




Speech By
Hon. Steve Minnikin
MEMBER FOR CHATSWORTH

Record of Proceedings, 27 June 2025

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

 **Hon. SJ MINNIKIN** (Chatsworth—LNP) (Minister for Customer Services and Open Data and Minister for Small and Family Business) (2.20 pm): Eight months ago, when we came into government, we committed to delivering a small and family business first approach. We also committed to provide a people-first framework to deliver Australia's most customer service focused government. I am pleased to rise today to speak to the Crisafulli government's first budget, a budget that lays the groundwork for both of these key commitments. Let's look at the small and family business first approach.

For the first time in over a decade Queenslanders have a budget that puts the right settings in place to support the current 495,000 small and family businesses that call Queensland home. This is a budget for small and family businesses and the staff they employ. It is a budget that recognises the potential of small and family business and their staff. By establishing the right conditions, we will pave the way for a thriving future for small businesses in Queensland and the potential for a further 120,000 new small and family businesses over the next seven years.

This Crisafulli government budget includes more than \$130 million over the next four years for a mix of new programs, grants and initiatives to support our small and family businesses and their staff. It funds the Small and Family Business First Action Statement, which members would remember I launched back in May during Queensland Small Business Month. It tackles Labor's legacy of red tape doubling in just two years and rising insurance costs due to a decade-long, soft-on-crime approach. It funds the \$40 million Secure Community Partnership Program as part of our efforts to end a decade of Labor ignoring crime and, in particular, youth crime. It funds a \$19 million Apprenticeship Pilot Program and new grants programs for construction and professional care businesses.

In addition to the action statement, I am pleased to inform the House that this budget will provide \$16.8 million to extend the Small Business Support Network to June 2028. We have reversed Labor's decision to end funding next week on 30 June. It would have been cut. Let's take a closer look at the Small Business Support Network. The program currently includes 14 small and family business financial counsellors and six small and family business wellness coaches. Additional counsellors are also provided to support our small business disaster recovery efforts. Since commencement of the Small Business Financial Counselling Service back in July 2021, more than 4,800 clients have been supported.

Additionally, since commencement of the Small Business Wellness Coaching Service back in October 2022, almost 2,500 clients have been supported. This is a group of qualified people who provide a wraparound support service, with free and confidential access to financial counsellors to overcome business challenges including natural disasters. Let me repeat: this is a group that provides support for Queensland small and family businesses facing difficult times including, as said, during natural disasters and, incredibly, Labor were going to axe them. The network also provides wellness

coaching to support mental health during challenging times. We have reversed Labor's decision and committed funding for a further three years, as stated. This gives certainty to this vital program and support to small and family businesses.

The budget also supports our people-first framework and delivers a first for Queenslanders who rely on our digital services and customer services. As I announced early this month, from 1 July the customer services arm of Transport and Main Roads will transport to my customer services portfolio. As I have been previously stating, having a dedicated minister for customer service is a first for Queensland. Over 90 customer service centres, online services, call centres and digital identity services will all transfer to one department. We have aligned the functions of government involved in delivering customer experiences. We are now starting down the path to deliver our commitment to become Australia's most customer service focused government. It positions us to tackle some of those longstanding frustrations experienced by customers. I have outlined them many times but they are worth repeating in this chamber: the red-tape frustrations, the multiple phone calls being bounced from section to section, a whole heap of jargon on different complicated websites and siloed services.

Importantly, the budget will end the piecemeal, short-term thinking that is Labor's legacy when it comes to delivering and upgrading digital systems over the past decade. It delivers a Queensland first—a \$1 billion Government Digital Fund to coordinate whole-of-government investment in ICT systems across the public sector over the next four years. It is long overdue and well received by the ICT community.

