



Estimates Committee D

2009

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCTION

1. On 3 June 2009, Estimates D was appointed by the Legislative Assembly to examine and report on the proposed expenditures in the Appropriation Bill 2009 for the organisational units within the ministerial portfolios of:
 - the Minister for Main Roads; and
 - the Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs.
2. The committee held a public hearing on 17 July 2009 at Parliament House to question the ministers about their portfolio budget. A transcript of the hearing is available from the Parliament's website at:

http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au/view/legislative_Assembly/hansard.asp
3. Prior to the public hearing, the committee put questions on notice to each minister. Responses to all the questions were received.
4. The committee has considered the estimates referred to it by examining information contained in:
 - the Budget papers.
 - answers to pre-hearing questions on notice.
 - oral evidence taken at the hearing.
 - documents tabled at the hearing.
 - answers to questions taken on notice at the hearing.
5. Answers to pre-hearing questions on notice, questions taken on notice at the hearing and documents tabled at the hearing, together with minutes of the committee's meetings, are included in a volume of additional information tabled with this report.
6. This report summarises the estimates referred to the committee and highlights some of the issues the committee examined.

MINISTER FOR MAIN ROADS

7. On 26 March 2009 machinery-of-government changes were gazetted establishing the Department of Transport and Main Roads. The Minister for Main Roads portfolio appropriation forms part of this department.
8. Main Roads has four outputs. Road System Planning; Road Program Development and Delivery; Road Corridor and Network Operations and Community Transport and Access Support.
9. The Road System Planning output ensures the long-term development of Queensland's road network as part of an integrated transport system. The Road Program Development and Delivery output develops and delivers road projects that provide a safe, efficient and reliable road network. The Road Corridor and Network Operations output focusses on the safe sustainable management and operations of the road network and corridors. The Community Transport and Access Support output provides funding grants under the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme to local government road projects and works undertaken on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community access improvement projects.
10. The following table details the appropriation for the Main Roads ministerial portfolio for 2009-10 (26/3/09-30/6/09) compared to the previous financial year.

Main Roads	Est Actual 2008-09 \$'000	Budget 2009-10 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>		
Departmental Services	821,015	2,037,496
Equity Adjustment	279,837	1,787,938
<i>Administered Items</i>		
Vote	1,100,852	3,825,434

Source: Department of Transport and Main Roads

11. Details of the 2008-09 financial year appropriation for the Department of Main Roads (ceased entity) are provided in the following table.

Department of Main Roads	Budget 2008-09 \$'000	Budget 2009-10 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>	-	-
Departmental Services	1,263,590	-
Equity Adjustment	1,575,670	-
<i>Administered Items</i>		-
Vote	2,839,260	-

Source: Appropriation Bill 2009, p 14.

Note – No Budget Allocations for 2009-10 as amount transferred to Department of Transport and Main Roads

12. The Main Roads ministerial portfolio estimates that it will have a total operating budget in 2009-10 of \$2,157.4 million.
13. The estimated expenditure for Main Roads ministerial portfolio outputs in 2009-10 compared to estimated actual expenditure for the prior year is detailed in the following table:

Main Roads Outputs	Est. Actual 2008-09 \$'000	Estimate 2009-10 \$'000
Road Systems Planning	51,124	51,735
Road Program Development & Delivery	1,810,904	1,828,621
Road Corridor & Network Operations	133,289	134,702
Community Transport Access Support	109,996	142,361
Sub Total	2,105,313	2,157,419

Source: 2009-10 Service Delivery Statements, Book 2, p 2-185.

Budget Highlights

14. Key priorities for 2009-10 include:

- continuation of upgrading the Ipswich Motorway between Wacol and Darra, commencement of construction of the Dinmore to Goodna section and completion of the Ipswich/Logan interchange.
- commencement of upgrading of the Bruce Highway between Cooroy and Curra

(Section B – Sankeys Road to Traveston Road).

