




Speech By
Charis Mullen

MEMBER FOR JORDAN

Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2023

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

 **Mrs MULLEN** (Jordan—ALP) (2.36 pm): I am very pleased to speak on the cognate bills and acknowledge my strong support for the state budget delivered by the Queensland Treasurer this week. This is a very strong budget, a budget that responds to the challenges facing Queenslanders right now whilst also investing in their future.

We are tackling the current cost-of-living pressures that are being felt right across our nation, in our state and in our neighbourhoods. The cost of groceries, fuel, mortgages or rent and utilities are all increasing and our government is determined to help where we can. We are supporting all Queenslanders through meaningful measures that will support their hip pocket when they need us the most.

The government is providing a record \$8.224 billion in concessions in 2023-24 to Queensland families and businesses. This is an increase of more than 21 per cent compared to 2022-23. We are providing the most significant electricity bill support package announced by any state or territory, more than doubling the size of the federally agreed support package for Queensland under the national Energy Bill Relief Fund.

As part of this package, all Queensland households will automatically receive a \$550 cost-of-living rebate on their electricity bills in 2023-24, while around 600,000 vulnerable households will benefit from a higher \$700 cost-of-living rebate. Once you add the \$372 rebate under the current Queensland electricity rebate scheme, vulnerable households will see total support for this group amount to \$1,072 in the next financial year. I know for seniors and pensioners in my electorate this will more than offset their electricity bill for the whole year. I look forward to meeting with my local seniors groups and sharing the good news with them over the next few months.

I have a fairly young electorate with the average age being around 29, and this includes many young families. I must say our free kindy announcement has already generated significant interest and support in my electorate. The announcement made by the Premier and the Minister for Education this week and backed in by this year's budget will see all families receive 15 hours of free kindy from January 2024 for all four-year-old Queensland children. We know this will not only further relieve cost-of-living pressures and improve access to early childhood education but also support greater economic participation for parents at a time when we really need them in the workforce as we face supply issues.

We are also providing more Fair Play vouchers for children aged zero to four for learn-to-swim activities, funding for school breakfast programs and more support for Foodbank which is supporting many of our local community centres with supplies for emergency food hampers.

It is because of our strong economic performance that we have been able to provide these important cost-of-living measures as well as increased funding for health, housing and community safety along with the critical infrastructure across all of Queensland. This is no accident. Our government made a deliberate policy decision last budget to introduce progressive coal royalties.

We waited with bated breath to hear whether the Leader of the Opposition would back in our progressive coal royalties, and we heard weasel words. We heard, 'Yes, the LNP will support the revenue measures in this year's budget.' Why can they not come out and say, 'We support the policy of progressive coal royalties?' We know that they voted for them last year, but since then they have distanced themselves from this decision. The Leader of the Opposition could not bring himself to even say the words 'coal royalties' in his speech. Queenslanders cannot, and should not, have any faith in the opposition when they cannot even utter the words. Queenslanders cannot, and should not, have any faith that in the private boardroom of the mining lobby they are not giving them a different story.

They have form. Their form is to cut, sack and sell so we cannot have any faith that they will not cut the important cost-of-living measures we have announced—tell pensioners and seniors they will no longer get support for their electricity bills. They say they support free kindy. If they do not, they will be disappointing thousands of families across Queensland who are excited about this opportunity for their young children. Will they cut the breakfast program that so many children are relying on? Will they cut the infrastructure spend on building our new hospitals and expanding our major new regional hospitals across the state, sacrificing hundreds of new hospital beds that are vitally needed in our health system? Will they prune frontline staff again? They certainly have form on this—sacking nurses, teachers and police officers, to name a few. Hopefully the announcement of a contemporary workforce plan for health staff includes not calling regional health staff 'duds'.

The budget reply certainly had plenty of personal attacks but very little substance. I certainly did not hear anything about the significant energy plan that we are progressing. This is all under threat if those opposite take control of the coffers. I know on this side of the House we will do everything in our power to ensure that this does not happen and that we continue to deliver for our communities now and into the future.

