




Speech By
Christopher Whiting

MEMBER FOR BANCROFT

Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2023

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

 **Mr WHITING** (Bancroft—ALP) (3.19 pm): I rise to speak in support of the appropriation bills. There are two issues that I want to discuss initially. The first is obviously the cost-of-living measures that are being delivered in this budget. They are outstanding. There will be a \$550 electricity rebate for every Queensland household, that is, over two million households. For vulnerable Queenslanders the rebate will be \$700 per household. If we add that to the existing \$328 rebate, that is over \$1,000 in electricity rebates. For many older householders, that would just about cover their electricity bills. What a great initiative from the Palaszczuk government. I congratulate the government for the \$650 rebate for eligible small businesses in Queensland. They will get that automatic rebate on their electricity bills in the next financial year. That is another outstanding cost-of-living measure.

I am really happy about the 15 hours per week of free kindy for Queensland families that will be delivered by this budget. That means some families will save up to \$4,600 a year in another great cost-of-living measure. I am also really pleased to see an expansion of the FairPlay voucher system so that eligible children aged up to four years can have swimming lessons. We all know how important being able to swim is in Queensland. This is not only a cost-of-living measure; it can help save lives in our state. For regional Queenslanders who need to travel for essential health care, the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme will be increased by \$70 million over four years. Once again, that is a great cost-of-living measure that will also help save lives. We have heard that from July Queenslanders replacing their driver's licence will pay just \$35.

One thing I really appreciate, and we have not heard too much about it so far, is the \$2.7 million to expand school breakfast programs, which are such a crucial and underestimated part of our school landscape. Recently I visited two breakfast programs in schools in my area. I could see what a benefit it was for not only the kids but also the teachers, support workers and parents as they interacted. At Deception Bay State School the program is so important that they have implemented it five days a week because it gives their kids a great start to the day, making it a great day to learn.

We know that the state government understands the pressures that Queensland families face. I know it because every day I talk to people in the shops, at hockey and when they walk into my electorate office for a chat. That is why we are making cost-of-living relief measures the centrepiece of this budget.

I will not speak for too much longer but I do want to talk about a couple of aspects of the budget that struck me while I was listening to opposition members speak. I was waiting for someone from the LNP to say something that is relevant to the diverse sweep of Queensland that we have today and to talk about the actual policies they might have to make Queenslanders' lives better—and I mean real policies and not a collection of slogans. Once again, what we heard today was virtually nothing. What little they have said has shown how irrelevant they are.

Yesterday and this morning I was struck by the very fact that the LNP just do not get modern Queensland. Their view of Queensland is very narrow. It is based in the 20th or, God forbid, even the 19th century. They have said nothing about the renewable economy, nothing about Skilling

Queenslanders for Work and nothing about a vision for the mass urban centres that will be built in our state in the years to come. In fact, dare I say, I do not think they have made the transition to the 21st century very well at all, but we know they have always been anti trans.

The Leader of the Opposition has said that he wants to build hope over fear. It is true that they want to appeal to people's hope because that is how they suck people in. They use people's hope to get their trust, they harvest their stories and use them for their own political gain and then they just drop those people after they have used them. That is the LNP business model in Queensland politics. It is a heartless tabloid model. They use people's hope and let them down.

The Acting Speaker has reviewed and approved the rest of my budget speech for incorporation. As such, I ask that the remainder of my speech be incorporated into the *Record of Proceedings*.

The speech read as follows—

The Palaszczuk Government continues to invest in the communities in Bancroft with a range of welcome capital projects.

The new Moreton Bay Central Fire and Rescue Station is already under construction in Steel St, Narangba. This new and permanent station, built at a cost of \$6.8million will cover the suburbs of Mango Hill, North Lakes and Deception Bay. The roof is on, the internal fit-out has started, and expressions of interest are already out for QFES personnel to work in the station.

Investment in local sporting facilities continues as we head towards the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

- There is \$140,000 for new lights for Deception Bay Football club as part of the Activate! Queensland program. These much-needed lights will allow more matches for local teams and more training.
- There is \$250,000 for a new amenities block at Caboolture Clay Target Club as part of the Activate! Queensland program. This amenities block is long-awaited and much needed at this large and active sports shooting complex.
- There is \$180,000 for the Deception Bay Athletics Centre as part of the Activate! Queensland program. This will contribute to their treasured project of build an artificial running track at this centre, which hosts one of Queensland's leading Little Athletics Clubs.

I am really pleased to see a continued investment in our local schools, especially our older schools at Deception Bay.

- Deception Bay state High School (\$455,000 in new funding for playground and tuckshop upgrades, \$6M of \$8M for a new block, \$100,000 in new funding for covered walkways),
- Deception Bay State School (\$200K in new funding for block refurbishment of H, I and OLA blocks, \$4M of \$8M for a new hall), and
- Deception Bay North State School (\$200,000 in new funding for block refurbishment of SC block)

The massive investment in local roads and highway continues in this Budget. The Bruce Highway upgrade between Pine Rivers and Caboolture will see \$56 million allocated in State government funding going towards construction, project scoping, design and planning of these upgrades, including the Dohles Rocks Road on and off ramps.

This year's funding will see the completion of our local satellite hospitals. \$79 million will finish the Pine Rivers Satellite Hospital and Kallangur, and \$79 million will also go the new satellite hospital at Caboolture.

There is \$11.6M to deliver new social housing under the Housing Investment Growth Fund (HIGF) capital grants (construction) budget item for Bancroft.