- completion of the Bruce Highway six-lane upgrade between the Gateway Motorway and Caboolture.
- continuation of the Houghton Highway Bridge duplication project with the construction of a new 2.7 kilometre bridge between Brighton and Redcliffe.
- commencement of construction of stage one of the Pacific Motorway Upgrade (Gateway Motorway to Logan Motorway), between Springwood South and Daisy Hill, including the Loganlea interchange and improvements to the Paradise Road roundabout.
- completion of the Bundaberg Ring Road to improve safety and reduce travel times for motorists and heavy vehicle drivers.
- completion of construction and widening of sections of the Roma-Taroom Road, which will provide motorists with an all-weather, sealed road for the majority of the distance between Roma and Taroom.¹
- completion of construction of Forgan Bridge and approaches in Mackay.
- commencement of construction of the Calliope Range deviation on the Dawson Highway, west of Gladstone.
- completion of stage one of the Townsville Port Access Project (Stuart Bypass).
- continuation of widening of the Gregory Developmental Road, north of Charters Towers.
- continuation of the upgrade of the Kennedy Developmental Road between Three Ways and The Lynd.
- completion of design and community engagement ahead of construction to replace the Don River bridges on the Leichhardt Highway, including the replacement of three timber bridges with concrete structures on a new highway alignment.
- continuation of rehabilitation and widening of a section of the Flinders Highway between Charters Towers and Hughenden.

¹ 2009-10 Service Delivery Statements, Book 2, p 2-173

- commencement of the Douglas Arterial duplication project on the Townsville Ring Road.
- commencement of the realignment of the Bruce Highway at Cardwell Range.
- continuing investment in the road network, balancing the need for enhancements and preservation of an ageing network and sustaining employment for over 30,000 people in roads and related industries.
- ensuring priority strategic planning activities are completed to provide high-level guidance on scope and desired outcomes for both road infrastructure and non-infrastructure investment.
- providing significant reductions in crash and incident-related traffic delays by introducing heavy vehicle recovery units and other “Open Roads” initiatives.
- continuing migration of the remainder of Brisbane City Council’s traffic control system to Main Roads’ STREAMS system.
- working with local governments to roll out priority infrastructure plans.
- developing consistent state-wide environmental systems and processes.
- rolling out of the five-year, heavy vehicle rest areas program.
- developing a designated road network for the high productivity freight precinct in the vicinity of the Port of Brisbane.
- applying the Intelligent Access Program to operators of heavy mobile cranes to allow access to approved routes in return for monitoring through new tracking technologies.
- allowing applicants to lodge, track and monitor the progress of development applications over the Internet by rolling out an electronic development application management system.²
- Debt on the Logan Motorway.
- Gateway upgrade project.
- Management of urban traffic growth.
- Incident response plan.
- The amalgamation of the Department of Transport and Department of Main Roads.
- North Quay slip lane entry point to the Riverside Expressway.
- Migration of Brisbane City Council’s traffic control system to the state.
- Rebranding of the motorway Etoll.
- Safer Roads Sooner projects in the Whitsunday electorate.
- Sunshine Motorway upgrade and southern section of the Caloundra-Mooloolaba road.
- Widening of Maryborough-Hervey Bay Road.
- Houghton Highway bridge duplication.
- Federal contribution to state road projects.
- Main Roads and Transport departmental staff wages.
- Gateway upgrade south and Gateway upgrade north projects.
- Cooroy and Curra section upgrade of the Bruce Highway.
- Q150 bridge-naming project.
- The Townsville Ring Road, the Woodlands to Veales upgrade and the duplication of the Douglas Arterial Road.
- Safety of federally funded roads and need for further funding.
- Five-year heavy vehicle rest areas program.

Issues considered by the committee

15. Issues addressed at the hearing include:
- Tolls on existing and new roads.
 - Congestion management and asset sales.

² 2009-10 Service Delivery Statements, Book 2, p 2-174/5.

MINISTER FOR DISABILITY SERVICES AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS

16. On 26 March 2009 machinery-of-government changes were gazetted transferring Disability Services to the Department of Communities. The Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs portfolio appropriation forms part of this department.
17. Disability Services leads integrated service delivery to assist people with a disability, people with a mental illness and people who are ageing, to participate in their community. Disability Services has four outputs: Accommodation Support Services, Community Services, Respite Services and Community Home Care.
18. Multicultural services leads the promotion of cultural diversity and enhancing community cohesion. Multicultural Affairs has one output entitled Leadership in Multicultural policy and engagement with ethnic communities.
19. The following table details the appropriation for the Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs ministerial portfolio for 2009-10 (26/3/09-30/6/09) compared to the previous financial year:

Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs	Est. Actual 2008-09 \$'000	Budget 2009-10 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>		
Departmental Services	277,490	1,380,049
Equity Adjustment	(20,806)	60,581
<i>Administered Items</i>	-	-
Vote	256,684	1,440,630

Source: Department of Communities

20. Details of the 2008-09 financial year appropriation for Disability Services Queensland are provided in the following table.

