Together we are getting things done. It would be remiss of me not to mention all of the staff, students, volunteers and the entire Yandina community who have supported this. Thank you, Minister Grace, for visiting and listening to our schools.

As the local member and member of the Community Support and Services Committee, chaired by the member for Mansfield, I had the honour of participating in the inquiry into social isolation and loneliness, which recommended that government raise the base funding levels for neighbourhood and

community centres to \$230,000 per annum. This is the greatest single increase in operational funding for neighbourhood and community centres—a rise of \$51.8 million over four years across Queensland. An extra \$100,000 per year will be transformational for our community centres.

I want to take a moment to recognise all of the good work of my centre in Nambour, the Maroochydore Neighbourhood Centre, the Maleny Neighbourhood Centre and the Caloundra Neighbourhood Centre on the Sunshine Coast, and I thank everyone who participated in the committee's inquiry. I thank Minister Enoch and her department for their consideration and assistance and securing extra funding for social and affordable housing, which will be well received across our region.

I will make special mention of my community centre in Nambour and Ms Angela Rondo, Ms Rachael Donovan and Ms Ana Greenfield, who have been generous in sharing their knowledge with me so I was able to understand their complex needs and exceptional work in tackling domestic violence and homelessness. I would also like to thank Ms Linda Denice, who coordinates programs across the Sunshine Coast region tackling the insidious issue of domestic and family violence. I also welcome the tireless advocacy of the Attorney-General, Minister Fentiman, who has secured more state funding and resources in this space.

This additional funding will allow the centres to hire new staff, buy equipment and deliver additional services and support for people who need it most, including those experiencing domestic and family violence, social isolation and loneliness, homelessness and financial stress. For vulnerable people in our community this support can be life-changing.

We are extending support for young Queenslanders at risk of homelessness to access safe, secure and affordable housing with an investment of \$28.9 million over the next four years to develop a policy and integrated framework of housing through the Queensland Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-25. I look forward to continuing the partnerships.

This is a budget that puts the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders first and foremost, with a record investment in health of \$23.6 billion delivering three new hospitals; a new Queensland cancer centre; 11 hospital expansion projects across Queensland; 2,200 new beds; and new doctors and nurses, supporting our frontline heroes to get their jobs done.

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

*The speech read as follows—*

It means better health services for more Queenslanders in our regional and rural centres and increased funding to support our paramedics. It means a commitment to hire an additional 9450 health workers over this four-year term of government.

Locally, our investment in Queensland's Health includes:

- \$24.4 million for Nambour General Hospital to meet the functional requirements of the hospital in its new role as a sub-acute facility, and
- \$24.6 million for Sunshine Coast University Hospital to continue construction delivering 450-beds at the completion of Stage One, growing to 738-beds at completion of Stage 3.

Speaker: Our record Health Budget also includes \$1.64 billion over five years to improve mental health and wellbeing and combat substance abuse. Drawing on the work of the Mental Health Select Committee—and I thank my colleague Joe Kelly for his work chairing that committee, all those that made contributions, the secretariat and Hansard—the biggest ever investment in mental health services will create a sustainable funding model by introducing a 0.25 per cent mental health levy on businesses with annual taxable wages of over \$10 million from 1st January 2023.

It will focus on rehabilitation care, additional community care units, adolescent day programs and Step-Up Step-Down services to help people transition out of our hospital system or avoid it in the first instance altogether.

I welcome the Albanese Labor government's decision to extend the current 50% public hospital funding until the end of the year, as well as their commitment to build Medicare Urgent Care clinics to help ease the pressure on our emergency departments. Finally, Queenslanders have a federal government we can rely on to work collaboratively with the states to get things done!

Speaker: We're looking after our state's most precious resource by investing in their success with \$144.3 million across the Sunshine Coast for additional and renewed infrastructure in our state schools.

In Nicklin we stand to benefit from this as our older state school receive the funding, they need modernise their facilities and keep up with their growing communities. In addition to the work announced for Yandina State School.

I'm proud to have advocated for:

- the new \$10.7 million Performing Arts Centre for Burnside State High School,
- \$600,000 for Nambour State college to refurbish Block L classrooms.
- \$450,000 for Woombye State School to refurbish Block E classrooms.
- \$400,000 for Burnside State School to refurbish Block D classrooms.

- \$375,000 to provide equitable access at Noosa District State High School.
- \$350,000 to refurbish Block A classrooms at Noosa District State High.

Speaker: I can also announce that a new hall for the Pomona Campus of Noosa District State High School has been funded. Former Principal Brett Burgess, current Principal Stacey Wilmore and the entire community have ably ensured getting this outcome. Collectively "getting things done"

Speaker: State-wide, we back our public service which is why we've invested in over 7,165 teacher and teacher aide positions since 2015, and we're going even further in this Budget with 675 more teachers and nearly 200 more teacher aides in 2022-23. Ensuring our students have the support they need to get the job done.