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—

Health Services

Deputy Speaker, our Government continues to invest in the health of Queenslanders.

Like many across the nation and around the world—Queensland's health system is facing greater demand and pressure than ever before.

Driven by our growing and ageing population, and compounded by pressures on primary, aged and disability care—we know the solutions are not simple and require new investment as well as reform and innovation across the health system.

The 2023-24 State Budget is continuing to build on the work of our Queensland Health and Hospitals Plan released last year which not only addresses demand pressures in the short term but will deliver long-term improvements.

Speaker, I'm proud to be part of a Government that understands the importance of resourcing our health system properly.

The 2023-24 Queensland Budget will provide a record \$25.8 billion for the Queensland health system to help meet growing demand—this operational funding will see the deployment of more doctors, nurses and paramedics.

This funding which includes an uplift of \$2.888 billion over 5 years to address demand and cost pressures and support programs and initiatives targeting improving ambulance responsiveness and reducing ramping, addressing pressures on emergency departments, reducing wait times for surgery and specialist clinics as well as boosting women's health care and mental health care.

In the Ipswich and Logan regions that cover my electorate of Jordan, we are seeing the significant investment to increase bed capacity and to ensure patients are continuing to receive quality care whilst reducing the pressures on our busy emergency departments.

In Logan, we are seeing a \$530 million investment to deliver the Logan Hospital Stage 2 expansion project, which will see an additional 112 beds with a contract recently awarded to John Holland.

In Ipswich, Stage 1 of the \$146.3 million master-planned expansion of Ipswich Hospital has delivered a 26 bed-ward and refurbished space for allied health, oncology and outpatient care, as well a brand new state-of-the-art MRI suite.

And we recently announced the successful tender of Stage 2 of the Ipswich Hospital—a further \$710 million that will deliver around 200 additional beds.

Out \$91 million Acute Mental Health Facility in the Hospital Precinct which is nearing completion and will open this year—50 beds in a contemporary environment for best practice mental health care and assessment, recovery and rehabilitation services.

A brand new \$24.5 million Alcohol and Other Drugs withdrawal management and rehabilitation facility—providing 10 withdrawal management beds and 35 residential rehabilitation beds.

Our new public hospital in Springfield which we are delivering in partnership with Mater Health Services—another 174 public overnight and same-day beds.

Intensive care unit, much needed emergency department, maternity services and additional high level clinical services—all now under construction.

And of course, our nearly completed South Ripley Satellite Hospital.

A fantastic new healthcare facility which will ease demand on Ipswich Hospital and provide care closer to home for residents in the growth corridor—dealing with outpatient services as well as minor injuries and illnesses.

And, in even better news this Satellited Hospital will also include a Modular Sub-Acute expansion which will boost capacity with 90 additional overnight sub-acute beds, freeing up capacity for acute patients in other, larger public hospitals in our region.

Schools Funding

Deputy Speaker, I'm also very pleased to see the significant funding for education and early childhood in this year's Queensland Budget—a record \$17.8 billion, an 8.8% increase from the 2022-23 budget figure.

In Jordan we are seeing investment of \$42.5 million for school infrastructure right across the electorate.

We continue to progress a new building at Flagstone State School, a \$10.9 million build along with a new drop and go facility which should be completed this year.

At Spring Mountain State School, construction is about to begin (this week in fact) on two new buildings and this year's Budget provides more than \$23 million to progress this build.

And Stage 2 at our newest Jordan School—Woogaroo Creek State School is due for completion with \$9.78 million allocated in this Year's Budget.

I'm also pleased to see new funding for a number of our schools—\$10 million for new classrooms at Camira State School, \$2.2 million for new classrooms at Woodcrest State College and we are progressing \$900,000 worth of work for refurbishments at Greenbank State School.