Disability Services Queensland	Budget 2008-09 \$'000	Budget 2009-10 \$'000
<i>Controlled Items</i>		
Departmental Services	851,543	-
Equity Adjustment	41,165	-
<i>Administered Items</i>	-	-
Vote	892,708	-

Source: Appropriation Bill 2009, p 15.

Note – No Budget Allocations for 2009-10 as amount transferred to Department of Communities

21. The Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs ministerial portfolio estimates it will have a total operating budget in 2009-10 of \$1,408.3 million.
22. The estimated expenditure for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs ministerial portfolio outputs in 2009-10 compared to estimated actual expenditure for the prior year is detailed in the following table:

	Est. Actual 2008-09 \$'000	Estimate 2009-10 \$'000
Disability Services Outputs		
Accommodation Support Services	435,396	495,011
Community Services	312,817	355,649
Respite Services	73,362	83,407
Community Home Care	398,941	465,060
Multicultural Affairs Output		
Leadership in multicultural policy and engagement with ethnic communities	7,263	9,267
Sub Total	1,227,779	1,408,394

Source: 2009-10 Service Delivery Statements, Book 3, p 3-21.

Budget Highlights – Disability Services

23. Key priorities for 2009-10 include:

- Funding for specialist disability services, non-clinical mental health services and home and community care.
- Funding for adults with an intellectual and/or cognitive disability who exhibit challenging behaviours.
- Redesign of specialist disability service system.
- Funding for YoungCare.
- Pilot of a brokerage model of self-directed funding for families of children and young people with a disability.
- Pilot of two community residential programs to assist young people showing early symptoms of mental health problems.
- Support for people with a psychiatric disability to transition from Queensland Health acute and extended treatment facilities to community living.
- Assistance for people to transition out of hospital and live independently in the community.
- Short-term accommodation and support for people with mental illness in need of respite.
- Home and Community Care Program (HACC) funding for additional services across Queensland to support the needs of the frail aged, people with disability and their carers.³

Budget Highlights - Multicultural Affairs

24. Key priorities for 2009-10 include:

- Implementation of Local Area Multicultural Partnerships (LAMP) and Community Action for a Multicultural Society (CAMS) by local government agencies and community organisations.
- Consultation with Queensland's multicultural community.
- Promoting and acknowledging the benefits of multiculturalism for Queensland.

Issues considered by the committee

25. Issues addressed at the hearing include:

Disability Services

- Recurrent funding for non-clinical mental health services.
- Satisfaction amongst service users using respite services.
- Levels of funding support for non-government organisations.
- Funding for individuals with a disability who require a wheelchair.
- Young People in Residential Community Care.
- Respite services for older carers.
- Available services for children with a disability.
- Autism Early Intervention.
- Funding for non-government organisations.
- Costs of implementing the recommendations in the Carter report.
- Capital infrastructure investment.
- Initiatives for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with a disability.
- Service delivery for Queenslanders with a disability who live in rural and remote locations.
- All Abilities Playgrounds.
- Meals on Wheels.
- Home and Community care services for Indigenous people, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people at risk of homelessness.
- Investigation of complaints.
- Cost and status of the Community Care Access Point.
- Employment opportunities for people with a mental illness.

³ 2009-10 Service Delivery Statements, Book 3, p 3-5/6

Multicultural Affairs

- Local Area Multicultural Partnership and Community Action for a Multicultural Society programs.
- Delivery of English tutoring programs in the multicultural communities of Queensland.
- Effectiveness of programs to change community attitudes to cultural diversity.
- Funding for the delivery of multicultural programs to the community.
- Cross-cultural training within government departments.
- Delivery of health awareness programs to multicultural communities.
- Youth engagement programs.
- Funding of language and interpreter services.
- Promotion of social cohesion.
- Local Council partnerships to deliver support for people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Antiracism campaigns.

Recommendation

26. The committee recommends that the proposed expenditure, as detailed in the Appropriation Bill 2009 for the organisational units in the portfolios referred to it, be agreed to by the Legislative Assembly without amendment.



