



Speech By
Hon. Yvette D'Ath


MEMBER FOR REDCLIFFE

Record of Proceedings, 24 June 2022

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Hon. YM D'ATH** (Redcliffe—ALP) (Minister for Health and Ambulance Services) (4.09 pm): I rise to make a contribution to the budget introduced by the Treasurer and commend him and his department on delivering not just another strong budget, but a record health budget. This Palaszczuk Labor government is delivering a record \$23.6 billion health budget. This budget represents our unwavering commitment to the health and wellbeing of Queenslanders. That is what people expect of a good government and that is what people expect of a Labor government. Queensland's health system has been and will continue to be challenged by unprecedented levels of demand right across the state. The record health budget addresses demand pressures in the short term while also delivering long-term improvements. This includes new infrastructure on more beds, a larger workforce, a focus on mental health and innovative reforms to our health system.

New hospitals and hospital expansion projects worth \$9.785 billion will deliver 2,509 extra beds across Queensland. This is in addition to the 869 beds being delivered through our current expansion projects and builds on the 1,350 additional beds that we have opened since 2015. This record investment includes new hospitals in Coomera, Toowoomba and Bundaberg, a new nation-leading Queensland Cancer Centre and hospital expansions at 11 sites across Queensland, including Townsville, Cairns, Mackay and Hervey Bay in regional Queensland, as well as the Redcliffe, Ipswich, Logan, QEII, Princess Alexandra, Prince Charles and Robina hospitals in the south-east corner. These will not just deliver more beds, it will support businesses and communities across the state, creating more than 21,000 jobs during construction. Our new accelerated infrastructure delivery program will deliver 289 extra beds over the next two years in some of our busiest South-East Queensland hospitals. In addition, the new hospitals and major expansion projects will deliver around 2,220 extra beds from 2024 to 2028.

The Palaszczuk government is also continuing our proud record of investing in our rural and remote health infrastructure. The budget provides funding of \$943.5 million over seven years for the next phase of the Building Rural and Remote Health program, the first phase including Blackwater. This will ensure that all Queenslanders continue to receive world-class health care no matter where they live. It will also provide a jobs boost with around 2,606 construction jobs to be supported by phase 2 of the program. The first tranche of phase 2 will replace the existing hospitals and health facilities with new modern facilities at Moranbah Hospital, Bamaga Hospital, Normanton Hospital, Tara Hospital, Pormpuraaw Primary Health Care Centre and Cow Bay Primary Health Care Centre.

This budget forms the basis of our Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan. This plan outlines the pressures we are facing. It sets out the solutions we are enacting to continue delivering world-class care to Queenslanders, including thousands of new beds. The Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan

does not just seek to address these unprecedented demand pressures with new beds. In addition, we are building upon the innovation we were able to harness during the COVID-19 pandemic and provide new solutions to assist our hospital staff. This includes: scaling up our virtual clinical hub to divert people away from ambulance and ED use; building up our virtual ward programs like Metro North's virtual ED; investing \$300 million to roll out our electronic medical record program to assist in the use of virtual care models; spending \$26 million to improve patient flow at our EDs to ease bed pressure; providing \$11.6 million to fund rapid access clinics across 10 HHSs streamlining care and preventing unnecessary ED presentations; investing an additional \$16 million over four years to continue the great work of Queensland Health's Long Stay Rapid Response Team, assisting long-stay patients get ready for discharge.

This is a budget that puts patients first, and what a contrast this budget provides to those opposite. The Leader of the Opposition has begun to compare the Newman government's record on health to the Palaszczuk government's record. That is a comparison I am very happy to make. Imagine the state the health system would be in today if Queensland continued on the trajectory charted by the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues. Imagine how stressed the health system would have been with thousands of frontline workers sacked and the borders wide open throughout the pandemic. The contrast is clear. We have a fully funded, comprehensive Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan, a plan that acknowledges the worldwide trends and the local pressures; a plan that delivers the largest health capital infrastructure commitment in Queensland's history; a plan that charts a course for innovative service reform backed by real funding; a plan that backs our frontline health workers and commits to bringing even more into our health system.

