




Speech By
Hon. Scott Stewart

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

Record of Proceedings, 16 June 2023

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

 **Hon. SJ STEWART** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Resources) (3.16 pm): I rise today in support of the Palaszczuk government's 2023-24 state budget. Resources is one of the key drivers of the state's economy, supporting around 75,000 jobs, mostly in regional Queensland. This budget continues our commitment to work with industry to grow and transform Queensland's resources sector. We are focused on helping ease the national cost-of-living pressures on Queenslanders while investing in critical infrastructures like health care, housing and infrastructure. Many people are doing it tough, so it is important we come together to help those in need by doing what we can. We are proud to own our public assets. This means we can directly help ease the cost of living impacting on Queenslanders.

The resources industry plays a key part in this through the royalties it generates which allows us to invest in infrastructure and services—in particular, in regional Queensland. Our progressive coal royalty tiers means we are getting a fairer share from current high coal prices. This allows us to build new infrastructure and invest in better services while supporting good jobs and easing cost-of-living pressures throughout the state. The resources industry is a key part of Queensland's economy and that is why, through this budget, we will continue to implement the vitally important work of the Resources Industry Development Plan. We are delivering several key actions as part of QRIDP, none more significant than the Queensland Resources Common User Facility. This is another example of how important our progressive coal royalty tiers are. They are supporting not only Townsville but also the future of the resources industry.

Those opposite need to come clean about whether they support this fair arrangement and if they do not they need to detail what they plan to cut because they cannot have their cake and eat it too. This \$75 million facility in Townsville will support the development, extraction and production of critical minerals like vanadium. It is one piece of the puzzle that will transform our critical minerals sector into a true pit-to-product supply chain. If we do not manufacture our future, others will do it for us.

Another important piece of the puzzle in supporting our resources industry and unlocking the potential of critical mineral deposits is CopperString 2032. We announced earlier this year that the Palaszczuk government would own and build this \$5 billion project which has the potential to unlock \$500 billion worth in critical minerals.

Thanks to our commitment to investing in regional Queensland through our progressive coal royalties, there is \$594 million for CopperString 2032 in this budget. Let us be clear: if the LNP do not support our fair progressive coal royalty system, CopperString is gone. There is a simple question that those opposite need to answer: will they support our progressive coal royalties? We know the LNP has a chopping block ready to go and regional Queensland will suffer because of it.

We know Queensland's gas industry will play a vital role in underpinning the reliability of the electricity market as we introduce more renewable energy sources. The gas industry now supports about 5,000 full-time equivalent jobs while also supporting employment growth in the manufacturing

sector and local businesses. That is why in this budget we are supporting the industry by investing \$21 million over the next two years to create a frontier gas exploration program. The grants will support appraisal activities that unlock gas sources in the Bowen and Galilee basins. By providing industry the investment certainty it needs to develop those basins, we will help ensure Queensland's gas supply remains reliable and affordable for many years to come.

I would like to address some of the comments the member for Condamine made in his speech budget reply speech. This government and this budget back the gas industry. If those opposite were interested in the gas sector then they should engage with APPEA, the industry and the Commonwealth government instead of ignoring it and pandering to the whims of the Queensland Resources Council, which has dropped the ball when it comes to supporting the gas industry in these turbulent times.

The silence of the member for Condamine has been deafening, so it is a bit rich for him to come in here and speak up now. Since last year, I have held five round tables with the gas industry to discuss the challenges they are confronting as well as practical ways in which the government can help. I have also travelled to Canberra to speak to federal Minister for Resources, Madeleine King, and my department has provided two submissions into the review of the code of conduct for gas market participants. We will continue to work with the industry moving forward.

Regarding island resorts, the member for Condamine needs to pay attention to the work already being done. Unlike those opposite, we have taken action, which is something that the Newman-Crisafulli government did not do. The member for Condamine is clearly not across his brief as he had no idea that action was being taken by my department in relation to Double Island. My department is working with other agencies and stakeholders to see what work needs to be done to revitalise our islands and what that will mean moving forward.

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

The speech read as follows—

This budget also provides funding for the continuation of our successful Abandoned Mine site program.

This program has already had some successes and I want to pay tribute to the hardworking Technical Services team within my department for the work they've done on the old Collingwood Tin Mine in Far North Queensland in particular.

I'm proud to say that:

- there were 10 direct jobs created across the life of the project.
- another 60 indirect jobs were created.
- the workforce included local Traditional Owners involved with water management, revegetation and operating earthworks equipment.
- 75% of expenditure was with local businesses.
- 90% of expenditure was with small and medium sized businesses.
- 55% of expenditure was with indigenous owned corporations.

And that's just on one project.

The Abandoned Mine site program not only does vital work remediating legacy sites across Queensland, but it also supports good jobs in regional communities.

Supporting and improving our state's landscapes is also supported through this budget.

It was this government that revamped the natural resource funding program by creating the Natural Resources Recovery Program last year.

We've had two rounds of the program so far and they've proved extremely popular.

From the Cape through to the Southeast and everywhere in between we've backed local organisations to help restore soils and improve the resilience of our state's natural landscapes.

We're working with farmers, graziers, Traditional Owners and their local communities on activities ranging from gully repair to fencing off and protecting native vegetation on stream banks.

The Natural Resources Recovery Program is not only boosting local communities, but also creating good jobs in regional Queensland.

And this program will continue to be supported under this government with another \$10 million on offer in the 2023-24 financial year.

My Department is steadfast in its commitment to work with our Traditional Owners as part of the Palaszczuk Government's Path to Treaty.

The Path to Treaty is a broader commitment to reframe the relationship between the Palaszczuk Government and Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Just last week I had the honour of accompanying the Premier and some of my other Cabinet colleagues to a ceremony that restored K'gari as the rightful name of Fraser Island.