Grace Grace MP
Chair
August 2009

Estimates Committee D Membership



Ms Grace Grace MP
(Chair)
Member for Brisbane Central



Miss Fiona Simpson MP
(Deputy Chair)
Member for Maroochydore



Mr Michael Choi MP
Member for Capalaba



Mr Andrew Cripps MP
Member for Hinchinbrook



Mr Chris Foley MP
Member for Maryborough



Ms Jan Jarratt MP
Member for Whitsunday



Hon Dean Wells MP
Member for Murrumba

Secretariat

Mrs Helen Bogatzis (Research Director)
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Estimates Committee D

2009

Statements of Reservation

from

Ms Fiona Simpson MP

Member for Maroochydore

Shadow Minister for Transport and Main Roads

and

Mr Andrew Cripps MP

Member for Hinchinbrook

Shadow Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs

Statement of Reservation

Main Roads

Merger – Department of Transport and Main Roads

The LNP supports the merger of the departments of Transport and Main Roads as this was our policy before the last State election. The merger has the potential to address some of the issues plaguing Queensland's transport network such as poor planning, substandard project management and lack of coordination. Ultimately however the answer to these issues will be the quality of leadership as this will have a stronger impact than structure alone.

On this question of leadership, the estimates process and the structure of the merger is found wanting. It was unfortunate the Committees examining the statements presided over of the Ministers for Transport and Main Roads were separated. This is a merger with two ministers and a lack of clarity about who does what. It should be recognised that the division of responsibilities between Ministers has not been clearly and publically enunciated, despite requested clarification as recently as the during the committee hearings. That, combined with the time pressures enforced by the limited examination time, resulted in less than optimal outcomes for the consideration of the combined estimates.

Such confusion is evidenced by the fact that neither the Minister for Main Roads or Transport were able to answer questioning by the opposition on the impact of the merger on staff costs and the impact of aligning divergent Enterprise Bargaining Agreements. It should be noted these questions remain unanswered to a satisfactory level.

Non-Government members strongly recommend considerations of the Department of Transport and Main Roads be combined in a single Estimates Committee in future with a extended time frame.

Transport Infrastructure Coordination and Planning

The LNP non-Government members would like to place on record their strong concern about the apparent lack of coordination and ministerial leadership shown by the current Queensland Government.

Despite questioning, including to the Minister for Main Roads during the considerations of Estimates Committee D, there has been no clear delineation of a chain of responsibility between the Ministers of Transport, Main Roads and Infrastructure for the long term planning and coordination of transport infrastructure in Queensland.

This lack of ministerial leadership was clearly evident in the recent damning Auditor General's Report into Transport Network Management and Urban Congestion in South East Queensland. This Report found, among other criticisms, planning activity "lacks integration and alignment and compromises its overall effectiveness in managing the Queensland road network." Unfortunately the Minister refused again to apologise to Queensland for the current Government's failures, which has delivered unprecedented urban congestion and adversely impacts all Queenslanders' lifestyle.

Further, the current Government has repeatedly cited strong, yet unanticipated, growth in the Queensland population, particularly in the South East, as contributing to the need for the current panicked and uncoordinated infrastructure program. Yet consideration of the Australian Bureau of Statistics population records for Queensland shows that since 1982 (over a quarter of a decade) Queensland's population growth has largely been high but stable at an average of 2 percent, exactly the same as the population growth experienced during the last decade of Labor Government.

The LNP non-Government members strongly believe this demonstrates the failure of the current Government to properly plan and coordinate infrastructure provision and would recommend major reform in the leadership processes.

In addition the LNP continues to raise concerns about the poor costing and scoping of projects which has led to ongoing questioning of the credibility of Queensland Main Roads practices leading to cost blowouts.

It should be noted that the LNP strongly supports a responsible and proactive program of transport infrastructure provision that delivers the transport network vital for Queenslanders standard of life, but would contend the current Government's poor management is resulting in duplication, wasted resources and congestion.

In addition the LNP non-Government members would like to place on record their concern regarding the Queensland's opaque processes in determining project priorities, the lack of long-term coordination and inconsistent planning which needs to be urgently addressed.

Sale of Queensland Motorways/Distance based tolling

It is noted that under questioning Minister Wallace confirmed the Government is actively investigating 'distance based tolling' on already fix tolled roads and proposed roads. It is the non-Government members' understanding that this proposal is far more advanced than just an investigation.

