




Speech By
Robert Skelton

MEMBER FOR NICKLIN

Record of Proceedings, 21 August 2024

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL
APPROPRIATION BILL
Consideration in Detail (Cognate Debate)
Appropriation Bill

Community Support and Services Committee, Report

 **Mr SKELTON** (Nicklin—ALP) (3.20 pm): I rise to speak to the Community Support and Services Committee's estimates report. The Miles Labor government is doing what matters for Queenslanders, and this is reflected in the budget highlights.

In the Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts our budget highlights include \$2.267 billion for our nation-leading cost-of-living rebate, with all eligible households automatically receiving \$1,000 in 2024-25 from the Queensland government on their energy bills. If you are a small business owner, on top of the \$1,000 off your power bill you will also receive our \$325 small business electricity rebate.

We have funded \$20 million in cost-of-living relief for households struggling with food, including: \$1.3 million for community focused food programs, including a new food and nutrition initiative to relieve cost-of-living pressures on families with school-aged children; \$2.9 million over four years to improve warehousing arrangements for Foodbank Queensland; \$3.6 million over two years to enable OzHarvest and SecondBite to continue critical food recovery and distribution services; and \$1.2 million over four years and \$300,000 per annum ongoing to support Queensland Meals on Wheels.

We are improving the resilience of our communities by investing in disaster relief support, with \$2.2 million going into community financial resilience support and \$3.3 million into continued emergency relief provider funding.

We have committed \$11.2 million to fund Closing the Gap initiatives, including: \$6.4 million in 2024-25 to continue wellbeing and community safety programs; \$3.1 million to strengthen the sector, including funding to the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander coalition; and \$1.7 million over two years to continue the Doomadgee Place Based Partnership and related programs.

In the disability sector we have invested more than \$160 million into reforms made in response to the disability royal commission and NDIS review, including: \$5 million to expand individual and systemic disability advocacy; \$10 million to provide a temporary uplift in the Queensland Community Support Scheme; \$6.5 million for the Hospital Assistive Technology Loan Pool pilot and an expansion of supports provided under the Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme; and \$24.4 million over five years for a sector-led stakeholder engagement strategy, the improvement of disability data and reporting, strategic leadership and the implementation and monitoring of disability reforms across Queensland.

Costs should never be a barrier to our kids getting involved in sports. That is why we have invested \$33.5 million to increase the value of our FairPlay vouchers from \$150 to \$200. We have also guaranteed 50,000 vouchers under current eligibility requirements and a further 150,000 vouchers for Queensland children and young people aged between five and 17. I was a bit surprised to know that riding for the disabled is included in the FairPlay vouchers. There is \$9.5 million in 2024-25 through the Sport Minor Infrastructure Program to provide targeted funding for the delivery of new, upgraded and end-of-life infrastructure projects supporting sports and active recreation. These have all gone ahead in my area, and I am looking forward to the Woombye Snakes being the next club due for an upgrade. I would like to thank the committee, the department and ministers for their involvement and engagement.

Mr Stewart interjected.

Mr SKELTON: I take that interjection from the member for Townsville about the Snakes. In particular I would like to thank the secretariat and Ms Lynda Pretty, who always answers my questions. Apparently there is no question so silly she cannot answer for me. Her work is quite remarkable. These are just some of the highlights of how the Miles Labor government is using public money for the public good. Unlike some in this place who would seek to use the public purse for private benefit, we are doing what matters for Queensland and getting things done. I commend the report to the House.