




Speech By  
**Adrian Tantari**

**MEMBER FOR HERVEY BAY**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2023

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE  
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr TANTARI** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (9.56 pm): I rise to speak in support of the appropriation and revenue bills before the House. This state budget focuses on the things that matter to Queenslanders and the people of Hervey Bay. It continues to deliver the economic recovery that the people of Queensland and Hervey Bay expect from governments. As a regional member, this budget shows that the Palaszczuk Labor government has listened to regional Queensland and is delivering on its commitment to not leave regional Queensland behind.

This budget takes action on national cost-of-living pressures and tackles the cost of living by providing a record whopping \$8.2 billion in concessions to ease the cost-of-living pressures for families and businesses. That is an increase of 21 per cent from the year before. Amongst the cost-of-living measures will be rebates on electricity bills for all Queenslanders. Each household will receive \$550 and those who live in the most vulnerable households, in addition to the existing \$372 under the Queensland electricity rebate scheme, will receive \$700, making a total of \$1,072. That is \$1,072 for some of the neediest in our communities. For some it may go close to eliminating their annual electricity bill, which is a great outcome. Many in that group will be pensioners, Health Care Card holders, Commonwealth Seniors Card holders and those eligible for a carer's allowance.

All Queenslanders will receive that assistance because they are benefitting from the fact that we own our power assets. This would not have happened under an LNP government. Not one of us, let alone the most vulnerable in our communities, would have seen a single cent in returns from our assets, which we have all worked hard to pay for, because they would have been sold off long ago. We know who would have been getting the benefits from our assets: their LNP mates. I know that the people in my electorate of Hervey Bay will appreciate the cost-of-living rebate, which will go a long way towards easing some of the national cost-of-living pressures that families are experiencing at this time.

Further to this, another great announcement made by the Premier and the Treasurer is that, as of next January, all four-year-olds will be able to attend kindy for free. That is a great outcome for families. With 15 hours a week of free kindy for 40 weeks, the average saving for a family will be around \$4,600 per year. I will say that again: \$4,600 a year. That will be a great boost to the family budget. Those savings could go towards things like paying the rent or the mortgage and putting more food on the table. It will allow many people to work more and also to improve the educational outcomes of their children.

The Palaszczuk government has to be applauded for increasing the availability of free kindy to more families—around 8,000—in this budget. But there is more. I am delighted to say that, following a call-out to the Minister for Health by me and many of our other regional members who are sitting in the chamber tonight, the Palaszczuk government listened to our regions and raised the rate of subsidy for the Patient Transport Subsidy Scheme known as the PTSS. This will mean that patients required to travel outside of Hervey Bay to access health services will now have the cost of that travel further reduced due to a higher rate of PTSS. Many members of my community have asked for this rate to be

lifted. This budget's allocation of a further \$70.3 million over the next four years shows the Palaszczuk government has responded to this call and delivered another cost-of-living outcome for the people of Hervey Bay. I want to thank all members of the Hervey Bay community who collectively lobbied to have the PTSS rate lifted. Our voices were heard and you have all contributed to this great outcome. Our community thanks you.

Another great cost-of-living measure that will assist families in my electorate is the announcement that the well-loved FairPlay scheme will be expanded over the next two years to provide SwimStart vouchers of up to \$150 for to eligible children aged up to four years to learn to swim. This will allow many families to ensure their littlies can get the core training in swimming and water safety. In the electorate of Hervey Bay this is a very important skill to develop given that we are a seaside electorate and have many water bodies that can be dangerous to little people if they are not prepared and made comfortable around water.

Another reduction to the cost of living will be the renewal of drivers' licences which will now have a flat rate applied at \$35. It is these small, everyday reductions in costs that make a big impact to the family budget by the end of the fortnight. I again congratulate the Palaszczuk government for acknowledging the national cost of living on family budgets and for acting to ease this pressure.

This budget continues to provide the funding for the next stages of major infrastructure currently underway and needed for the Hervey Bay electorate—namely, the Hervey Bay Hospital, Urangan State High School, the Urangan Point State School hall, Booral Road and Boundary Road in Urangan, the Maryborough Hervey Bay Road and Pialba Burrum Heads Road intersection; the purchase of land for the Hervey Bay replacement fire and rescue station; funding towards trunk infrastructure that acknowledges the growth that is in Hervey Bay today; funding to rebuild the Pialba substation and to upgrade the Eli Waters sewerage infrastructure; major and minor school upgrades right across the electorate, including a refurbishment of block D of the Sandy Strait State School; and collaborating with the Fraser Coast Regional Council by providing joint funding towards the Hervey Bay Centre Master Plan Implementation stage 1 and the Scarness Beachfront Tourist Park redevelopment. All these projects bring jobs and economic prosperity to the Hervey Bay electorate.

