




Speech By
Barry O'Rourke

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Record of Proceedings, 13 June 2024

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE
AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; STATE FINANCIAL
INSTRUCTIONS AND METWAY MERGER AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mr O'ROURKE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (2.39 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill for 2024-25 introduced by the Hon. Cameron Dick, Deputy Premier and Treasurer. This is another great Labor budget for Central Queensland. We are focused on assisting all Queenslanders with cost-of-living support, and that is what this budget does. We are providing \$1,000 off every householder's power bill from 1 July, rising to \$1,372 for concession card holders. Eligible small businesses will also receive an automatic rebate of \$325.

From 5 August the cost of all Translink public transport services across the state will be slashed to 50 cents, no matter where you live or how far you travel, which will ease congestion. People who live in Emu Park and travel to Rockhampton each day will save about \$43 per week, which will be similar for those coming down from Mount Morgan. This is also an ideal opportunity for the average-sized family to travel to the beach for the day for around \$5 return—much cheaper than driving.

Unlike the LNP, we have a plan for our TAFE that will provide tens of thousands of Queenslanders with free and subsidised training, easing the pressure on the cost of living and helping Queenslanders secure good jobs that are being created by our Big Build and our record investment in frontline jobs. We will continue to provide free kindy, which will save local families up to \$4,600 per year, ensuring everyone can access it. This is a huge change that comes from two great Labor values—fairness and equal access to education. This is something an LNP government would never deliver.

The Miles government is investing an additional \$65.52 million to expand the Sustained Health Home Visiting program. This new investment is part of the \$501 million Putting Queensland Kids First plan. It offers intensive in-home support commencing from pregnancy, helping children experiencing vulnerability reach their full potential. We are also taking 20 per cent off rego costs for light vehicles, including motorcycles and trailers, for all Queenslanders' renewal notices from 5 August for a 12-month period. Again, this is part of the biggest cost-of-living relief package in Queensland's history, and we can do this because we are making multinational mining companies pay their fair share.

We are expanding the FairPlay program. Every Queensland child aged between five and 17 years will be eligible for the FairPlay program as a new direct cost-of-living measure. The FairPlay program, opening on 1 July, will increase in value to \$200 and the number of vouchers will increase from 50,000 to 200,000. Of that 200,000, 50,000 will continue to be set aside for those with an eligible concession and the remaining 150,000 will be for all Queensland families on a first-come, first-served basis.

The stamp duty discount for first home buyers will be boosted in a move that will help 10,000 Queenslanders a year into the property market. The threshold for the concession on transfer duty will lift from \$500,000 to \$700,000. The concession will be phased out on values above \$800,000. We are also freezing all other government fees and charges, so they will not increase with inflation. Labor is leading the nation by delivering this massive cost-of-living support for all Queenslanders.

The Deputy 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—

There is a further \$191.2 million for the financial year for the Rockhampton Ring Road. This is a great project for Central Queensland and will create on going employment for a few years to come.

I'm happy to say there's also ongoing funding for the Catheter Lab at Rocky Hospital and ongoing funding for major projects like the Browne Park Upgrade, the Fitzroy to Gladstone water pipeline, and the Rocky to Mt Morgan water pipeline. There is \$39.8 million out of a total spend of \$91.9 million for the new mental health facility at the Rocky base hospital.

Overall, there's more than \$4b worth of local infrastructure projects that have been delivered or are being delivered in the Rocky area with the support of this Miles Labor Government. Our per capita infrastructure spend in CQ is 69% higher than it is for Brisbane.

The truth is Labor governments have a proud record of delivering for Rocky and Gracemere, walking around town you could barely bowl a cricket ball without the risk of hitting something a Labor government has helped deliver, whether it's Laurie Street duplication, the pump track, upgrades to our sporting facilities, the millions in road infrastructure, the courthouse, the hospital, not to mention the countless upgrades schools over the years. There has been more than \$100 million spent on upgrading our schools in the Rockhampton electorate over the past nine years.

And we'll only ever see this kind of investment under a Labor government in Central Queensland. What did we get under the Newman LNP government? Nothing but cuts to our schools, hospitals and services like QBuild.

That's what we can expect if the LNP gets in again. Locally we've heard the LNP like Michelle Landry and Matthew Canavan opposing our progressive coal royalties scheme. Let me repeat that—they apparently oppose a scheme that ensures Queenslanders receive their fair share of the profits being made by multinational miners benefiting from high coal prices.

Queenslanders own those resources, and those progressive royalties are one of the reasons we can deliver our cost of living support, and why we can deliver huge investment around Rockhampton.

The LNP, it seems, would rather that money go to shareholders overseas or to multi-millionaire CEOs. I am looking forward to watching them try to explain that to voters in Rockhampton next election. Just confirms in my mind that if we have a LNP government that it will be back to the Newman days of Cuts, Sack and Sell.

As usual, this budget also includes plenty of support for the Rocky Regional Council, including, as I said, funding to build the Rocky to Mt Morgan Water pipeline.

The Miles Labor Government has provided funding to the Rockhampton Regional Council to the value of approximate \$43 million over the years through the Works for Queensland program and numerous other grants programs. Under the Newman LNP government, I am told the Council only received \$1 million in funding over the three years.

Again, this Health budget we see record funding of \$870 million up \$61 million on last year. The staff at the Central Queensland Hospital and Health Services do an amazing job and I thank them for the work they do each and every day.

There is \$603,000 out of a total spend of \$3.1 million to provide a Mental Wellbeing Safe Haven for Rockhampton which you would expect to be completed in the next few months.

There is a further \$13.5 million out of a total \$47.7 million for the Rockhampton Rail Yards, rail maintenance, manufacturing and logistics centre.

The Miles Government is serious about training opportunities and increased workforce participation for residents in Rockhampton electorate through Skilling Queenslanders for Work program with \$6.9 million in funding.

I have enjoyed attending the graduations where participants have graduated with new skills, experience and qualifications that have help them break into jobs like Individual Support (Aged and Disability) care, horticulture, construction workforces or launch their own small business.

Each of these Certificate Courses build the participants' self-esteem and motivation as well as the general everyday skills that are needed in any workplace. It is great to hear these courses are fostering new small businesses, green thumbs and builders who are looking to contribute to the local economy.

We all know how important education is to securing better life outcomes. This investment is \$90 million across Central Qld and supports the government's commitment to good jobs and better services.

It is essential that our schools are maintained and there will be \$1.1 million for school maintenance. There are 12 projects across the Rockhampton schools totally \$6 to \$7 million.

Across Rockhampton and Central Queensland we will continue to see an investment in our road infrastructure projects like the Bruce Highway intersections and bridge upgrades supporting local jobs and let's not forget the Rockhampton Ring Road in partnership with the federal government supporting hundreds of jobs.

We will see an infrastructure and upgrade spend on Glenmore electricity substation and Rockhampton South Substation with a total cost \$24 million.

In this budget across Central Queensland is \$2.3 billion in funding for Qld's Big Build for infrastructure and capital works supporting 6,200 jobs.

There is so much more in this budget across other portfolios like Child Safety and our Police, Fire and Emergency services and Corrective Services portfolios and very importantly community organisations that provide support for the residents of Rockhampton and Central Queensland. I am pleased to be delivering a great budget for the people of the Rockhampton Electorate. This budget is all about good jobs, better services, and doing what matters for all Queenslanders.

I congratulate the Deputy Premier and Treasurer the Hon Cameron Dick on a budget for all Queenslanders.

I commend the Bill to the House.