




Speech By  
**Jennifer Howard**

**MEMBER FOR IPSWICH**

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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**

 **Ms HOWARD** (Ipswich—ALP) (10.14 pm): I rise to speak in support the Queensland budget 2024-25. The Treasurer is again to be commended for handing down a budget that focuses on what matters for Queensland. It contains responsible cost-of-living relief for Queenslanders that will help them lower their household bills. It safeguards Queensland's long-term future by sensibly investing in critical infrastructure such as our hospitals, our kids' education, our transport networks, housing and community safety.

Queensland's economic growth is set to strengthen to three per cent. As of April 2024, Queensland recorded the largest employment growth of any state or territory since March 2020. It is no wonder that people are moving from interstate to Queensland. In the first quarter of 2024 over 1,600 people migrated to the Ipswich local government area. The fastest growing suburb in the local government area is Ripley in my electorate of Ipswich. I am pleased to say that the Miles government recognises this growth. It sees the pressure it is putting on our local hospitals, our schools, our housing, roads and public transport. That is why I am so proud to support a budget that delivers the infrastructure that Ipswich needs to manage this growth.

In this budget we have delivered a record \$1.1 billion for the West Moreton Hospital and Health Service, which will provide world-class treatment and care to Ipswich people. We also have funding to shortly commence work on building stage 2 of the \$710 million Ipswich Hospital expansion, which will deliver 200 new beds, a larger emergency department and new operating theatres; \$205 million will go to schools across the Ipswich region to upgrade and maintain buildings, classrooms and school playgrounds; and \$36.3 million will be delivered to improve bus services in Ipswich and extend bus routes into those growth areas I was talking about like Ripley and Deebing Heights. Ipswich also stands to receive \$1.8 billion in this budget for infrastructure and capital works projects as part of the Queensland Big Build. These works will support up to 4,800 jobs and create a pipeline of infrastructure that Ipswich residents and businesses need now and into the future.

At the heart of this budget is our massive cost-of-living package to help ease financial pressures on Ipswich households. Over the past two years constituents in Ipswich have endured multiple interest rate hikes, rent increases and growing inflation on things like groceries, fuel, electricity, education and health services. It has really been a perfect storm, and it has affected every household in Ipswich. In these uncertain economic times Ipswich people deserve to be supported. The Miles government is doing just that by delivering a solid package of vital cost-of-living measures to help make ends meet.

Ipswich people tell me that these relief measures will make the world of difference to them. The \$1,300 electricity rebate and the \$1,672 rebate for concession card holders means that many households will not have to pay a power bill for the next 12 months. Fifty-cent public transport fares will mean that a worker travelling return from Ipswich station to Brisbane Central five days a week will save

up to \$66 a week on their train fare. One woman I met at the train station told me she has already worked out that she will save over \$1,200 in the six months of this trial. The 20 per cent rego reduction is a huge saving that will take pressure off rising fuel and vehicle costs, and \$200 FairPlay vouchers will mean that more Ipswich kids get a chance to play sport at club level. First home buyers looking to buy affordable homes in Ipswich will benefit greatly when stamp duty is cut on homes worth up to \$700,000, and free kindy, free school breakfasts, free TAFE and free tools for first year apprentices mean that our kids in Ipswich are getting everything they need to get the best start in life.

We can do all of this because we are making multinational mining companies pay their fair share. Disappointingly, the LNP does not support our mining royalties. They would rather take billions away from the people of Queensland and put it back into the profits of mining companies. This would make Queensland poorer. It will cut all of that great cost-of-living relief that Queenslanders need and deserve. For many people in my electorate of Ipswich those cost-saving measures might mean having money left over to buy a few extra groceries per week, help them pay the car rego on time, or help their kids join a local sports club or get into kindy. These savings matter to Ipswich families.

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

*The speech read as follows—*

Speaker, our coal royalties are also supporting Queensland's Big Build which is critical to building Stage 2 of the Ipswich Hospital Expansion. Without those royalties, the Stage 2 expansion would be under threat.

A good public hospital and health system is not only vital for people living in Ipswich, but it's the key to healthy economic growth and productivity for our city.

Health

In this budget, we will deliver \$65 million out of a total spend of \$710 million to build the Stage 2 Ipswich Hospital Expansion. This will see the construction of a new acute clinical services building housing 200 new beds, a new and expanded emergency department, and additional operating theatres.

