




Speech By
Hon. Michael Healy

MEMBER FOR CAIRNS

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**

 **Hon. MP HEALY** (Cairns—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Sport) (7.45 pm): The ghost of Robert Menzies? Wow! That is really going to work well! Cost-of-living action is at the heart of the Miles government's first budget along with building the infrastructure we need for our growing state and, most importantly, investing in our greatest asset, which is our people. This is the biggest cost-of-living relief package ever presented to the people of Queensland at a time when it has been desperately needed. We know that because we have been listening to people and this is what people have been telling us. This budget is helping with household bills and putting downward pressure on inflation. There is \$3.739 billion in new and expanded cost-of-living action including over \$1,300 off Queensland householders' electricity bills, 50-cent public transport fares, 20 per cent off vehicle registrations, 200,000 FairPlay vouchers valued at \$200 available to every Queensland child aged between five and 17, and first home concessions extended up to \$800,000. These are absolutely fundamental in ensuring a better quality of life for Queenslanders.

I want to touch on some of the things that are happening in my electorate because they are absolutely fundamental in ensuring we are working with regional councils and we continue to grow. Some of the investment in my electorate in Cairns includes our announcement of \$87.5 million towards stage 1 of the Cairns Water Security project, which will help the council deliver critical water security in our region and will avoid them having to put the rates up significantly. I want to acknowledge the Minister for Water, who has done an outstanding job. He was a hard man to advocate to, but he did the right thing because he knew it was the right thing for the people. I want to recognise my parliamentary colleagues who also assisted in that. The Miles Labor government is now funding \$195 million of the project to bolster Cairn's future water supply.

There is \$250 million for the Cairns Hospital expansion to deliver a new surgical centre, refurbish selected areas within the existing hospital and utilise opportunities for futureproofing facilities. In addition to that there is \$60 million for the Cairns Health Innovation Centre, which will deliver additional capacity for Cairns Hospital and provide health education, training and research facilities for future medical professionals in Cairns. This is about building a new health industry in the tropics.

There is \$37 million in the budget out of a \$360 million total spend towards the Cairns Marine Precinct common user facility. It currently employs over 4,500 people. There is strong demand. I went to a marine college meeting on Saturday last where over 1,500 students and parents turned up. This is a real investment into our area. This will provide much needed labour for increased maintenance, repair and overhaul service capabilities delivered in partnership with the Australian government.

In addition to that, there is \$21 million to complete the Cairns police facility upgrade. I acknowledge the fantastic work of the police minister. He has listened to what we have been asking for and he has provided, as well as additional police, a facility that has been designed with all the features

and specifications needed for a modern policing facility that will accommodate the current staffing level with room for, most importantly, future growth. The facility will support frontline policing services to deliver safe and secure communities and build a safer Queensland.

All of these measures from the new Miles government are delivering better services for Cairns and Far North Queensland. This builds on our record of delivery, where the Far North has benefited from: 680 extra nurses, up 31 per cent; 297 extra doctors, up 62.2 per cent; and 59 extra ambulance officers, an increase of 21.5 per cent. What we hear from the other side borders on pathetic. In contrast, when those opposite were in government, in Cairns 306 frontline health jobs were cut, 48 nurses lost their job and over 500 full-time staff in teaching positions were sacked. It was absolutely appalling. It has taken years for the Far North to recover from the LNP's cuts to local schools and hospitals.

In relation to my portfolio responsibilities of sport and tourism, I would like to provide comprehensive details about how we are delivering world-class, thriving, inclusive and sustainable tourism and sport and active recreation sectors. Firstly I would like to touch on the Leader of the Opposition's comments in relation to sport and tourism—at least I would like to, but there were no comments about tourism and there was very little, if anything, about sport. The opposition leader is the shadow tourism minister. The only mention of tourism in his hour-long, visionless speech was the following—

We will deliver sustainable ecotourism opportunities by creating more world-class experiences to drive conservation through education.

What in God's name does that mean? I have had five tourism operators, from the Gold Coast to Cairns, ring me saying, 'Can you explain what that is?' I said, 'I will tell you what it is: it is absolutely nothing.' The Leader of the Opposition did not even mention his supposed 20-year tourism plan, which he has been spruiking for four years but no-one has ever seen.

Mr Mander interjected.

Mr HEALY: I will start on you in a tick, buddy. Industry certainly has not been consulted on any plan.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): Direct your comments through the chair, please, Minister.

Mr HEALY: It is concerning that industry has not been consulted on any plan. We have a plan—a real tourism plan. It is Towards Tourism 2032. It has been consulted on with industry. Industry has been involved. It is a framework and we are working with the tourism industry. It is amazing. The partnership with government and industry to deliver long-term growth and success for our tourism is well articulated, with goals and milestones. This is a multibillion dollar industry—a huge employer, and most of them are small businesses. It is unbelievable that there was not one single mention of it. We in the industry remember what the LNP did to the tourism industry when they were last in government: 35 staff were taken out of Tourism and Events Queensland and \$188 million was slashed from its budget. It was absolutely appalling.

Let us move on to more impressive things. There has been no commitment from the opposition to match our investment in sport infrastructure across Queensland. There is no funding available for grassroots sports clubs. The LNP has said nothing about it. The only contribution on community sport from the shadow minister for sport, the member for Everton, was bemoaning the lack of any funding for the Mitchelton Football Club, which last year received \$2,970,000 in disaster recovery funding. The member for Everton is not even aware of what is going on in his own electorate. Those opposite will not back our FairPlay proposal, taking away \$200 from every Queensland child, limiting kids' access to sport and taking away all the social, physical and mental health benefits that sports participation brings our children. It is concerning and disturbing.

The good news, Mr Deputy Speaker, is that the Deputy Speaker and Speaker have reviewed and approved my budget speech for incorporation and, as such, I ask that the remainder of my speech be incorporated into the *Record of Proceedings*.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Krause): As you suggest, member for Cairns, good news.

The speech read as follows—

In my Ministerial portfolio of Tourism and Sport—

Families feeling the pinch of junior sport costs will get some budget relief with an extra \$33.5 million expanding the FairPlay program for all Queensland children aged five to 17 years and boosting the voucher value up to \$200.

The additional funding boosts the Miles Government's FairPlay program to \$40 million for 2024-2025, with the number of vouchers available increasing from 50,000 to up to 200,000.

The value of each voucher is also increasing from up to \$150 to up to \$200, to help reduce the cost of sports memberships, registration and participation fees for families.

The program will be open from 1 July 2024 with vouchers to be redeemed by June 2025, enabling children to take part in summer and winter sports and activities.

Since the program began in 2019, over \$30 million has been redeemed by activity providers with more than 210,000 vouchers used by eligible families.

The Queensland Government's Minor Infrastructure Program has been allocated another \$9.5 million for shovel-ready community sport infrastructure.

A further \$3 million has been approved for the Youth Development Partnership Fund aimed at improving youth crime prevention in association with the Queensland Police Service.

There is \$72 million over 4 years to continue delivery of the Queensland Academy of Sport 2032 High Performance Strategy—Inspiring Extraordinary Sporting Success ensuring elite sporting success in Brisbane 2032.

Other Sport and Recreation programs receiving a boost to support a healthier and more active Queensland are the popular Active Clubs program receiving \$1.9 million, the ActiveKIT program receiving \$1.3 million and the Emerging Athletes Pathways Program receiving \$2.3 million for 2024-2025.

Queensland's tourism industry strategy Towards Tourism 2032, sets out the best path forward to grow Queensland's visitor economy and achieve industry's ambitious target to reach more than \$44 billion-a-year in overnight visitor expenditure by 2032.

Queensland has already achieved \$34 billion in annual overnight visitor expenditure.

Tourism and Events Queensland's base funding will continue to be supported with \$125 million-a-year, as the Queensland Government backs its lead marketing agency to drive demand.

Working with industry, the \$30 million Growing Future Tourism program will deliver major new and enhanced tourism infrastructure or experiences with funding between \$1 million and \$4 million on a matched contribution basis.

Visitors to regional Queensland will enjoy new and enhanced tourism infrastructure and experiences across the state with the support of the \$10 million Building Bush Tourism Fund.

\$12 million is also allocated over two years to support the 2023 Year of Accessible Tourism activities, increasing awareness and capability and for visitor experience development.

First Nations tourism gets a boost with a \$3 million investment, matched by the Australian Government, supporting the sector to deliver the \$6 million Strategic Indigenous Tourism Projects initiative in Queensland. The initiative focuses on increasing the supply of First Nations tourism experiences with a focus on Brisbane 2032.

Further budget measures for Cairns include:

\$16 million to expand TAFE Queensland's Great Barrier Reef International Marine College. This includes constructing a new workshop, additional classrooms, staff facilities and a boat shed.

\$16.5 million to deliver a new performing arts facility at Trinity Bay State High School

\$14.7 million for QAS Cairns Operational Centre and Regional Office Redevelopment providing support to communities through delivery of pre-hospital ambulance responses services.

To support our local marine tourism industry this budget delivers:

\$5.9 million for the Cairns Marlin Marina Reconfiguration and Expansion, and

\$12 million for Trinity Inlet Channel Navigation Improvements to allow easier movements for larger cruise ships.

In contrast when those Opposition were in Government they cut 35 staff from Tourism and Events Queensland, through their budget slash and burn process in 2012 and 2014.

They failed to invest in tourism and cut \$188 million from the tourism budget.

Their lack of investment in the sector severely limited Tourism and Events Queensland's ability to plan, market or deliver events supporting the tourism industry.

The LNP Government's short-sighted vision for tourism put thousands of Queensland jobs at risk, and we saw Queensland tourism drop behind New South Wales and Victoria.

Thankfully, we have rebuilt the tourism industry so that Queensland is back in its proper position as Australia's number one holiday destination.

Cost of living action is at the heart of this budget, along with building the infrastructure we need for our growing state and investing in our greatest asset, our people.

This is the biggest cost of living relief package ever for Queensland, helping with household bills and putting downward pressure on inflation.