

# QUEENSLAND BUDGET 2026–27

## *What It Means for Gold Coast Business*

A Gold Coast Central Chamber of Commerce Analysis • June 2026

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Treasurer David Janetzki handed down the Crisafulli LNP Government’s second Queensland Budget today, framing it as a “foundation for a fresh start” at a time of genuine economic challenge. At the Gold Coast Central Chamber of Commerce, we have been closely watching the papers — and our verdict is measured: there are real wins for Gold Coast businesses, but also significant concerns that our members cannot afford to ignore.

## The Highs: Reasons for Optimism

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### Power Bills Are Finally Heading Down

This is perhaps the most immediately tangible win for Gold Coast businesses in this budget. Electricity costs have been a persistent pressure point for our members, and the news is genuinely positive. Under the Government’s Energy Roadmap, the Australian Energy Regulator’s draft Default Market Offer indicates small business electricity benchmarks in Southeast Queensland are set to drop by up to 12.8 per cent in 2026–27. The Premier confirmed businesses will see falls of between 8 and 14 per cent depending on their tariff. For hospitality venues, retailers, manufacturers and anyone running energy-intensive operations, this is meaningful relief. We encourage all members to review their current plans against available market offers to ensure they capture the full benefit of these falls.

### Apprentice and Trainee Incentives Extended

The Government has committed \$64 million to extend the 50 per cent payroll tax rebate for employers who hire apprentices and trainees. For Gold Coast businesses with annual Australian taxable wages of \$1.3 million and above, this continues to reduce the cost of growing your workforce and investing in the next generation of skilled workers. The Chamber has long advocated for measures that address the skills pipeline on the Gold Coast, and we welcome the continuation of this support.

### The No New Taxes Pledge Honoured

Ahead of the budget, the Crisafulli Government made a firm commitment to not introduce or increase any taxes — and it has held to that promise. In an environment where businesses are already managing rising costs on multiple fronts, certainty around the tax environment is genuinely valuable. We commend the Treasurer for keeping this commitment.

### Small Business at the Centre of the Narrative

The Government’s stated position — that “small and family businesses are the engine room of Queensland’s economy” — is a sentiment the Chamber strongly endorses. The budget includes:

- Continued funding for micro-credential courses in partnership with the University of the Sunshine Coast, aimed at improving business planning and capability for small business owner-managers.
- Red tape reduction and improved government procurement access for small businesses.
- Ongoing digital investment to streamline government services interactions for small operators.

### Infrastructure Spending Signals Confidence

The Government’s infrastructure pipeline remains substantial, and the Gold Coast is set to be a direct beneficiary. Funding commitments relating to the Logan–Gold Coast Faster Rail corridor, road network upgrades across SEQ, and the new Coomera Hospital all point to a government that recognises the Gold Coast is a growing city deserving of matching investment. This infrastructure spend creates direct contracting and supply chain opportunities for local businesses, and generates the consumer confidence that drives spending across our city.

## The Lows: Causes for Concern

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### State Debt at Alarming Levels

The Chamber cannot overlook the structural financial position of the State. The budget projects a deficit of \$6.1 billion in 2026–27, and Queensland’s total debt is forecast to balloon to \$216 billion by 2029–30, up from \$142.3 billion in the current financial year. While a surplus of \$619 million is projected for 2029–30, the path there is long and the risks are real. Businesses understand that government investment drives economic activity — but debt of this scale carries long-term implications for future taxation settings, service delivery and the overall investment climate. The Chamber will monitor the fiscal trajectory carefully and advocate for responsible debt management.

### Housing Affordability Remains Unresolved

The housing crisis continues to undermine Gold Coast business. Our members are struggling to attract and retain staff because workers simply cannot find affordable places to live in our city. While the budget maintains commitments to the Residential Activation Fund and social housing pipelines, the pace of housing delivery remains a genuine concern. Until housing supply on the Gold Coast meaningfully catches up with demand, labour market pressures will continue to weigh on business. We call on the Government to ensure that Gold Coast-specific housing projects are accelerated, not delayed.

### Stamp Duty Uncertainty for Business Owners

Of concern to many business owners is a structural issue barely addressed in the budget papers: proposed federal reforms to discretionary trusts could see Queensland collect stamp duty on real estate, goodwill and equipment transferred to related entities. For family businesses — the backbone of the Gold Coast economy — this could create a significant and unexpected compliance and cost burden. We will be seeking clarity from Treasury on this matter and urge affected members to speak with their advisors urgently.

### Workforce and Skills Gaps Need Greater Focus

While the apprentice and trainee incentives are welcome, the broader skills and workforce challenge on the Gold Coast requires more ambition. Tourism, hospitality, construction and health care are all facing acute labour shortages that are directly limiting business growth. The budget does not contain sufficient targeted measures to address workforce supply at the regional level. The Chamber will be engaging with the Government to advocate for stronger Gold Coast-specific workforce and migration initiatives.

### The Path to Surplus Remains Uncertain

The budget’s \$619 million surplus projection for 2029–30 rests on continued strong coal royalties, solid economic growth and strict expense discipline. Any deterioration in commodity prices, interest rate uncertainty, or broader economic slowdown could push that target further away — and with it, the prospect of fiscal headroom to support business. Our members need confidence that the numbers stack up, and we will continue to hold the Government to account on its fiscal commitments.

## Our Overall Assessment

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The 2026–27 Queensland Budget is a budget of cautious progress. For Gold Coast businesses, it delivers some genuine relief — particularly on energy costs — and maintains a positive investment narrative around infrastructure and workforce development. The no new taxes pledge provides important near-term certainty.

However, the scale of Queensland’s growing debt, the continued housing affordability crisis, and the absence of bold structural reform signal that there is much more work to be done. The Gold Coast is one of Queensland’s most dynamic economic regions, and we deserve a budget that matches our city’s ambition.

The Gold Coast Central Chamber of Commerce will continue to engage constructively with the State Government on behalf of our members — pushing for practical, business-friendly policies that allow Gold Coast enterprises to grow, employ and invest with confidence.

*For further information or to discuss how this budget affects your business, contact the Gold Coast Central Chamber of Commerce.*

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