Deputy Speaker, a slowing of enrolments has meant that our Senior Campus for Springfield Central State High School has been delayed, but I have strongly advocated for upgrades and more classrooms at the current campus and this year's Budget will deliver \$38 million to progress this along with additional funding to be made available for further land acquisitions if required.

Infrastructure

Deputy Speaker, we continue to see strong investment in infrastructure.

I continue to advocate for more investment for the Centenary Motorway—which is a very important connector road for my communities in Greater Springfield.

In a few months we will see the finalisation of the \$15 million Centenary Highway/Logan Motorway Interchange Upgrade—a significant and much-anticipated project for my electorate which will help reduce congestion at this well-known hotspot.

We are progressing a major upgrade of Exit 32 southbound on the Centenary Motorway, expanding this off-ramp from two to four lanes which will be further supported by the Ipswich City Council's upgrade of Springfield Greenbank Arterial Road and a new signalised intersection.

It's great to see early works underway on the duplication of the Centenary Bridge at Jindalee and planning studies continue for the Darra to Toowong and Darra to Yamanto sections of the Centenary Motorway.

There is also further funding to progress work on Exit 33 and Council's duplication of the Sinnathamby Boulevard Bridge and we are supporting Council's Springfield Parkway Upgrade Stage 2.

And, in very good news for our Ipswich communities, Deputy Speaker, this year's Budget will see the Queensland Government matching the Federal Government funding of \$3.375 million for a Detailed Business Case for the Ipswich to Springfield Rail Line.

This is a significant step forward in progressing this vital infrastructure project for our Ipswich region.

It is a project that all Ipswich Labor MPs have been advocating for and we are very pleased to see this funding announcement.

And, we continue to progress rail corridor planning—for the Salisbury to Beaudesert Rail Line Business Case (jointly funded with the Federal Government), another very important project for the southern part of my electorate.

Housing

Our Government continues to recognise the importance of housing—affordable housing, housing for vulnerable people, for families escaping domestic and family violence.

The Queensland Budget will provide increased funding of \$1.1 billion for the delivery and supply of social housing across Queensland—which will help to meet higher construction costs and to boost the Quickstarts Queensland program target by 500 homes—bringing it to 3,265 social housing commencements by 30 June 2025.

Our \$2 billion Housing Investment Fund will continue to boost housing supply and increase housing and homelessness support across Queensland.

To date, over 1,500 homes have been approved for support

I'm particularly proud of our Housing Investment Fund that calls on developers, institutional investors, registered community housing providers and eligible government entities to bring forward innovative proposals to add new social homes and affordable housing builds, refits or refurbishments across Queensland.

This is exactly the types of partnerships and projects we wanted to see through HIF—and I know the Government is currently evaluating a number of new proposals through the recent HIF Private Site Invitation which closed in May 2023.

Trade and Investment

As the Assistant Minister for Treasury, I have been really pleased to be supporting the Treasurer through the important portfolio of trade and investment—which has never been more important.

I continue to highlight terrific Queensland companies achieving international export success with the support of our Trade and Investment Queensland team and this year have visited companies across Brisbane, Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Townsville and Mackay.

Deputy Speaker, we are exporting so much more—in fact, in 2022 Queensland's exports hit \$137.2 billion—the largest ever calendar year total.

The Queensland Trade and Investment Strategy 2022-2032 continues to be progressed—a \$150 million strategy which will ensure that we continue to support our exporters as they reach for new markets and boost sales where they are already currently trading.

Conclusion

Speaker, in conclusion I would like to congratulate the Queensland Treasurer on the delivery of the 2023-24 Budget—I know just how challenging it is to meet the needs of our growing state and to ensure we are continuing to fund frontline services, to fund infrastructure and our growing health and education systems.

May I also acknowledge and thank the Acting Under Treasurer, Maryanne Kelly and the many Treasury officers who worked so diligently and professionally to meet the Government's requirements of delivering the State Budget.

We have continued to invest in Queenslanders—to meet their current needs and to support their future aspirations.

I commend the Bills to the House.