




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr BAILLIE** (Townsville—LNP) (2.30 pm): That was extraordinary! I rise to respond to the budget, the first delivered by the Crisafulli government, and I do so with strong support. Queenslanders voted for a fresh start and this budget delivers it. In the lead-up to last year's election, the LNP did not run fear campaigns like those opposite or needed focus groups to tell us what was broken. Queenslanders told us and we listened: crime out of control, a health system on life support, a critical housing shortage and the cost of living rising faster than anywhere else in the country. We made a commitment to fix the mess Labor left behind and get Queensland back on track, and this budget is the first step. Let's talk about what it means for the Townsville electorate.

With regard to crime, in addition to the multiple changes we have made to strengthen the laws, we are investing in our commitments to increase the number of boots on the ground and provide our police with the resources they need: a dedicated rapid response unit—the Flying Squad—has already visited Townsville six times since being established in January, taking 180 juvenile offenders into custody; a second Polair helicopter to enable 24/7 availability and ensure police have the resources they need when they need them; upgrades to the Townsville watch house which are well overdue; an additional district court judge with staff and two new courtrooms to deliver faster justice; and investments to increase security for small businesses, with additional lighting and surveillance in public spaces which has been welcomed by the small business community in Townsville. I would like to acknowledge Heidi Turner from the Townsville Chamber of Commerce, who joins us here in the gallery today.

As we have said since day one, to address crime we need to do more than catch offenders and put them before the courts. We need to focus on early intervention and rehabilitation, and we are doing that, too, with: investment in the Staying on Track program to provide one year of focused rehabilitation for every young offender released from detention; the Regional Reset program, which is a short-stay program targeted at youth demonstrating high-risk behaviours; a crime prevention school to be established in Townsville to re-engage youth who have been disengaged from mainstream education and are at risk of falling into a life of crime; and investment into local, early intervention programs like Community Gro in Garbutt where we are investing \$1.8 million over three years to support their youth hub and provide a safe environment for young people to attend out-of-school hours, and is an opportunity to grow positive relationships with each other, staff, volunteers and mentors. We are taking real steps and allocating significant investment into early intervention and rehabilitation.

Even those opposite recognise the great work we are doing. Just last week, we had a member of the shadow ministry visit Community Gro, an advocate for the program we are funding saying—

Community Gro in Garbutt do an amazing job supporting the community in Townsville through multiple programs including the youth hub.

I thank the shadow minister for their advocacy in the Crisafulli government's funding of this early intervention program after they had previously had their funding cut by the federal Labor government and was then left on life support, only able to operate on half capacity for several months until we took government and delivered the funding they needed to provide that service to our community.

I turn our attention to health. We are delivering on health with the hospital expansion plan and more health workers. The expansion to Townsville University Hospital with 165 new beds, eight perinatal beds and a new multilevel car park delivering close to 700 spaces can now be delivered by local contractors. We are adding more healthcare workers as well, with additional funding in 2025-26 to grow the workforce to 6,378 FTE in the Townsville Hospital and Health Service.

On housing, the Crisafulli government is focusing on driving up supply with the Boost to Buy program for those who do not have access to the bank of mum and dad and the removal of a tax. You heard that right—removal of a tax. No stamp duty for first home buyers on new homes focuses on a new supply and allows those new home buyers to rent out a room to increase occupancy and further reduce overall housing demand without risking their eligibility for concessions. In particular in Townsville, we are excited about the Residential Activation Fund, a \$2 billion fund that will prioritise shovel-ready projects focusing on construction and critical trunk infrastructure such as water, power, sewerage, stormwater and roads needed to unlock new residential developments, and \$1 billion of that fund will be spent in the regions—regions just like Townsville. Along with my colleagues, we have been working with our local councils as well as developers to apply for the fund and try to attract as much of that fund to Townsville as possible and deliver more homes into our region to satisfy demand.

With regard to cost of living, we are providing real cost-of-living relief for households. On the power front, we have the Supercharged Solar for Renters Program and we are reintroducing indexation to the electricity rebate scheme for vulnerable households. Along with a maintenance guarantee on our state-owned, power-generating assets and investment this year into the Brigalow gas peaker project, this investment to secure the reliability and capacity of our power-generating assets will put downward pressure on the cost of power.

Further on cost-of-living relief, there are the new \$200 Play On! sports vouchers and the \$100 Back to School Boost for every school student from 1 January. Health checks for kindy kids, which we announced last week, will be starting in Townsville, providing hearing, speech and vision checks for students as they enter primary school and may identify unknown barriers they may face as they take their next steps on their learning journey.

While we are talking about schools, we are investing in schools, too. Hermit Park State School will benefit from various ground enhancements across the school site. There will be investment into Pimlico State High School to refurbish the science block and upgrade the water reticulation system, as well as refurbishment of some classrooms. Townsville South State School will have a refurbished prep space in P block. Townsville State High School will have their existing hall upgraded into a performing arts centre. We love the arts on this side of the House. There are funds for Townsville West State School to install a permanent shade structure to the existing playground.

On Magnetic Island, my advocacy helped secure funding to replace the Sooning Street Bridge after it was damaged in a weather event prior to Christmas and sustained further damage during the February rain event. I am looking forward to restoring the road access to Radical Bay, and works are already underway on the new amenities block at Picnic Bay after the previous block was 'temporarily unavailable' for years.

On Palm Island, in addition to commitments to provide a pathway to home ownership for Palm Island residents and funding to kickstart the Palm Island tourism masterplan, we are investing in a multi-agency community safety facility on Palm Island.

Let's look at the big-ticket items across the state. The Olympic and Paralympic Games will bring investment in infrastructure into the regions hosting events, as well as into grassroots sports right across the state, like the Western Suburbs District Cricket Club, which is benefiting from the Games On! Program. Thanks to the Crisafulli government, Townsville will be an Olympic city in 2032. CopperString, with \$2.4 billion being invested next year alone, will secure the economic future of Queensland and unlock North West Minerals Province from Mount Isa to Townsville and straight through our port. For the Bruce Highway some \$9 billion has been secured by the Crisafulli government, in an 80-20 split with the federal Labor government, just two months into government. The Bruce is critical for Townsville and the Crisafulli government already has five projects underway to begin restoring the Bruce Highway to a standard that Queenslanders can be proud of. After years of mismanagement, Queenslanders finally have a government that is focused on delivery and not excuses—a government getting on with the job.

This is a budget that lays the groundwork to clean up the mess Labor left behind and to give Queenslanders the services, safety and opportunities they deserve. This is what a good government looks like—listening to locals, acting on their concerns and delivering real outcomes. This is a budget for safer streets, better health care, more homes and real cost-of-living relief. We are ready to deliver and with this budget, that work begins. I commend this budget to the House.