




Speech By  
**Barry O'Rourke**

**MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON**

---

Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2023

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

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (12.03 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill 2023, introduced by the Hon. Cameron Dick, Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment. This is another great Labor budget for Central Queensland. We are seeing support for every local household—\$550 off every household's power bill, rising to \$1,072 for concession card holders. Eligible small businesses will also receive an automatic rebate of \$650 on their electricity bill in the next financial year. We are also making kindy free for everyone from next year, saving local families up to \$4,600 and ensuring everyone can access it. This is a huge change that comes from two great Labor values: fairness and equal access to education. This is something an LNP government would never deliver.

There is also \$100 million in funding to be spent on the first stage of the Rockhampton Ring Road over the next 12 months out of our state's \$280 million contribution to this great project. That is \$100 million being spent this year on this important project. It is \$100 million more than the LNP members Michelle Landry and Matt Canavan secured during the almost one decade they were in government.

I am happy to say that there is also funding to get construction started on the catheter lab at the Rockhampton Hospital and ongoing funding for major projects like the Browne Park upgrade, Rookwood Weir, the Fitzroy to Gladstone water pipeline and the Rockhampton to Mount Morgan water pipeline. Overall, there is more than \$4 billion worth of local infrastructure projects that are being delivered in the Rockhampton area with the support of the Palaszczuk Labor government. Our per capita infrastructure spend in Central Queensland is 69 per cent higher than it is for Brisbane.

The truth is that Labor governments have a proud record of delivering for Rockhampton. Walking around town, you can barely bowl a cricket ball without the risk of hitting something a Labor government has helped to deliver: the art gallery, the south-side swimming complex, the Yeppen roundabout upgrade, the courthouse, the hospital—not to mention countless upgrades to roads and schools over the years. We will only ever see this kind of investment under a Labor government in Central Queensland. What did we get under the Newman LNP government? Nothing but cuts to our schools, hospitals and services like QBuild. That is what we can expect if the LNP gets in again.

We have heard LNP members, like Michelle Landry and Matt Canavan, opposing the progressive coal royalties scheme. I repeat: they apparently oppose a scheme that ensures Queenslanders receive their fair share of the windfall profits being made by multinational miners benefiting from high coal prices. Queenslanders own those resources, and those progressive royalties are one of the reasons we can deliver free kindy, cost-of-living support and huge investment around Rockhampton. The LNP, it seems, would rather that money goes to shareholders overseas or to multimillionaire CEOs. I am looking forward to watching them try to explain that to voters in Rockhampton at the next election.

As usual, this budget also includes plenty of support for the Rockhampton Regional Council including, as I said, funding to build the Rockhampton to Mount Morgan water pipeline. There is also funding to cover the cost of carting water to Mount Morgan while the council works on getting the project up and running. The Palaszczuk Labor government regularly subsidises council projects through the Works for Queensland program and numerous other grants programs. I am afraid that occasionally that seems to breed a culture of expectation.

Again in this budget, health will see record funding of \$809 million, up \$46 million on last year. The staff of the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service do an amazing job, and I thank them for the work they do each and every day. The Acting 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—*

There is \$1 million out of a total spend of \$3.1 million to provide a Mental Wellbeing Safe Haven for Rockhampton.

We will continue to contribute to Queensland's economy by funding quality skills programs and opportunities, including free TAFE and apprenticeships for Central Queenslanders under 25 years of age in priority skills areas.

The Palaszczuk Government is serious about training opportunities and increased workforce participation through Skilling Queenslanders for Work. \$47.9 million has been allocated to develop skills and provide training to 5,265 people in CQ, with 3633 people having secured a direct job as a result of this program.

I have enjoyed attending the graduations where participants have graduated with new skills, experience and qualifications that have helped them break into jobs like Individual Support (Aged and Disability) care, horticulture, construction workforces or launch their own small business.

Each of these Certificate Courses build the participants' self-esteem and motivation as well as the general everyday skills that are needed in any workplace. It is great to hear these courses are fostering new small businesses, green thumbs and builders who are looking to contribute to the local economy.

The Back To Work, has provided \$35.3m in payments to 1420 employers in Central Qld to employ 3250 eligible unemployed jobseekers. This is a wonderful program that assists our unemployed gain jobs.

We all know how important education is to securing better life outcomes. This investment is \$74.8 million across Central Qld and supports the government's commitment to good jobs and better services.

It is essential that our schools are maintained and there will be \$1.1 million for school maintenance. There will also be \$1 million for North Rockhampton High School for security fencing, North Rockhampton Special school will receive \$3.8 million of a total spend of \$17 million for additional classrooms. Rockhampton Special School \$8.8 million out of a \$9.5 million spend to construct a new building for learning spaces and \$1.2 million to refurbish E Block. And one of my favourite schools, The Hall School will receive \$10 million towards their new hall out of a \$12.6 million spend and \$244,000 to construct a new multi-purpose court and fencing. Rockhampton State High School will receive \$454,000 to upgrade the tuckshop infrastructure, and Allenstown School will receive \$454,000 to upgrade their tuckshop facilities, Waraburra State School will receive \$1.3 million to refurbish their swimming pool, and the list goes on.

Across Rockhampton and Central Queensland we will continue to see an investment in our road infrastructure projects like the Bruce highway, duplication of lanes, intersections and bridge upgrades supporting local jobs and let's not forget the Rockhampton Ring Road in partnership with the federal government with major works to commence in the near future supporting hundreds of jobs.

We will see an infrastructure and upgrade total spend of \$10.2 million on Glenmore electricity substation.

Palaszczuk Government's support through the Works for Queensland and we have seen the Rockhampton Regional Council deliver projects like the Airport upgrade, pathways at the botanical gardens, upgrades to playground equipment, the replacement of the boardwalk along the Fitzroy River and many other projects. We have seen hundreds of jobs supported through this very important program across Rockhampton. Approximately \$42 million since 2015.

In this budget across Queensland is \$1.1 billion in funding for Qld's Big Housing Build. \$322 million for the quickstart construction program, \$452 million additional funding to deliver the existing social housing construction program and \$249 million to retain and upgrade social housing dwellings. Our \$2 billion housing investment fund is now delivering \$130 million each year.

Given my passion for the provision of housing services it is also great to see ongoing funding of \$7.1 million across CQ for specialist homelessness services.

There is so much more in this budget across other portfolios like Child Safety and our Police, Fire and Emergency services and Corrective Services portfolios and very importantly community organisations that provide support for the residents of Rockhampton and Central Queensland. I am pleased to be delivering a great budget for the people of the Rockhampton Electorate. This budget is all about good jobs, better services, and a great lifestyle for all Queenslanders.

I congratulate the Treasurer and Minister for Trade and Investment the Hon Cameron Dick on a budget for all Queenslanders.

I commend the bill to the House.