The 200 new beds are part of the Miles Government's Capacity Expansion Program which is our commitment to deliver 2,200 in public hospitals across Queensland.

Speaker, in the first quarter of this year, just over 20,000 people visited the Ipswich Hospital emergency department. As our region's population grows, that number will only go up.

That's why I'm looking forward to seeing Stage 2 get underway when construction works commence later this year. The build will also support 1,700 good construction jobs which is a win for our local workforce.

Once finished, Stage 2 of the hospital will be a major milestone achievement in line with our other recent health achievements in Ipswich such as the new Acute Mental Health Unit, the Ripley Satellite Hospital, and the new Ripley Ambulance Station, all completed and opened last year.

Building on those achievements will be our major investment in the expansion of the Ripley Satellite Hospital. This budget will commit \$33.5 million out of a total \$269 million spend to deliver a three-storey, sub-acute modular unit on the site of the Ripley Satellite Hospital delivering new services in rehab, geriatric, palliative, and interim care.

We are also committing \$10 million out of a total spend of \$36.2 million to build an Alcohol and Other Drug Community Treatment Facility in Ipswich.

This is a service that's very much needed in Ipswich—no specialist alcohol and other drug treatment service currently exists.

People wanting help for substance use either have to pay tens of thousands of dollars for private rehab, or go without.

This new facility will deliver an affordable 45-bed residential rehabilitation and withdrawal facility to help people quit.

Transport

Speaker, this budget is about delivering what matters for my community and that includes public transport.

Residents living in new growth areas of Ipswich have told me that they need public transport in their communities so they don't have to rely on private vehicles to get around.

I'm very pleased to announce that our budget will deliver for them \$36.3 million to expand Ipswich bus services into these new growth areas.

We are delivering new services to Deebing Heights, Springfield, Karalee, Redbank Plains, Collingwood Park, Augustine Heights, and Bellbird Park.

We're improving bus connectivity to the Ripley Valley.

We will introduce a new direct bus route linking Ipswich to Springfield via Redbank Plains.

We will also improve bus connectivity to rail services and Ipswich Hospital.

These upgrades will target Ipswich communities experiencing significant population growth and will introduce bus services to many areas for the first time.

This is a great win for Ipswich residents; it will reduce congestion on our roads, and improve access to jobs, healthcare and education. When 50 cent fares come in on the 5th of August, Ipswich residents will also be able to access cheap bus fares.

This budget will also provide \$100,000 to start work on the business case for the Ipswich to Springfield rail line. This is a project that will transform connectivity between Ipswich, Ripley Valley, Redbank Plains, and Springfield. The business case is a \$7.5 million endeavour, jointly funded with the Federal Government and Ipswich City Council

I've been fighting hard for the Ipswich to Springfield rail line for many years and it's exciting to see it go into the planning stage.

#### Education

Speaker, we are putting Queensland children first by investing in our schools. This is a direct investment in our state's future prosperity.

Last year, the Ipswich electorate welcomed the brand, new Ripley Central State School to our community. It's a young, thriving school with fast growing enrolments, and it's great to see \$10 million in this budget to continue the school's building works.

I'm also very excited to see a number of schools in my electorate receiving funding for upgrades and additional classrooms.

\$27.75 million will be spent in this budget to upgrade, improve, and maintain schools in the Ipswich electorate.

Some of this includes:

\$16.7 million for Claremont Special School to deliver a brand, new building and new play spaces

\$5.9 million for Bremer State High School to build additional classrooms

\$1 million for Ipswich East State School to install a new security fence around its school grounds

\$498,000 for Bundamba State School to build an outdoor learning area and nature playground

\$320,000 for Ipswich West State School to install new ramps and accessible amenities.

Ipswich has some of the oldest schools in Queensland. The Miles Government is committed to investing in these schools so that they meet contemporary education building standards.

We are also committed to investing in children's future by supporting them from the earliest years of their lives.

That's why we're funding the free school breakfast program so that kids can get a healthy start to the day. Ten schools in my electorate will receive healthy free breakfasts to help Ipswich kids learn and play throughout the school day.

Our Putting Queensland Kids First Package is a game-changer that will provide positive support to our most vulnerable children. The program will see Raceview State School get a Health Practitioner, a Family Support Coordinator, and a Behaviour Specialist. Churchill State School will receive a Family Support Coordinator.

