



Speech By
Hon. Shannon Fentiman


MEMBER FOR WATERFORD

Record of Proceedings, 23 June 2022

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. SM FENTIMAN** (Waterford—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Minister for Women and Minister for the Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence) (12.57 am): This is an historic budget for Queenslanders and the Treasurer should be incredibly proud. It encapsulates the Palaszczuk government's commitment to delivering good jobs and better services and guaranteeing our wonderful lifestyle. At its heart is a record \$23.6 billion investment in Queensland's health system. It delivers the single largest capital investment in health in our state's history.

This budget also delivers for Queensland women and girls. It was the Palaszczuk government that delivered the Women's Strategy after those opposite cut it. It was the Palaszczuk government that delivered a women's budget statement after those opposite cut it. As Minister for Women, I am delighted to see \$100 million in funding provided for the outstanding Skilling Queenslanders for Work program—a program that we brought back after those opposite cut it. Skilling Queenslanders for Work has now helped over 20,000 women get a job. That is how you get women back into the workforce: you give them the skills and training they need to build a successful career. The member for Broadwater talked about the need for practical solutions. It does not get much more practical than getting 20,000 women into work.

The Palaszczuk government is also continuing to support women into leadership positions. We have exceeded our target for women on boards after those opposite cut it. I noted that in his response the member for Broadwater has set a gender quota for his three-person economic team. Given he is a man, his deputy is a man, his shadow Treasurer is a man and his Manager of Opposition Business is a man, I think it is a good bare minimum to start with. But given how few women are represented on that side, it might be a little hard for him to fill the role. If only he had not knifed the youngest LNP woman to take her seat, Broadwater, maybe he would have more women to choose from.

I was reflecting on the member for Broadwater's commitment to establish this women-led economic team. I was wondering: why does that seem familiar? I realised it was exactly what Scott Morrison did. When he finally realised that he had a bit of a women's problem, he set up this subcommittee of cabinet to look at women's economic issues. Thankfully, the women of this country saw right through that and will see right through the member for Broadwater. I am really pleased that the member has come around to the idea of quotas and now has a quota for his three-member economic team, but it seems there still are no quotas to actually get women on their side of the House into parliament.

Opposition members interjected.

Mrs D'ATH: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. They keep interjecting when out of their seat.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Martin): That is a point of order. Members can only interject from their own seat. Either move or cease your interjections.

Ms FENTIMAN: The Leader of the Opposition said he wants action when it comes to supporting women. If it is so important for him to have women in his leadership team, he could do that now. He does not have to wait. They are the shadow government, allegedly. I am sorry: if women in leadership is so important, do it now. Have a reshuffle and put some women in the leadership team, put some women into economic portfolios. Absolutely, it is more just cheap talk. There is no action, leadership or credibility. Get some more women elected to parliament and then maybe Queensland women will take you seriously when it comes to talking about action for women and girls.

I am also incredibly proud of what this budget will deliver for my community. The wellbeing of the Waterford electorate is always at the forefront of what I do. What is fantastic about this budget is that we heard of another expansion of the Logan Hospital for our growing community—another 100 beds on top of the already 200-bed expansion. Commuters will also be thrilled to know that work is underway to relocate the Loganlea train station and that we have secured funding to the Bethania to Logan Village rail trail, something the member for Logan and I have been fighting for.

Of course, there are local schools. I am so proud that we are investing so many millions of dollars in our local schools in Waterford. Thank you to the minister. In particular, there will be a new school hall for Loganlea.

I have sent my speech to the Speaker 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—

Mr Speaker, equal access to justice is a fundamental right of every Queenslanders.

And in a digital age, it is more important than ever our courts keep pace with technology.

That's why we have committed \$246.8 million over five years to modernise our courts.

This includes more than \$22 million to replace the Beaudesert courthouse.

We've listened to the community in the Scenic Rim, and this project will replace and transform the current aging building, to deliver efficient and safe services.

This budget will also upgrade much needed technological improvements through our five-year ICT strategy, that will provide for e-files and e-filing—enabling users to interact virtually with the courts where appropriate.

Queensland Law Society labelled it a “bumper justice budget,” noting how the investment in court technology and infrastructure “positively impact access to justice for all Queenslanders regardless of where they live.”

And when this Government speaks of access to justice, that means all Queenslanders, including—indeed especially—those most vulnerable in our society.

That's why the budget includes an additional \$76.8 million for Legal Aid Queensland over four years to increase essential services such as free access to duty lawyers in court, dispute resolution, and general legal advice.

CEO Nicky Davies has welcomed the “vital funding” which she said will help meet growing demand for legal services.

Additionally, we're providing increased funding of \$6.9 million over four years and \$1.3 million per year ongoing for the Queensland Human Rights Commission, which has seen growing demand on its services during the pandemic.

We will provide \$5 million over four years to assist the important work of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions' northern chambers of Cairns, Townsville and Rockhampton.

We are also delivering \$7.5 million over four years to strengthen casino regulation, targeting problem gambling and enhancing support services.

Mr Speaker, we know strong Labor governments always invest in health and hospitals—and rightly so.

But it's a brave government that decides ending domestic and family violence must also be at the centre of its reforms.

This budget backs the safety and economic security of women and girls across Queensland.

We have committed to an historic \$363 million reform package over four years, to implement all 89 recommendations of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce's Hear Her Voice report.

This landmark investment in our systems, communities, and first responders will increase our ability to understand and identify coercive control.

And most importantly, it will enable us to criminalise this insidious form of abuse.

The budget includes \$164 million to bolster our hardworking and dedicated domestic, family and sexual violence support services this year.

We will ramp up our roll-out of specialist domestic and family violence courts, committing \$60.4 million over 4 years and \$19.1 million annually, to expand this crucial service.

Mr Speaker, this model is ensuring victims of violence are supported through the legal process, instead of becoming lost in it.

Just last week I released the results of an independent evaluation of Queensland's first domestic and family violence court at Southport, which confirmed the specialist service is helping women successfully navigate what is often a confronting experience.

In fact, the report states that Southport specialist court is "nationally and internationally recognised as a sector-leading response to domestic and family violence".

Mr Speaker, it is the nature of Budget speeches that they invariably involve a lengthy recitation of financial allocations.

But I can assure Members of this House that behind each of the figures there are real and lasting benefits to the people of Queensland.

We are deeply committed to ensuring all Queenslanders—irrespective of age, gender or financial means—are kept safe and have access to justice services.

As Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, Women and Prevention of Domestic and Family Violence, I am enormously proud of the investment the Palaszczuk Government is making in empowering women and girls, while modernising the criminal justice system.

I commend this budget to the House.