The Department of Customer Services, Open Data and Small and Family Business will review investment proposals with a view to adopting common and core systems. As I have previously stated, we will take a calm and methodical approach to tackling the number of internal and customer-facing ICT systems that need to be renewed or, in some cases, replaced. We will ensure greater oversight and efficiency in the implementation of key digital systems and customer services. We will reduce future expenses associated with the creation of bespoke systems and software—proprietary software as opposed to more open architecture. We will see fewer ICT cost blowouts and project overruns because we mean it when we say we have respect for Queenslanders' money. I realise this is a new concept for those opposite, but we understand the importance of driving value for money and innovation. Take the role of artificial intelligence, for example. We are not entering an exciting era of AI; it is already here.

As I said earlier, there are a number of digital systems across government that were ignored by Labor and have reached or are beyond the end of their useful service life. More will reach their end-of-life date in the coming years. We are already exploring the benefits of AI to ensure those systems continue to support and deliver the services that Queenslanders expect.

This budget allows us to invest in a government that is transparent about performance; provides opportunities for financial, economic, social, health, scientific and environmental benefits through research and innovative re-use; and contributes to more effective government service delivery.

One of the greatest frustrations of Queenslanders is having to provide the same data, the same information, to different agencies time and time again due to a lack of coherent data sharing across the 19 different departments of the Queensland government. Ironically, this frustration extends to many public servants who, in the course of their duties, are presented with roadblocks and delays to exchanging data internally between departments, whether for assisting Queenslanders, for looking at performance measures or for policy development.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Public Service for trying to offer great customer service with old systems and old processes. I want to empower them with modern, contemporary customer service tools and watch them offer a new level of service and convenience. Our 'tell us once' approach will help address this.

In another first for Queensland, we will be implementing data-sharing systems, leading to the establishment of real-time metrics for assessing government performance. It is already underway in different forms in other states but Queensland, under Labor, failed to get onboard. We will be working with other key agencies to provide clarity ease of access to keep performance metrics for government services. I am committed to making it easier for data to be shared across government departments. As I have said, this will lead to better and more accurate information for policy decision-making and better services and deliver better outcomes for everyday Queenslanders. Our goal is to enable a more seamless transfer of data between departments and agencies.

The Crisafulli government is also committed to ensuring its services, information and infrastructure are secure so it can deliver trusted services to Queenslanders. The cyber risk landscape continues to escalate in an environment of geopolitical uncertainty, supply chain vulnerabilities and a

rise in the sophistication and frequency of cyber attacks. As the rapid demand for digital services and technologies such as AI and quantum computing multiplies, it also brings new challenges and increased exposure to the cyberthreat landscape.

This budget continues to position Queensland to meet the cybersecurity threats presented and be ready to host upcoming high-profile events such as the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This budget continues to support the Queensland Government Cyber Security Unit as it engages and collaborates with all levels of government across the state and with our national counterparts to increase cybersecurity maturity, uplift capability and provide advice and coordination for cybersecurity incidents. The Queensland Government Cyber Security Unit works to build and promote ongoing cyber resilience in government service delivery, nurturing a diverse cyber talent and professional skills pipeline.

The Crisafulli government's first budget is what a real plan looks like. In closing, I thank the Treasurer and his department for their engagement and willingness to embrace innovation and the reforms required. The budget is a fresh start for Queensland. It is a budget that delivers for Queensland, and that is exactly what a responsible budget should be about for everyday Queenslanders.

Mr Deputy Speaker, you have reviewed and approved 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—

Mr Speaker, returning to small and family business, we know they are the backbone of our economy.

They are critical to our communities—creating jobs and supporting diverse local economies across the state.

Small businesses continue delivering vital goods and services to Queenslanders, in the face of a range of operating challenges and pressures, which include cost of living pressures, digital transformation, global uncertainty, cyber threats, and natural disasters.

Collectively these factors are affecting business confidence and profitability and testing the grit of our small business owners.

Our Small and Family Business First Action Statement is a key step to ensure Queensland small and family businesses are empowered to get on with driving economic growth and employing Queenslanders.