Supporting our young students' health and wellbeing gives them the strongest foundation for learning. The Putting Queensland Kids First Package is an important investment priority to help Queensland kids be happy, confident and prepared for the journey through school, training, and future employment.

#### Sport

Speaker, one thing I can confidently say is that many kids in Ipswich love their sport, and that's why our \$200 FairPlay vouchers are so important to me.

This is a win for Ipswich families including those who may not have had the means to get their kids into club sport previously due to participation fees or the cost of uniforms and equipment.

This budget also provides a win for two sport clubs in my community who are getting funding through the Activate! Queensland program for upgrades.

Ipswich Netball Association is receiving just over \$220,000 to upgrade their lighting on their courts so they can play netball at night.

Brothers Football Club is receiving \$350,000 to construct two new female changerooms and upgrade their current male changerooms.

I've long championed increased female participation in sport, so it's fantastic to see Activate! Queensland deliver that funding to Ipswich Netball and Brothers so their female players get the amenities they need.

This budget's funding for sport infrastructure in Ipswich builds on our recent sport investment achievements such as the recently completed clubhouse for Raceview Soccer Club, and the newly completed canteen for Ipswich and West Moreton BMX Club. In 2020, the Queensland Government committed a total of \$1.4 million for both of these projects, and it was great to see the projects come to fruition and start operating.

Lastly, I cannot forget to mention the Miles Government's \$10 million commitment to building the proposed North Ipswich Sport and Entertainment Precinct; a 12-thousand seat stadium that will be jointly funded with the Federal Government and Ipswich City Council.

## Housing and Other

Speaker, it's also great to see the number of social housing projects completed or underway in my electorate.

Housing is a concern for many people in my community.

At our Housing Summit in 2022, we acknowledged that more needed to be done to build more homes sooner. Our landmark Homes for Queenslanders plan announced earlier this year confirms our commitment to build 1 million homes across Queensland by 2046 including 53,500 social homes.

This budget will lock in a record \$2.8 billion in 2024-25 to help deliver Homes for Queensland.

In Ipswich, we are seeing more social homes built faster to accommodate our growing population.

The QuickStarts Queensland program aimed to commence 185 social homes in the Ipswich region by 30 June 2025.

This target for Ipswich has already been exceeded with contracts awarded for the commencement of 197 social homes as of 31 March 2024.

Of these homes, 42 have been delivered, 106 are currently in construction, and 49 homes are under contract to be delivered.

In my electorate, construction work is well underway on 41 new social housing apartments in Basin Pocket targeting a tenant cohort of seniors, and 13 new apartments in West Ipswich targeting people with a disability and older people.

In Booval, work will soon commence on 43 new social housing apartments which will target a tenant cohort of women.

This work is ongoing, and the 2024-25 budget ensures \$30.2 million is committed to expand and improve social housing in the Ipswich region.

Accessible and affordable housing is something the Miles Government is firmly committed to and builds on our recent announcements to double the First Home Buyers Grant, introduce the Help to Buy Scheme, and cut stamp duty for first home buyers purchasing homes up to \$700,000.

We're also implementing rental reforms that will making renting more secure, stable, affordable, and fair.

I would now like to provide an overview of several other important commitments we've made in the 2024-25 budget for Ipswich.

Ipswich's Swanbank Clean Energy Hub battery storage facility will receiving investment of \$274.8 million in 2024-25 out of a \$403.4 million total spend to install a large-scale battery at the Swanbank Precinct.

More battery storage is also underway through the Queensland Energy and Jobs Plan delivering \$12.2 million to install a network battery for Ipswich which will store excess solar PV generated by solar customers.

Community safety in Ipswich is being prioritised with a commitment of \$9.5 million out of a \$36.5 million total spend to deliver extra police officers, Mobile Police Beats, and police vehicles for high pro-active visibility activities.

The new \$34 million Ripley Police Station is also well underway with \$15 million in this budget for ongoing construction works.

## Conclusion

Speaker, Ipswich people can be satisfied that this budget delivers record cost-of-living relief that will help them balance their household budgets. I can also assure them that the Miles Government is investing in the vital infrastructure Ipswich needs to keep pace with its growing population.

This budget has deliberately gone into deficit to help Queenslanders through temporary economic pressures, but it's the right decision that will strengthen our future.

I commend the Bill to the House.