We recognise the elevated demand for child protection services, which is why we are making the landmark investment of \$2.2 billion over 5 years and \$500 million on going.

And we're devoting \$78.8 million over 4 years and \$18.9 million ongoing to continue our Youth Justice Strategy reforms.

We're ensuring community safety with the largest increase in resourcing in 30 years, investing \$2.9 billion into our Police this year.

The new \$9 million Nambour police Station is due to be completed any day now, delivering on a 2015 Palaszczuk government commitment to provide better facilities to our local officers. The replacement of the Cooroy Police Station, valued at \$4 million, will soon be underway. These projects are supported by the more than \$3 billion we have invested in better policing services in Queensland in this budget.

I would like to offer the electorates gratitude to our policemen and women for their duty. I thank OIC Gary Brayley and the team at Nambour for their patience as there have been many delays during construction. I thank OIC Mal Scott and the team in Cooroy and look forward to seeing the plans for the new station there. OIC Kevin in Palmwoods for your ongoing commitment to community safety. I would also like to thank OIC Pierre Senekal in Kenilworth who looks after a large area that has been particularly hard hit by recent flooding and he has had to have his vehicle replaced due to writing one off responding to the emergencies.

Speaker: \$29.7 billion will be invested across the state to support the 25,200 jobs created by our 4-year record level roads and transport plan.

Locally delivering over \$489 million in funding for the Beerburum to Nambour Rail Upgrade Stage 1, hand in hand with the Federal Government. This Beerburum to Nambour Rail Upgrade (B2N) project covers about 40km of the North Coast Line and will provide additional track capacity and reliability. This means less travel time and increased passenger and freight services to our growing Sunshine Coast region.

This is in addition to the \$301.3 million to upgrade both the Maroochy Road and Mons Road interchanges on the Bruce Highway at Forest Glen and the \$320 million for the Sunshine Motorway, Mooloolah River Interchange Upgrade Stage 1, both in partnership with the Australian Government.

Speaker: Locally and in partnership with the community the safety treatments for Margaret Street in Palmwoods funds have been allocated. This was due to many constituents worried about the lack of pedestrian access and safety concerns.

This is a budget that supports our small and medium sized businesses, delivering payroll tax cuts to more than 12,000 Queensland small business, with the potential to save \$26,000 per year.

I thank Di Farmer, the Minister for Employment and Small Business and Minister for Training and Skills Development and her department for their work in delivering this relief, and their work supporting the businesses in my electorate of Nicklin.

We have a laser like focus on enabling the key drivers of our economy to deliver more trade opportunities, a better skilled workforce, with specific attention paid to mentoring and enhancing innovation to support our small business to reach their goals.

Because we know that delivering better services for Queenslanders relies on continuing to grow our economy

Therefore, we strive to create more jobs in more industries across Queensland. Industries like renewable energy, new economy minerals, advanced manufacturing, aviation and aerospace, biomedical products, agriculture, tourism, research and education services, and creative and design industries. Supporting good, secure jobs by supporting the industries of the future, while backing our traditional industries.

Our commitment to delivering more jobs includes our four-year \$59.1 billion infrastructure program, supporting 48,000 jobs in the next year alone.

We're investing \$48 million into pumped Hydro facilities like that of Borumba Dam, which many in my electorate are looking forward too, delivering good quality jobs for our local tradies while supporting our renewable energy future.

We want to make sure our Tourism operators continue to bounce back after the pandemic, which is why we're investing 66.4 million over four years in programs to support the industry.

I'm glad to see we are also taking care of our native fauna with a commitment to invest \$40 million to protect native animals including \$24.6 million for our koala conservation strategy. I would like to thank Minister for Environment Meaghan Scanlon and Minister for Transport Mark Bailey for working with me to provide \$5 million in funding to repair our koala fencing along the highway in Nicklin last year.

To combat the rising cost of living, our government is giving back a record \$6.8 billion in concessions to Queenslanders during this financial year alone an increase of 10 per cent on last year's budget.

Earlier this year, we announced Queensland households would receive \$50 off their power bills, because Queenslanders own our state's power assets, their generators, the transmission, and distribution.

That discount is being increased to \$175, at a cost to the budget of \$385 million. Queenslanders have now received \$575 in discounts over the past four years, at a cost to the Budget of \$1.2 billion.

It is quite often said in this house that Queensland's best days are ahead of it, well this budget doesn't just prove our state's future is bright, but it delivers on it too!

Speaker: This budget addresses the areas of most need. Health, Education, Housing and Infrastructure. An honest Labor Budget that delivers good jobs, better services, and a Great lifestyle.

I commend these Bills to the House.