In contrast, what do we see from those opposite? Four dot points on a page—four dot points that contain zero new beds, zero new staff, zero new dollars and zero new ideas. In the absence of any detail, all Queenslanders can do is judge the member for Broadwater on his record of sackings and cuts.

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

The speech read as follows—

Mr Speaker, we recognise our frontline staff are at the heart of our healthcare system, and the reason why Queenslanders can be confident they will receive world-class healthcare.

I take this opportunity to wholeheartedly thank Queensland's healthcare workers for their dedication and commitment through the pandemic and beyond, during what have been very difficult times. When Queenslanders needed them most, Queensland's healthcare workers answered the call.

During our response to the COVID-19 pandemic tens of thousands of healthcare workers changed how they delivered care overnight.

As frontline staff they were empowered to work with their patients to deliver care in new ways. They upskilled, they innovated and in doing so they were able to continue to deliver healthcare to Queenslanders when and where they needed it most.

But we don't just want to thank our healthcare workers, we are committed to listening to them and supporting them.

In the coming weeks and months as I travel around the state, I want to hear from the people who walk the wards every day and work with them to make our world-class system even better.

In addition our record hospital infrastructure spend, this year's budget supports the lifeblood of our healthcare system by continuing to deliver on our commitment for 9,475 additional frontline workers by 2024.

This investment aims to provide much needed relief to our frontline staff, with new healthcare workers to be injected into every part of the state.

I also acknowledge that it has been a particular challenge for our rural and remote communities to retain staff.

That is why we are investing in recruitment drives to communicate far and wide that Queensland is the best state to be a healthcare worker.

Just last week I had the pleasure of visiting our hospitals and ambulance stations in Stanthorpe and Warwick. What struck me when I spoke to staff was how many had initially come for a short-term posting, only to fall in love with the community. Before long, six-months would turn into five, ten or fifteen years—that's the message we want to broadcast to tomorrow's Queenslanders.

Mr Speaker, in addition to thanking our hospital healthcare workers, I would also like to speak to the remarkable people of the Queensland Ambulance Service.

Our QAS staff provide life-saving care to so many Queenslanders, every single day of the year, often in extremely distressing circumstances.

That's why we are investing \$1.1 billion into the Queensland Ambulance Service, which represents an 11 per cent increase on our previous budget.

This investment is designed to recruit more frontline staff, build new stations, upgrade our existing stations and ensure our fleet of ambulances are cutting-edge.

These efforts will ensure Queensland Ambulance Service will continue to meet the emergency healthcare needs of Queenslanders now and into the future.

Mr Speaker, after enduring floods, fires and a worldwide pandemic the likes of which has never been experienced in our lifetimes, mental health and crisis support services have never been more vital.

In recognition of this, this budget injects a remarkable \$1.6 billion over five years to improve mental health and wellbeing, and to combat substance abuse.

Mr Speaker, specific mental health projects include:

- \$239.4 million to support the needs of children, adolescents, young people and their families with mental illness and problematic substance use;
- \$320 million to support adult and older person mental health treatment services and facilities;
- \$143 million to prioritise mental health crisis response and suicide prevention services;
- \$61 million to support mental health services for First Nations people;
- \$64 million to deliver community psychosocial support services; and
- \$54 million to support forensic and prison services.

This funding surge will change thousands of lives by expanding service availability, improving the quality of care for people of all stages of life and bolstering our workforce.

Recently, the Mental Health Parliamentary Inquiry provided key recommendations to expand and enhance mental health services across the state, and I thank the select committee for their excellent work on this report.

This year's budget will address many of these recommendations, including an increase of funding for mental health, alcohol and other drug services in Queensland and the expansion and enhancement of services to address specific needs of infants, children and young people, and their families.

This year's record health budget will strengthen the capacity of existing community-based services and bridge the gap in the delivery of inpatient services for children, adolescents and young adults.

We will dedicate resources and funding to support initiatives under a new five-year plan for mental health, alcohol, and other drug services.

Our plan will focus on additional mental health care capacity, including the mental health co-responder model to support timely and appropriate health responses to patients experiencing a mental health crisis.

The factors causing growth in demand across the health system are complex.

