




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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

 **Ms PUGH** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (9.17 pm): I rise with great excitement tonight to speak about this year's budget. I am going to start with one of my favourite announcements—free kindy! I have often said that the member for McConnel is like the Oprah Winfrey of the Queensland parliament and this year she has certainly delivered the goods. You get free kindy, you get free kindy—every Queensland kid gets free kindy! I have to tell members that there is a lot of excitement in my community about free kindy for every Queensland kid who is starting kindy in 2024 and beyond. Kindy will be free for eligible-aged children who attend a government approved program, offering free kindy from 1 January 2024, which members might remember is, in fact, my daughter Elyse's birthday. We know that a quality kindergarten program offers lifelong benefits. Kindergarten participation encourages a love of learning and leads to positive long-term outcomes for children by playing a crucial role in shaping a child's development and preparing them for future success. I think we can all agree that is so important.

Importantly, families will benefit from this free kindy whether or not they attend a sessional kindergarten or a kindergarten in a long day care program. Free kindy is offered for 15 a hours a week in the kindergarten program—meaning 600 hours a year—delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher. As a mum of two kids who have already benefited from kindy, and another who will benefit in the years to come, I am so proud that our government is doing this.

I want to touch briefly on the flood recovery programs and update the House on the expenditure from last year's budget that has affected my community, particularly in Oxley and Corinda, where over 400 homes were substantially impacted by floods. I can update the House that in my electorate alone a total of 78 homes have now been bought back. Hundreds more homes will be retrofitted and raised up—some cases have been approved already, with many more still to come. This has been a life-changing program. I place on record tonight my appreciation for both of the ministers who are continually working with my community on this important program. It has made such a difference in my community.

Of course, it would not be a parliamentary sitting week if I did not update the House on how the Centenary Motorway works are going. Members would know that major works are now underway on the Jindalee bridge—a project on which we are partnering with the Albanese government. I have been working alongside my good mate the federal member for Oxley, Milton Dick.

A government member: Good bloke.

Ms PUGH: He is a good bloke; I take that interjection. This critically important project is just the first step in a total corridor upgrade between Darra and Toowong. Earlier this year Transport and Main Roads conducted vital community consultation to identify the community's priorities for the next stage of works. In the coming months we will see the feedback collated and presented to the community again for final consideration before options are selected for advancement by Transport and Main Roads.

I do not have to tell members of this House just how excited I am about the works on the Jindalee bridge and how excited I am to see the future options being put on the table for the entire corridor in the western suburbs, which is growing at a rate of knots. There is a lot happening in that space economically. We need to make sure we get that corridor developed so that those jobs and those communities can continue to grow and continue to thrive.

In the time I have remaining to me, can I say how disappointed I have been to hear the opposition whingeing and whining about the Centenary Motorway—complaining about the cost increase that has of course come as a result of factors that are increasing all kinds of costs in construction right around the world. They have put it on their list. We do not know exactly what that list means, but people in my electorate know what happens to road projects in Mount Ommaney when the LNP get into government. Last time they cut the Sumners Road overpass. We built it. It was budgeted to cost \$80 million. In fact, we brought it in under budget—at \$65 million—and six months early. It is a fantastic bit of kit. My community will not stand by and watch that kind of thing happen again.

I congratulate the Treasurer and the Premier on a bonza budget that delivers cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders and vital infrastructure upgrades for the Mount Ommaney electorate. I commend the budget to the House.