As part of that ceremony, I had the pleasure of transferring more than 19 hectares of K'gari land back to the Butchulla people.

They will now hold this land as aboriginal freehold land forever for the benefit of the Butchulla People.

I can assure the House we will continue to recognise Indigenous languages through place names, in the spirit of truth-telling and reconciliation as we walk the Path to Treaty.

It allows all Queenslanders to come together in a joint commitment to one another, to our land, water and winds.

Earlier this year the Palaszczuk Government delivered key reforms to the way the state's stock route management system is operated.

Councils are now able to retain more of the stock route revenue fees to reinvest back into network maintenance and make it easier for drovers to access and update stock route maps and management plans.

Stock routes have a rich cultural heritage in Queensland, and we will continue to support councils and farmers maintain and improve this important network.

Resources has also committed nearly \$10 million of additional funding over the next four years focussed on communicating and educating landholders to strengthen understanding of responsibilities under the vegetation management framework.

With this Budget the Palaszczuk Government continues to back a diversified and resilient resources industry that grows, transforms and thrives.

This is a budget that will keep investing in increasing the sustainable productivity of our land resources.

And that means backing good jobs and stronger regional economies, leading to great Queensland lifestyles.

And there is no greater lifestyle choice on offer than in Townsville.

Through this budget we are investing in the capital of the north through a number of projects.

As a former principal it's exciting to see funding in this budget for school upgrades and maintenance in my electorate.

This includes \$13.1 million to construct additional specialist classrooms and deliver a new performing arts facility for the school.

Before becoming the member for Townsville, I was principal at Pimlico State High School and even then, the performing arts centre was being discussed so I'm proud to be part of the Palaszczuk Government that is delivering this project.

The sod has already been turned and construction has begun.

This budget backs our schools in Townsville with better services and better facilities for the kids in our classrooms.

In my electorate this budget is investing more than \$27 million for school infrastructure in the Townsville electorate which is another example of this government investing in better services for Queenslanders.

We are also delivering free kindy for kids in Townsville and throughout Queensland which is a fantastic way of easing the cost of living on young families.

This government will invest in the future of our youngest Queenslanders through initiatives like this and as a former teacher I'm proud to see it being delivered.

A specific project I would like to highlight, which I know will be welcomed by Townsville, Magnetic Island and tourists, is upgrades to the visitor trails on Maggie.

Magnetic Island is the jewel in Townsville's tourism crown and we know its natural assets are what draws so many people there.

As part of this budget, we're investing \$608,000 out of a \$2.6 million total spend to upgrade these trails—we have already seen work done on the island as part of this program and I look forward to seeing that continue.

Magnetic Island is not the only island in my electorate that will receive funding through this budget.

Palm Island is an incredibly diverse and at times complex place which is why as the local member and Ministerial Champion I am pleased to see significant funding for the community to help with important infrastructure.

There is \$9 million for important infrastructure upgrades as well as a new home economics building at Bwgcolman Community School.

Education is key to making sure young people have opportunities in the future and that's why investments like this are important.

Also on Palm Island we are working with council on aerator upgrades at the Solomon and Francis Creek Dams to help suppress blue green algae with \$400,000 as part of the budget.

Another exciting project I would like to highlight which I have advocated for is \$87,000 for Palm Island Aboriginal Shire Council.

This funding will be used to coordinate and facilitate the delivery of community identified physical activity opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people.

I've worked closely with Mayor Mislam Sam to secure funding for this program because we both know it will make a big difference to the Palm Island community.

Investing either indirectly in health through programs like this or directly funding infrastructure is an unashamed focus of the 2023-24 budget.

There is a record \$24.2 billion being spent in health.

I'm pleased to see a significant investment in the Townsville Hospital and Health Service through this budget.

This includes the biggest upgrade to Townsville University Hospital since it was constructed.

This facility is the only tertiary hospital in the region and the hardworking staff help so many people which is why these upgrades are so important.

We will always back our health workers with the facilities they need, and this budget does just that.

I also want to highlight the budget's investment in Moranbah Hospital—a project that I know is important to this mining community.

As the Minister for Resources, I've worked collaboratively with Isaac Regional Council Mayor Anne Baker on this and I'm proud to see Moranbah Hospital being funded as part of our record health budget being delivered by the Palaszczuk Government.

Another key part of this budget is our investment in community safety initiatives including the new Kirwan police facility.

This budget provides \$446.4 million in whole of government funding over five years to support community safety, as well as resources to tackle the complex causes of youth crime and help boost police resources.

The Kirwan replacement police facility at the former 1300 Smiles Stadium site is another important part of this budget.

We are backing the Queensland Police Service with a state-of-the-art facility—something the LNP refused to back at the last election—rather they wanted a harness racing track.

We back our police while the LNP sack our police.

It is also important that we work in the early intervention space to address youth crime and this budget does just that.

As announced by the Premier this week the government will partner with the Jonathan Thurston (JT) Academy to expand its innovative JTYouGotThis program.

The program is to help young people at risk of being involved in the youth justice system.

As part of the budget, we are investing \$4.73 million in this year's state budget to support the program.

Other programs I welcome as part of the budget to help community safety is \$4.2 million in funding for Street University in Townsville, continuing the Townsville High Risk Youth Court, and a Fast Track Sentencing pilot—these are just some of the initiatives in this budget.

This budget backs the people of Townsville by helping ease the cost of living, investing in infrastructure which is important for the future of the city, and which will support good jobs and our great lifestyle.

However, all of these investments are at risk of being abandoned by the LNP because they won't commit to backing our progressive coal royalty tiers.

It is this government that will back all Queenslanders and all of Townsville.

I commend the Bill to the House.