Distance based tolling means motorists using existing roads such as the Gateway and Logan Motorway on sections where there are currently no tolls, could face a toll within the next few years with new tolling technology applied to entries and exits. This would result in Queensland motorists, who are already reeling from a new fuel tax and higher registration fees, are likely to also face bigger tolls on motorways within the next two years.

The LNP non-Government members are concerned motorists are being targeted so the Queensland Government can boost the value of the Gateway and Logan Motorways ahead of the assets fire sale.

It is also a concern that the Minister refused to state when he was first alerted to the proposed sale of Queensland Motorways. This leads to one of two conclusions, that there was consideration of the sale prior to the recent State election or Minister Wallace, similar to his colleague Minister Nolan were not consulted about the sale of major assets in their portfolio.

In addition Minister Wallace confirmed that the Go Via theme song "Don't stop me now" cost the government \$150,000. He also claimed around 155,000 tags were issued in the past six weeks. This equates to a cost of approximately \$1 per tag in a situation where it is a sellers market and motorists largely had little choice but to take up this option. The LNP non-Government members would like to place on record their reservations that this is a proper use of taxpayer funds.

In addition the ongoing difficulty experienced by many motorists in accessing the Go Via system raises concerns for the LNP non-Government members.

Federal Government funding

In the recent round of Federal Government transport infrastructure funding announced as part of the Nation Building Program, Queensland has clearly been a loser. Of particular concern is that only two road projects received funding;

Ipswich Motorway – a blowout of \$884 million to the project cost was funded by the Federal Government. Despite many assurances from the Queensland Government that \$1.1 billion was the full cost of the widening of the current Ipswich Motorway this has proved vastly inaccurate with another 70 percent plus cost blowout. This has robbed other possible road projects of funds. The Minister for Main Roads should acknowledge this loss as he set it out in his press release of 5 March 2007 when the former Australian Government was proposing to spend comparable funds on the Ipswich corridor upgrade and he stated this was removing funds from other projects, in particular in north Queensland. The LNP strongly recommends the implementation of improved planning and costing mechanisms in the Department of Transport and Main Roads to ensure such poor outcomes are minimised in future and expresses concern that the Minister for Main Roads did not acknowledge this failure in his evidence to the committee.

Bruce Highway, Cooroy to Curra - \$488 million was committed by the Australian Government for this project. The non-Government members would like to record this is considerably less than the \$700 million committed by the former Coalition Government for this section of dangerous road, and over 18 months later. In addition it should be recorded that the LNP non-Government members are passionate that safety should be the highest priority in determining the upgrade of our transport network, particularly in such proven dangerous sections such as Cooroy to Curra. The LNP members would like to record their strong and ongoing concerns that the Minister refused repeatedly to table any safety report that confirms the

proposed upgrade will not result in a reduced safety outcome, with their potential unintended consequence of more fatalities on this section of road. This is particularly due to the road moving from four lanes at Cooroy, back to two lanes till the section which will be upgraded to four lanes from Sankeys Road to Traveston Road and then back to two lanes into Gympie. Of particular and ongoing concern is that the Minister refused repeatedly to rule out that the section of road to receive funding received priority over a staged approach due to the need to re-align the section of the Bruce Highway due to be flooded by the planned, but stalled Traveston Crossing Dam. The LNP calls on the Minister to release this information as a matter for priority. The Bruce Highway is, and will continue to be, the lifeblood of our State and all outcomes must enhance and optimise safety, particularly on dangerous sections of road that are crying out for upgrade such as Cooroy to Curra.

Federal advance funding – Non-Government Members would like to place on record their concern that the Minister for Main Roads claimed in the estimates hearings that the advance payment for transport projects as part of the Nation Building funds went to “Land Acquisition”. It is clear from the budget papers much of these prepaid funds actually went to consolidated revenue.

Regional transport network

While the limited time allocated to the consideration of the Main Roads budget estimates strongly restricted the ability to consider all regional projects, the LNP non-Government members would like to place on record ongoing concerns regarding the lack of road funding for regional Queensland. In particular, issues which were able to be raised in the Estimate Committee hearings were as follows;

Toowoomba Second Range Crossing – this project has been delayed yet again in the recent SEQIPP. This is particularly concerning in light of the ongoing reduction of rail services in regional Queensland, forcing increasing levels of freight and livestock onto the Warrego Highway which travels through the main street of Toowoomba and down the current steep and treacherous range crossing. The LNP non-Government members condemn the Government for the lack of action on this vital infrastructure project.