This is what Labor governments do. We listen to our communities and we act. With this budget the Palaszczuk government has done just that for the Hervey Bay electorate. The Acting Speaker has reviewed and approved my speech on the budget 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—*

Speaker, previous LNP speakers in this debate, use the same old language of doom and gloom about this good cost of living budget.

With no real thought or acknowledgement of the outstanding work by this Government to keep the budget in the black, something we all thought on this side was their economic mantra.

Speaker, we keep the budget in black and they still moan, because it comes from the royalties of our rich resources that we all own, and not from the pockets of Queensland's families and the most vulnerable in our community.

Instead of embracing the massive action taken on tackling the national cost of living issues, and work done to steer our economic prospects, the other side continues to scare and drive division in our community.

We on this side know that this budget delivers better services for all Queensland no matter where they live – unlike the LNP, who if they were in power bringing down this budget, would have just inflicted more cuts, sold more off and jacked up cost of living for every Queensland family.

We know that they can't wait to start pruning away in the background, cut, cut, cut like Johnny Depp's Edward Scissorhands, the member for Chatsworth is champing at the bit, to slash and burn the budget by \$10 Billion.

Mr Speaker, another part of this cognate Bill I would like to address in my contribution is the section in the Revenue Legislation Amendment Bill 2023 that deals with Payroll Tax.

This particular area won't be a headline grabber like a number of the other measures in the cognate bill but has a substantial impact on the regional businesses and employment in my electorate of Hervey Bay.

This cognate Bill amends the Payroll Tax Act 1971 to implement a 2023-24 State Budget measure to extend the 1 per cent payroll tax rate discount for regional employers for a further 7 years, until 30 June 2030.

This cognate Bill also implements a further 2023-24 State Budget measure to extend the 50 per cent rebate for wages paid or payable to apprentices and trainees to include wages paid or payable during the financial year ending on 30 June 2024.

These measures give certainty to small and medium regional business and their employees, saving these businesses many thousands of dollars to reinvest in their businesses and employing and growing their business in tough economic times where people are spending less because of the national cost of living pressures.

Speaker, as the Treasurer said in his introductory speech our economy is now the envy of the nation.

Around the world economic conditions are deteriorating as interest rates rise ward off inflation. The Queensland economy is forecast to grow 2% this financial year, rising to 3% in 2023.

By comparison, the Reserve Bank of Australia expects national economic growth to slow again, to 1½% in the calendar year 2024 and inflation is forecast to continue easing, down to three- and three-quarter percent next financial year.

Employment growth is forecast to ease from 3¼% in 2022-23 to 1% next financial year.

But unemployment will continue to remain low by historical standards, at 4¼% next financial year, rising to 4½% in 2024-25 Queensland's fiscal position is easily the strongest of the major states.

As the Treasurer stated in his budget speech, the people of Queensland recognise the importance of the things that matter, like better hospitals, smarter schools, safer roads and creating a pipeline of infrastructure that creates jobs for decades to come.

Speaker, the last budget delivered record funding to ensure a strong health care system for all Queenslanders.

It delivered for Hervey Bay by ensuring our hospital is upgraded and improved to meet the growing demand of health services in our region.

This 2023-24 budget keeps the jobs growth going in Queensland and continues that trend, by providing the funding for the many and varied programs and services needed to move my community forward.

This budget continues delivery on the promises made and delivers for the people of the Hervey Bay electorate.

Speaker, a budget tackling the cost-of-living rises, growth in jobs, health, education, infrastructure, housing, and this is what a Labor budget is all about.

As I have said in this place previously, I will do my best to ensure the people of the Hervey Bay electorate gets its fair share from our government and with this 2023-24 budget the Palaszczuk Labor Government has delivered on its promises and commitments made to the people of Hervey Bay.

Speaker, the Palaszczuk Government are doing what we promised, and with this budget we continue to build a better Hervey Bay.

Speaker, I support the Bill before the House.