



Speech By  
**Ann Leahy**


**MEMBER FOR WARREGO**

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Record of Proceedings, 11 May 2023

## **PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

### **Federal Budget, Local Government**

 **Ms LEAHY** (Warrego—LNP) (2.47 pm): The Labor Albanese government has not met the expectations of Queensland's councils in this week's federal budget. The federal Labor government's budget shows that financial assistance grants reduced again to councils, from 0.52 per cent to 0.5 per cent of national taxation. Twenty years ago, the financial assistance grants were one per cent of national taxation. Queensland councils want the FA grants returned to one per cent of national taxation. For councils, the FA grants are the major funding source for critical services and infrastructure across the state.

We heard this morning how the state Labor government likes to partner with Queensland councils. Where is the state Labor government partnering with Queensland councils in their call for a fair share of funding from the Commonwealth government? Councils have had enough of reducing funding, and the state Labor government is doing nothing about it. The Palaszczuk government used to demand its fair share from Canberra. Now it is silent when councils lose out. We were told that a new era of intergovernmental cooperation was upon us. Clearly, that does not include fighting for Queensland councils' funding. I call on the Palaszczuk Labor government to listen to councils and to stand up to its federal colleagues and ask for Queensland councils' fair share.

These FA grants are the funds that Queensland councils use to put bitumen on local roads, repair the footpaths and extend and repair water and sewerage infrastructure. In Cairns there is some \$220 million worth of infrastructure needed for water supply to communities in this region. Water is critical for the health of these communities and closing the gap. Health services like kidney dialysis cannot happen when councils cannot provide potable water. The gap for Indigenous councils and their residents cannot be closed without clean drinking water. It should concern the Palaszczuk Labor government that this week I have learned of people at Yarrabah who have had to resort to bucketing water out of the creek because they do not have sufficient clean water supplies.

Alarmingly, funding for the critical Local Roads and Community Infrastructure Program disappears in the 2026-27 federal budget. This follows the federal government's decision to exclude some councils from the latest round and to cut community infrastructure. What have we heard from the Palaszczuk Labor government in standing up to Canberra? Nothing. It cannot even pick up the phone. Councils are clear that these federal funding programs should continue for community infrastructure as well as roads and for all councils. This region deserves better from the Palaszczuk Labor government and its colleagues in Canberra and Queensland councils deserve better.

*(Time expired)*