




Speech By  
**Les Walker**

**MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA**

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Record of Proceedings, 15 June 2023

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

 **Mr WALKER** (Mundingburra—ALP) (11.14 pm): I rise to speak on the 2023-24 Queensland state budget, a budget for all Queenslanders. First, I want to thank the Premier and the Treasurer for an amazing budget that really sets up this state for an exceptionally bright and exciting future. I also want to thank all the ministers I have continually met with to advocate for the infrastructure and services that the people of Mundingburra need and want. As a first-term member of the Palaszczuk Labor government I can say that a lot has been achieved for my electorate of Mundingburra, the city of Townsville and the region.

Cost of living has been a deliberate focus in this budget, and rightly so. That is what Labor governments do. In this budget is the biggest electricity bill support package in the nation. There is a \$550 cost-of-living rebate on all Queensland household electricity bills. A \$700 cost-of-living rebate on electricity bills for vulnerable households plus a further \$372 under the Queensland electricity rebate scheme brings total rebates for Queenslanders doing it the toughest to \$1,072 over the next financial year. There is a \$650 rebate on electricity bills in the 2023-24 financial year for around 205,000 eligible small businesses to help cut the cost of doing business here in Queensland. There is another \$70 million for other initiatives to keep costs down for households and enable more choice and greater energy equity.

Free kindy for four-year-olds represents an excellent start to a young person's education and a smart investment in a young person's future and Queensland's future—a saving for Queensland families of \$4,600. Free learn-to-swim vouchers will help improve the safety of young Queenslanders and also improve the health and confidence of our young people. This is another initiative that helps keep young Queenslanders safe.

There is more for my electorate of Mundingburra when it comes to education. Minister Grace Grace has supported my community over the past 2½ years with major works and upgrades right across the electorate. I thank the minister. I will outline some of the infrastructure and resources that will be provided over the coming financial year for the electorate of Mundingburra. The most exciting and a huge win is the start this financial year of a new school hall for William Ross State High School. This is an especially important piece of infrastructure for that school and the community.

I will rattle off some of the schools and what they have received in this budget: Aitkenvale State School, \$450,000 to refurbish H block, \$225,000 through the school infrastructure enhancement program to refurbish amenities block AS and \$50,000 to commence the enhancement of blocks D, B and C; Annandale State School, \$650,000 to refurbish block F; Cranbrook State School, \$400,000 to refurbish block PS; Currajong State School, \$200,000 to commence the refurbishment of block A; and Townsville Community Learning Centre, a state special school doing exceptional work and about to have the official opening of the school hall and learning space, another \$254,000 for the middle school playground. William Ross State High School also gets a further \$40,000 for an automotive education

shed/workshop space. Aitkenvale State School will also get another \$203,000 for a playground and tuckshop upgrade. One of the most in-need schools in the seat of Mundingburra, Vincent State School, gets a playground and tuckshop upgrade at a cost of \$281,000.

With regard to health, I want to publicly thank Minister Yvette D'Ath and the Minister for Health, Shannon Fentiman, for the excellent work and the outcome for Townsville and North Queensland with the \$530 million investment—over half a billion dollars—for the Townsville University Hospital for 143 new hospital beds, new operating theatres, new rooftop helipad and more. This is on top of the recently opened new 33-bed acute admissions unit which supports the emergency department. I want the other side to hear that: we have already opened up another 33 beds and there are another 143 coming. We are not talking about it; we are delivering. Mr Deputy Speaker Lister, 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—*

Crime

Mr Speaker,

We will continually attack the issue of crime with \$101.6 million Youth Justice Investments to boost police resources to tackle youth crime, as part of the governments total funding package of \$446.4 million over five years.

Mr Speaker,

This also includes extra funding of \$185.5 million over five years to the Department of Youth Justice. Also includes funding for Youth Co-Responder Teams, Intensive Care Management, Specialist Youth Crime Rapid Response Squad and On Country programs.

Mr Speaker, \$87.5 million for police recruitment initiatives, \$56 million for PCYC "Back to Basics" initiatives and for new and improved infrastructure in key locations.

Roads,

Mr Speaker,

The Townsville Connector Road Project, better known as Stuart Drive is well and truly underway with early works commenced and the tender to soon be awarded. This is a game changer for those who use this road on a daily basis. This project also includes upgraded Active Transport.

Housing

Mr Speaker,

The Palaszczuk Labor State government is spending an additional \$322 million to expand the QuickStart's Queensland social housing construction program by an additional five hundred homes.

Mr Speaker,

An average \$130 million every year will be invested from the \$2 billion Housing Investment Fund to achieve affordable and improved social housing outcomes.

Mr Speaker,

We are seeing social housing is being built across the seat of Mundingburra as we speak. Eighteen units on Ross River Road, sixteen, two bedroom and two, four-bedroom units, another forty, one-bedroom units at the Pimlico Youth Hub, just to name a few.

Mr Speaker,

There is so much in this budget that benefits the people in my seat and across Townsville I could go on for hours.

Like I said earlier Mr Speaker, this is an excellent budget and a budget for every Queenslanders, and I commend the budget to the House.