

\$500 million injection for Schools and Hospitals Fund

The Palaszczuk Government has announced a \$500 million injection in Queensland's local schools and hospitals to enable the delivery of important refurbishment and maintenance projects.

Treasurer Curtis Pitt said a new statewide Schools and Hospitals Fund would provide an economic uplift to local communities with a focus on health refurbishment and education capital and maintenance projects.

"Infrastructure – including critical social infrastructure such as schools and hospitals will always play a key role in our decentralised state," Mr Pitt said.

"By giving Queenslanders access to well-maintained and modern facilities we can ensure that our state continues to grow and prosper.

"More importantly, the state-wide Schools and Hospitals Fund will deliver new health and education projects and generate local jobs and new investment in our economy.

"This key jobs-generating initiative will allocate \$90 million to deliver two new schools in Townsville, including \$50 million for a new primary school to open by the 2018 school year, and \$40 million for master planning works for a new high school to open by the 2020 school year.

"This is a sound investment in our kids and our future," he said.

"The Schools and Hospitals fund will include a \$230 million allocation to facilitate a much needed new maintenance boost for our schools over three years from 2016-17.

"In addition to the extra \$230 million over three years under the Schools and Hospitals Fund, the Government has approved a further \$70 million in 2015-16 for school maintenance projects."

"This takes the overall uplift in spending on school maintenance to \$300 million over four years.

Mr Pitt said the new funding would tackle the maintenance backlog left over recent years.

"The Auditor-General has recommended that Queensland invest 1 per cent of the value of its education asset base, per annum, in improving school facilities.

"The funding provided in this year's Budget delivers on that recommendation.

"We will see schools refurbished across the length and breadth of Queensland – local projects that will benefit painters, plasterers, carpenters, tilers and floorers, electricians, plumbers and other trades right around the State.

“Local tradespeople will be able to register their interest and become an accredited supplier of works.

“An additional \$180 million will be available over four years for vital upgrades and repairs at the Roma, Hervey Bay, Gladstone and Caloundra hospitals through the Enhancing Regional Hospitals program.

“Similarly, the hospital projects will involve hundreds of local jobs and provide an economic impetus to regional and local communities.”

Mr Pitt said the new Schools and Hospitals Fund would expand on other planned health and education projects for which the Budget provided funding.

“For example, there’s nearly half a billion dollars that will be spent this year alone to continue delivery of the Sunshine Coast Public University Hospital and its Skills, Academic and Research Centre.

“Education and health are the backbone of good Labor Budgets and this project stream for local hospital and school refurbishments has been targeted to support local jobs and local economies,” Mr Pitt said.

“The Palaszczuk Government is committed to making sure that our local communities have access to appropriate educational and hospital facilities,” Mr Pitt said.

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