They are comprehensively articulated in our Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan. They include:

- A growing population—expected to increase by 20% by 2036 causing more presentations to our hospitals.
- An ageing population—people over the age of 65 are disproportionately likely to need access to emergency health services and more likely to suffer chronic conditions. That cohort is projected to increase by 50% by 2036, creating a pipeline of additional demand for years to come.
- Declining rates of private health insurance—there are now 3.1 million Queenslanders without private health cover, meaning they turn to our public health system in their time of need.
- Aged and disability care pressures—there are over 500 long stay patients in our hospitals who should be in community, aged care or disability care. Ambulance transfers from aged care facilities have grown by 55% between financial year 2018/19 and financial year 2020/21 to 41,000.
- An underfunded primary care sector has undermined the hard work of our GPs and led to a decline in medical graduate interest in the sector, with a 4% decline of GP supply projected by 2032, with demand set to increase by 38.5%—meaning those who can't get in to their GP will come to our hospitals.
- And the ongoing impact of COVID-19—we have 439 hospital inpatients who are COVID positive. This outstrips the new beds funded through last year's Care4Qld bed initiatives, demonstrating the ongoing bed pressures we will face as we live with the virus into the future.

These are pressures being felt not just here, but across Australia and the world.

This budget is our investment in the future health of our community and the wealth of our economy.

This budget is a hallmark of the Palaszczuk Government. It delivers good jobs, better service and a great lifestyle.

That includes:

- \$2.9 billion for our police
- \$2.2 billion for our child protection services
- \$363 million to fund our ongoing response to domestic and family violence
- Investing in the clean industries of the future like hydrogen and pumped hydro
- Supporting our tourism industry
- \$6.8 billion worth of concessions to ease the cost of living for Queenslanders
- \$200 million over three years to increase the supply of housing in priority areas

These investments will stimulate the economy, increase the economic security of Queenslanders, and importantly create and support decent and reliable Queensland jobs as we recover from the global pandemic.

I am also proud to announce this budget is also a major win for Redcliffe, with my electorate receiving funding for:

- a \$1.06 billion expansion of Redcliffe Hospital that will deliver around 204 additional beds for our busy hospital. Redcliffe Hospital has been facing growing demand pressures. This redevelopment will provide our amazing staff with greater capacity to meet that demand and people throughout of our region get the world class care they deserve
- \$200,000 committed for renewal planning at the Woody Point Special School to ensure it can deliver state of the art, purpose-built facilities for its students.
- The Palaszczuk Government is also committing \$500,000 to refurbish two learning spaces in the Clontarf Beach State High School Science Block.
- As well as:
 - \$340,000 for Humpybong State School to install a new security fence;
 - \$800,000 for walkway upgrades to Clontarf Beach State High School; and
 - \$897,000 for general maintenance and works for schools across Redcliffe
- Vital road infrastructure for Redcliffe will be delivered with a \$9.6 million commitment which will mean the life-saving Elizabeth Avenue pedestrian overpass will be built. The overpass will include disability access and improve safety for students, parents, cyclists, and the public.
- We have committed \$315,000 for safety improvements at the Anzac Avenue, Marine Parade and Redcliffe parade Intersection.
- The Palaszczuk Government is delivering \$1.2 million this year as part of a \$3 million commitment to the people doing it tough in Redcliffe to rebuild the Redcliffe Homelessness Hub at the Old Pensioners Hall. The hard working and dedicated Redcliffe community organisation, The Breakfast Club, will be one of two tenants in the new building with one other space being available for a homelessness service. This is an incredibly important piece of social infrastructure that will make a real difference for the most vulnerable in our community.
- As a proud supporter of the mighty Dolphins, I'm pleased to see funding for the high quality flood lights for the Redcliffe District Rugby League Club.

As I said before Mr Speaker, there is no comparison between the Palaszczuk Government's record on health delivery and that of those opposite.

I will fight for our workforce, not against them.

I will fight in Queensland's best interest nationally, not undermine it for cheap political points.

This Government will always invest in our people and our facilities. That is what good governments do, and it is what Labor governments do.

I again congratulate the Treasurer, and the Premier, on this year's budget.