




Speech By
Robert Skelton

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Record of Proceedings, 29 November 2023

MOTION

Sunshine Coast

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (5.41 pm): I rise in support of the government's amended motion. I want to address some of the things that the member for Ninderry said in his contribution. As far as Meals on Wheels in Nambour are concerned, they received a huge grant from the state government this year to increase their infrastructure. As far as the petition for Kenilworth and Imbil is concerned, it is community generated. The community want them back. There are some complexities around that issue because they have a specific police officer in mind. I am not going to go into those details, because it is not for me to say.

Mr Crisafulli interjected.

Mr SKELTON: No. I take that interjection from the member for Broadwater. It is an internal police matter. It is a legal matter—you know, you do not interfere.

Crime rates have been steadily decreasing over the past five years on the Sunshine Coast thanks in large part to the Palaszczuk government's crackdown on serious crime and repeat offenders. In Nicklin, the QPS have presided over a sustained reduction in crime with the community, and I have consistently lobbied the Queensland Police Service for regular patrols and mobile police beats, which are now both commonplace in the electorate.

Last year we opened a brand new police station and we have another one underway at Cooroy. The staffing issues involving the Queensland police are to do with long-term sick leave and other such things—which a former member should know that these positions cannot be filled against. Again, I will not comment anymore on that.

Just this morning we have announced another 1,450 police officers are being added to police stations across Queensland. This comes in addition to the record \$3.28 billion we already invested into policing services in the 2023-24 budget.

Furthermore, the Sunshine Coast police have announced today that they are taking coordinated action to enhance safety over the Christmas period, with high-visibility operations focused on high-risk locations like shopping centres, public parks and transport hubs. We have invested another \$56 million statewide into PCYCs, including \$2 million to the Sunshine Coast PCYC in my electorate. This means more Project Booyah and more breaking the cycle which is excellent.

Youth crime prevention is a central focus of the government and we are investing \$450 million over five years to tackle youth crime. This includes high-visibility police controls, a youth crime rapid response squad, youth co-responder teams, additional early action groups and police liaison officers. In January we passed Jack's Law, which expanded wandering powers to all safe night precincts and transport hubs, and network safety officers are patrolling the buses and trains in the electorate. We have strengthened all our laws to boost punishments for anyone committing crime.

We know that rental increases are occurring across the country. That is why the government is delivering record investment in housing. We have introduced laws to restrict rent rises to once per year. These are cost-of-living measures.

We are building and unlocking more homes with the help of the government's Housing Investment Fund including at Yandina, where we opened 26 new social housing units in partnership with Coast2Bay, and at Nambour, where we have delivered social housing including \$1.4 million for safe and secure housing for up to 21 at-risk young people at a time—that is, supported housing. On the wider Sunshine Coast, we are buying up the properties under the old NRAS scheme to keep unlocking supply. This all contributes to relief on cost-of-living pressures.

When it comes to infrastructure, we have delivered the \$300 million Maroochydore-Mons Road interchange. We have opened the Nambour station park-and-ride, adding another 50 parking spaces at the Nambour station and a footpath for pedestrians. We are disappointed with the federal government. There can be no doubt about that. The member for Caloundra and I have made innumerable representations to the minister's office as well as their staff from the outset—as soon as they got into government. Unfortunately, they have to make some cuts because of the tremendous deficit left by the government before them.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr SKELTON: They will not borrow. They are happy to make some cuts. When it comes to cost of living, we are all over the Climate Smart Energy Savers rebate and pensioner concession cards that will save them money. I ask all MPs to assist their small businesses and pensioners to get the rebates they deserve. It is an excellent program and contributes significantly to lowering their cost of living. It is up to all members to make sure people know about Free Kindy and what that brings to the table. There are so many cost-of-living savings delivered by this government. It is not some rolled gold magical mystery tour that those opposite present.

(Time expired)