Warrego Highway – This Highway has been ignored for too long. It has long been the practice of the Queensland Government to blame the Federal Government for not funding this and other National Network roads. The LNP would like to put on record their ongoing concern regarding the lack of federal funding particularly in regional areas. This builds on our criticism of the lack of funding in the recent Nation Building announcement. However, we also believe it is the role of State Governments to ensure projects are truly “shovel ready” and also provide initiative and leadership when seeking to partner with the Federal Government in addressing priorities. This has not been occurring and needs to be addressed.

Conclusion

The LNP non-Government members would like to place on record their ongoing concerns and reservations about the Main Roads Estimates and would urge the Government to address the issues raised above as a matter of urgency.

Signed,



Fiona Simpson
Shadow Minister for Transport and Main Roads

Statement of Reservation

Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs

Secretary of Committee D

I refer to the draft report for Estimates Committee D and submit a statement of reservation on the report in relation to the Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs portfolios and some general comments on the process of Estimates Committees hearings.

General comments on the Estimates Process

The Estimates Committee process is intended to be an effective scrutiny of the Government's expenditure, but once again this year has shown major deficiencies in the process.

In general, the limited number of questions without notice allocated to each Minister fails to ensure that committee members have the opportunity to prepare adequately for the Committee's hearings. This is particularly the case given the very low level of specific and program information contained in the Budget Papers and the inconsistent manner in which budget allocations are reported from year to year, making comparative analysis of budget papers problematic.

The result of this is a process that fails to allow any real analysis and scrutiny, curtailing any benefit and effectiveness.

Time limitations on the examination of Ministers were also shown to be harmful to the integrity of the process, and some particularly poor allocations of time were demonstrated in this year's hearings. The short and interrupted questioning times often prevent logical and continuous lines of questioning which could otherwise be followed.

Again, Ministers were often reluctant to answer specific questions with relevant and detailed answers, instead relying on general, and often pre-prepared, statements about their portfolios.

With respect to the portfolio scrutinized by the Committee, the following reservations are made:

The amount of time that could be spent analyzing Disability Services (1 hour and 50 minutes) was inadequate, especially considering the weighting of its Budget (\$1.4B) when compared with the 40 minutes allocated to the \$9M Multicultural Affairs segment.

In dealing with plummeting satisfaction rates among clients of disability service, the Minister blamed the clients who did not send back their forms. This was a poor justification for rates that had declined by as much as 13 per cent in just one year for services in relation to community support services.

Despite clear decreases in the level of State funding budgeted in the 2008-09 Budget to the amount actually spent, the Minister described the underspending as 'just the usual deferral'.

When asked about specific blowouts in costs on capital projects, the Minister instead read from a pre-prepared list of delayed and unfinished projects unrelated to the projects in question.

Inconsistencies between amounts outlined in the Budget Papers and the amounts for the same projects in the responses to Questions on Notice to the Committee were exacerbated by the Minister's answers to the hearings. It was intensely difficult to get a real picture of actual expenditure on specific projects, particularly the very important projects surrounding the response to the Carter Report into dealing with severely challenging behaviours.

Of great concern was the Minister's assertion that the Government's \$414 million fund would be adequate to serve the viability of the Non-Government organizations in the sector, facing the impost of significantly increased wages. Having admitted the sector would receive 45 per cent of the \$65 million allocated this year, to be divided among more than 700 service providers, the Minister would not elaborate on the methods for prioritizing the allocations.

The attitude towards community engagement in local projects was also regrettable, with the Minister blaming the community for delays in project delivery, stating that community involvement directly led to delays.

The Opposition remains concerned about the Government's level of support for the community sector who provide invaluable services to people with disabilities, and believes that the people who will most suffer from this attitude are in fact the people with disabilities themselves.

With respect to Multicultural Affairs, the Minister's responses were again general and inadequate. Questioned about Government funding for linguistic services, the Minister mentioned a visit she had made to a Non-Government organisation's own program for language tutoring.

The Minister did admit the need to review the policy in this area.

A great disappointment in both the Budget Papers and the Estimates Committee was the failure of the Minister to attribute credit for the Carers Recognition Act, which was mentioned in both cases, to the Member of Parliament who composed and introduced the Bill to the Parliament, the Member for Burdekin, Rosemary Menkens, who was the previous Shadow Minister for Disability Services.

Signed



Andrew Cripps

Member for Hinchinbrook

Shadow Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs