




Speech By  
**Hon. Glenn Butcher**

**MEMBER FOR GLADSTONE**

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Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2023

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

 **Hon. GJ BUTCHER** (Gladstone—ALP) (Minister for Regional Development and Manufacturing and Minister for Water) (12.23 pm): I congratulate the Treasurer on his budget. It is a budget focused on cost-of-living relief, creating jobs and delivering Queensland's largest ever infrastructure pipeline, the Big Build. Regional Queensland is a big focus in this year's budget. The budget contains cost-of-living relief for every Queensland household. It continues our biggest hospital infrastructure program, with more job-creating projects from Coolangatta through to the cape. Of the \$20.3 billion for the Big Build, 65 per cent of that is going to regional Queensland, supporting around 38,500 jobs. The Big Build means more good jobs and better services right across the state because the Palaszczuk Labor government is doing what Queenslanders need us to do and that is provide good jobs, better services and support for our great lifestyle.

We know that cost-of-living pressure is something being experienced by Queensland families. It is tough. That is why this budget is putting money back in the pockets of Queenslanders using our publicly owned assets, delivering a dividend for Queenslanders: \$550 off every household power bill; \$1,072 off power bills for pensioners and concession card holders. There will also be free kindy for all kids, saving families around \$4,600 a year.

I have been listening to the speeches of those opposite and I have not heard them say once that they would keep progressive coal royalties, which are delivering \$7 billion to our budget. How can those opposite support these projects and this funding in their electorates if there is going to be a \$7 billion black hole in the budget? That means they will cancel the Big Build and cut frontline services right across Queensland just like Campbell Newman did. They have already announced they want to cut \$10 billion from infrastructure. The member for Chatsworth has admitted to a secret plan for \$2 billion in cuts and he has backed it in since he made that comment.

**Mr Head** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Callide, order!

**Mr BUTCHER:** Before I talk about my portfolio areas I would like to take a moment to highlight what this budget means for my local community of Gladstone. Gladstone is an industrial powerhouse of Queensland and this budget delivers investment in our income generating assets and industries. Everywhere I go people are talking to me about hydrogen and renewables and how Gladstone is at the forefront of these developments so it was great to see in the budget that has been delivered over \$370 million to progress the development of renewable projects right across Central Queensland, in particular Gladstone. This includes investments in CleanCo and CS Energy—our publicly owned energy generators—only possible because we kept our assets in public hands.

There are some more big ticket items for Gladstone that I will get to shortly, but I wanted to start by highlighting some of the smaller announcements—in dollar figures—which are initiatives that will have a big impact on our community: \$3 million has been allocated for roof replacement, generator

upgrade and the refurbishment of the pathology lab at the Gladstone Hospital; \$15.3 million for the construction of a new classroom and refurbishment of Q Block at Gladstone State High School; \$11 million for Toolooa High School to construct a new building and a new hall at that fantastic school. I acknowledge Principal Harrison for his work.

**Mr Head** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Callide!

**Mr BUTCHER:** Central State School students will also benefit from a new hall to the tune of \$5.8 million; \$130,000 has been allocated to upgrade the accessible amenities at Benaraby State School—I know how much they have been looking forward to that.

**Mr Head** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Callide, I will give you a warning if I have to ask you to come to order one more time.

**Mr BUTCHER:** Thank you. So rude, the member for Callide. Gladstone students will also benefit from funding to continue the school breakfast program.

**Mr Head** interjected.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Member for Callide, you are now warned under the standing orders.

**Mr BUTCHER:** For those listening and watching, that is the rudeness of the member for Callide. That is your local member and he should be ashamed of himself. The amount of \$865,000 has been allocated to build a housing and homeless hub in Gladstone that will offer food, shelter, clothing and vital support services to our people. I make particular mention of the increased accommodation and fuel subsidy under the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme for Gladstone locals who need it most. But there is more: \$115.4 million to the great Gladstone Port; alternative port access road funding locked in; \$83 million for the Gladstone State Development Area; \$20.8 million for Powerlink upgrades; and \$2.6 million to the Clinton Industrial Estate.

I do not want to run out of time so I will turn to my portfolio area where there is so much going on. Our government's track record on water infrastructure is strong, investing \$4.5 billion and creating 2,940 jobs since 2015.

In this budget, our big water build continues with: increased investment in Rookwood Weir; a down payment on raising the Burdekin Falls Dam; the Toowoomba to Warwick pipeline is locked in; the Fitzroy to Gladstone pipeline is locked in; the Paradise Dam is locked in; and the state funding for the Mount Morgan pipeline is locked in. In his budget reply, the Leader of the Opposition whinged about the cost of Rookwood Weir. Well, guess what? We are building that water infrastructure. It is not cheap but it is an investment in the future for our irrigators. Every time we hear the LNP whinge, which is often, about how much something costs it means they are going to cut it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Acting Speaker has reviewed and approved 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—*

As I was saying earlier, the people of Gladstone will benefit from some very important initiatives aimed at tackling the cost of living and improving services, including:

- \$550 off every household power bill
- \$1,072 off power bills for pensioner and concession card holders
- And \$650 off power bills for eligible small businesses

Back to my portfolio, the Palaszczuk Labor Government continues to deliver for regional Queensland. More than \$1.7 billion of funding for water infrastructure and planning, supporting water security projects right across the state.

I'm proud that this Budget has allocated an additional \$440 million for one of the state's most important projects, making safe and raising our largest dam, the Burdekin Falls Dam.

This project is using our progressive coal royalties and reinvesting them in our regions.

If those opposite had their way—progressive coal royalties would go, and infrastructure projects like this would be cut.

Once complete, the two-metre raising will unlock more water and more opportunities for North Queensland—up to 150,000 megalitres of new water allocations.

This project will future proof North Queensland's water security, growing existing industries like agriculture and delivering opportunities for emerging industries like hydrogen.

Not only that, the project will also provide more than 350 jobs during construction.

This year's Budget also progresses the Paradise Dam Improvement Project, providing \$116.4 million this year to continue pre-construction activities.

This work will support around 250 jobs during construction and will deliver long-term water security for the Bundaberg region.

In Central Queensland, the Palaszczuk Labor Government is increasing the investment in Rookwood Weir, with \$156.7 million to be spent this year. This project is supporting 320 local jobs right now.

Like many others around the country, we are seeing a range of factors adding to financial pressures on our projects, and Rookwood Weir is no different.

Rookwood Weir has faced six wet weather inundation events—a product of an unprecedented level of rain in the wet seasons that had a significant impact on construction timeframes and costs.

Despite all these challenges, Rookwood Weir is on track for completion by the end of the year.

The Big Build is happening right across the state. The Palaszczuk Labor Government is a step closer to bringing water security to the Southern Downs.

The Toowoomba to Warwick Pipeline project has \$300 million locked in. In this budget we have \$13.4 million spent this year to support pre-construction works.

What's not to like? More water security for Toowoomba and the Southern Downs and more jobs for regional Queenslanders—in fact, more than 400 jobs.

In addition, Toowoomba Regional Council will receive \$15 million over four years to deliver treated water to the communities of Cambooya, Greenmount, Nobby and Clifton.

Southern Downs Regional Council will also benefit from this game-changing project, receiving \$8.5 million over five years for network monitoring to reduce losses and leaks in its water network.

The Gladstone Area Water Board will spend \$548.5 million for the construction of the Fitzroy to Gladstone Pipeline. This project will create 400 local jobs with more than 25 apprenticeships.

This 117-kilometre pipeline will run from the Lower Fitzroy River in Rockhampton and connect to Gladstone Area Water Board's existing water network at Yarwun.

The pipeline is just the sort of project recommended by the Bradfield Regional Assessment and Development expert panel—investing in water infrastructure closer to where the water falls, using local water resources effectively and developing regional water grids.

If that sounds familiar, it's because the Bradfield Panel recommended this for Central Queensland.

It brings us more urban water security. It supports established and existing industry. And it secures more water for future focused job creating, clean industries. Like renewables and green hydrogen for Gladstone.

Speaking of green hydrogen and renewables, the budget also allocates \$8 million over two years for a detailed business case to look into sustainable long-term water for a growing green hydrogen industry in the Gladstone region.

That's the kind of long-term and forward planning that this Government is delivering.

I am pleased to advise the Palaszczuk Labor Government has allocated \$11.7 million over three years for a First Nations Water Strategy.

This funding will strengthen engagement with First Nations communities. It will also promote cultural inclusion when it comes to water planning across Queensland.

This follows the passing of the Path to Treaty Bill earlier this year, where the Palaszczuk Labor Government outlined a firm commitment to build stronger partnerships with First Nations Peoples.

First Nations Peoples will be empowered to participate in decisions about water that has also played a critical role in their lives—in culture, custom and identity.

There are so many more projects in this Budget that are vital to keep water flowing across regional Queensland.

The Palaszczuk Labor Government is committed to making sure all Queenslanders have safe and reliable water and sewerage services no matter where they live, so we've allocated \$2.6 million for an Urban Water Risk Assessment to identify drinking water and water security challenges across remote and regional communities.

Working with Local Governments to identify and tackle challenges before they become problems.

\$22.8 million will continue the 15 per cent irrigation price discount. This is an important measure and will help keep irrigation prices as low as possible for eligible growers, and helping keep food prices low on the shelves.

\$7 million has been allocated for Cloncurry's water supply through the Community Service Obligation.

\$10.8 million has been allocated as part of the Palaszczuk Government's \$40.4 million contribution to the Mount Morgan Pipeline.

Our support for the State Council of River Trusts continues with \$300,000 allocated to support the important work of River Improvement Trusts across Queensland.

Queenslanders can count on the Palaszczuk Labor Government to deliver water projects needed across the state, no matter where you live. Our record is now more than \$5.2 billion since 2015.

To be clear, we are pro water infrastructure. We're a government that's delivering water infrastructure across Queensland. But we need to make sure projects stack up, environmentally and economically.

Building our Regions is a program that I'm particularly passionate about. Under the Big Build, Building our Regions will continue to strengthen and improve water and sewerage infrastructure and planning projects throughout the state with a \$28 million investment this year, part of the \$70 million in total that has been allocated for Round 6.

The Building our Regions program has already supported 3,180 construction jobs, and this continued investment will create even more regional jobs.

These vital, though unglamorous, projects ensure regional Queenslanders have efficient, reliable water and sewerage infrastructure now and into the future. It is also a crucial funding program that helps local governments maintain their infrastructure.

With these investments, Queenslanders can rest assured that urban water, sewerage and irrigation water supplies are stable, safe and affordable.

The hugely successful Made in Queensland Grant Program continues with \$32.2 million invested in Queensland manufacturers, helping them adopt new technology, gain international competitiveness, productivity and innovation.

Made in Queensland has created and supported more than 5,400 jobs, and the investment in this budget will ensure even more manufacturing jobs are made in Queensland.

I want to also make mention of our Manufacturing Hubs and the incredible work they deliver. Our six Manufacturing Hubs are supporting businesses to adopt the machinery, technology and processes they need to advance their businesses.

The budget invests \$16.7 million towards the Manufacturing Hubs Grant Program because we know that that this financial support helps grow good, secure jobs, in workshops rights across Queensland.

Together, the Palaszczuk Government's investment in these two successful grant programs has seen more than 6,400 jobs supported and created.

We expect this to rise to more than 9,200 jobs on completion of all projects. The projects will generate more than \$165 million in private sector investment for our state.

I'd like to pause to reflect on that. That's more than 9,200 jobs created and retained by our Queensland based manufacturers by the time all the currently funded projects are completed. And we know jobs in manufacturing are good, secure and well-paid.

The Advanced Robotics for Manufacturing (ARM) Hub will also receive \$7.2 million over four years to continue its vital work in leading edge robotics for manufacturers.

This ARM Hub has had a stellar year, celebrating its third birthday and even helped a local startup manufacturer send their product into space—the sky isn't the limit, it's just the start for Queensland manufacturers.

This Budget and these priorities make it clear we are serious about manufacturing in Queensland and there is no better place to manufacture than Queensland.

This is a Big Build that delivers big for Queenslanders no matter where they live.

Will those opposite support this measure that has delivered so much for Queensland?

As Minister for Regional Development, Manufacturing and Water, I'm proud to stand behind this Budget and what it promises for regional Queensland—that's good jobs, better services and a great lifestyle today, and into the future.