The key outcomes of the Action Statement include:

- Making it easier to access government services by focussing on streamlining and improving access to services and supporting businesses in every stage of their journey.
- Tailored support to start, grow and thrive by addressing key barriers to success and assisting small business to enhance capabilities, access business software and employ more apprentices.
- Responding to red tape and other pain points by applying a small and family business first lens to regulation and ensuring it is effective and supports business stability.
- Boosting procurement opportunities by creating more opportunities for small and family businesses to tender for government work, simplifying contracts and removing unnecessary requirements.

Let's have a closer look at some of the key deliverables from our Action Statement.

In January the Crisafulli Government delivered our election promise that the Queensland Small Business Commissioner would re-focus on reducing red tape for small and family businesses.

It was a key commitment of the Crisafulli Government's 100 Day Plan.

The Statement of Expectations for the Queensland Small Business Commissioner outlines a commitment to consult and collect feedback from small and family businesses to identify practical solutions to remove red tape.

Last month in Townsville we announced the launch of the first round of our \$40 million Secure Communities Partnership Program to help deter crime against small and family businesses.

This round of funding will support local councils to install critical safety upgrades including CCTV, alarm systems, security lighting and fencing to make local small businesses, and business precincts safer.

We're doing this because Labor weakened the youth crime laws, which led to small and family businesses, and their staff, being the victims of crime.

It led to operating costs and insurance costs soaring.

It is a challenge that has been a generation in the making and one which we are determined to change.

The Action Statement also outlined our plan to Deliver a Small Business Month with: "A program of events and activities with grants, workshops, clinics and more to connect small businesses to information and networks and celebrate success."

From workshops on financial literacy and business recovery to embracing technology like AI and social media, the month-long program provided practical support equipping small businesses with the tools and knowledge they need to thrive in a competitive economy.

This year, 48 events were funded through the Crisafulli Government's Better Local Business Grants program, with local governments, business groups, and Chambers of Commerce leading the charge in hosting impactful sessions.

The Crisafulli Government delivered 11 financial literacy workshops, eight business recovery clinics, four "Big Partners for Small Business" sessions, and a combined financial literacy and recovery clinic in Winton.

The Crisafulli Government has shifted the focus of Small Business Month away from the previous Labor Government-centric celebrations and is instead prioritising meaningful engagement and direct support for small business.

Mr Speaker, all politics is local and when it comes to delivering locally, the Crisafulli Government is supporting the people in my electorate of Chatsworth and across Brisbane's south-eastern suburbs.

This budget delivers on the vision we put forward ahead of the 2024 election.

I welcome the investment in education portfolio in my electorate of Chatsworth, including a new Block A at Belmont State School as part of the \$70.68 million School and Education Boost funding, and \$40,000 for facility upgrades.

At Gumdale State School there's \$661,000 to upgrade facilities and at Carina State School—my old school—\$15,000 to upgrade facilities.

Nearby Mayfield State School will receive funding to deliver a new acoustic wall in the undercover activity centre.

In another initiative very dear to my heart, the Queensland Koala Society will receive funding to deliver a fauna crossing on Old Cleveland Road at Carindale to keep our koalas and wildlife safer and the Bulimba Creek Catchment Coordinating Committee, otherwise known as B4C, will receive \$135,000 to deliver a weed control and rehabilitation program.

Of course Mr Speaker, the Sleeman Sports Complex at Chandler will be a focus during the Olympic and Paralympic Games with cycling and BMX and a para-sport facility as part of the 2032 Delivery Plan.

This budget delivers the fresh start for Queensland that we promised before last year's election.

After Labor's crises in youth crime, health, housing and cost of living, it delivers the foundations for safety where you live, health services when you need them, a better lifestyle through a stronger economy and a plan for Queensland's future.

The job of budget repair after more than a decade of Labor mismanagement is not an easy task, but I commend the Treasurer and his Department for this year's Queensland Budget.