

**THURSDAY, 5 JUNE 2003**

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. R. K. Hollis, Redcliffe) read prayers and took the chair at 9.30 a.m.

**PETITION**

The following honourable member has lodged a paper petition for presentation—

**Roundabout, Dawson Highway, Gladstone**

**Mrs Liz Cunningham** from 1,403 petitioners requesting the House to note their concerns at the number of traffic jams occurring in peak hour between the Kin Kora roundabout and the Garden Lovers roundabout, Dawson Highway Gladstone and to ensure an urgent review is done to identify ways to rectify this problem.

**PAPER****MINISTERIAL PAPER**

The following ministerial paper was tabled—

Minister for State Development (Mr Barton)—

Report on investment and trade mission to China from 15 to 24 March 2003

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT****Sugar Industry**

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.32 a.m.): Last night I received a letter from the Prime Minister, John Howard, in regard to sugar industry reform. I welcome this letter and after discussions with Tom Barton, the Minister for State Development, and Henry Palaszczuk, the Minister for Primary Industries, can I say that we believe that what is outlined in the Prime Minister's letter is achievable. We are very pleased with the Prime Minister's letter and I thank him for sending it.

In fact, later this day, State Development Minister, Tom Barton, will go to Canberra to resolve any issues. He will be having discussions with the federal minister, Warren Truss. We are keen to progress this matter. We have had discussion. It is now time to get on with it and we are keen to do that.

I want to make sure that the record is set out clearly for all Queenslanders to see. I seek leave to incorporate a copy of the Prime Minister's letter in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Prime Minister  
CANBERRA

4 JUN 2003

The Hon Peter Beattie MP  
Premier of Queensland  
PO Box 185  
BRISBANE ALBERT STREET QLD 4002

My dear Premier

I write regarding the contents of the Sugar Industry and Other Legislation Amendment Bill (No. 2) 2003 ("the Bill").

My Government remains committed to an economically sustainable sugar industry and wishes to work with you in finalising the sugar industry legislation. While I appreciate that changes have been made to the original reform package proposed by your Government, I am of the view that further consultations on implementation details still need to occur.

After discussions with the Federal Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon Warren Truss MP and members of the Federal Sugar Industry Taskforce, I consider that urgent discussions need to occur in the following areas:

Collective Bargaining and Arbitration

Under the arbitration process outlined in the Bill, it appears that the Sugar Industry Commissioner will be unable to hear disputes in instances where one party is unwilling to participate in the arbitration process. This provision

would allow parties to effectively avoid the arbitration process if they consider it is not in their interests. I would appreciate clarification on how growers can be protected from abuse of market power where this may occur.

Single Desk

Value-adding and innovation are crucial to the future of the sugar industry. Indeed, providing scope for value-adding and innovation lies at the heart of the rationale for reform. Referring to the proposed exemption system, there are concerns that the proposed legislative changes do not effectively increase the scope for grower participation in value-adding and other downstream processes. It is also not clear how the amendments will allow growers to apply for exemptions from vesting (whether individually or in a collective). This issue needs clarification.

I would ask that our governments urgently review how your proposed legislation deals with these concerns. This review should take the form of discussions between the Minister for State Development, the Hon Tom Barton, MP and the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, the Hon Warren Truss, MP. As part of this, it may be necessary to consider further amendments to the legislation.

Naturally, the Commonwealth's funding package will remain in place while the discussions on these concerns take place. I am confident that if we can reach agreement on these issues, we will be able to carry the industry forward to a sustainable and more prosperous future.

Yours sincerely

(sgd)

(John Howard)

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Sir Charles Kingsford Smith; Aviation Industry

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.33 a.m.): Later today I will attend a ceremony honouring one of our greatest Queenslanders, Sir Charles Kingsford Smith. Relatives of Smithy and his legendary co-pilot, Charles Ulm, will be at today's ceremony, which will commemorate their historic flight across the Pacific. It is almost 75 years to the day that they made that inaugural flight and if members visit the Kingsford Smith Memorial on the way to Brisbane airport and have a look at the *Southern Cross*, it makes us wonder how they ever did it.

It was an epic, courageous journey and it is fitting that we should celebrate this achievement during Queensland Week. Smithy was a man who personified the spirit of innovation. He was determined to be the best in the world. That is the sort of Smart State spirit that my government wants to foster in Queenslanders. He and Charles Ulm pushed back the boundaries of international flight and helped make the Queensland aviation industry what it is today.

In addition to the trans-Pacific flight, they completed a record-breaking circumnavigation of Australia in 1927 and in 1928 they also completed the first non-stop trans-Australian flight and were the first to fly across the Tasman. In 1929, they made a record-breaking flight from Sydney to London, once again in the *Southern Cross*.

Smithy and other great Queensland aviation pioneers like Bert Hinkler and Sir Hudson Fysh would probably not recognise Brisbane airport as it is now and would be astonished at the changes which have taken place in aviation in Queensland. In 2003, the Smart State has a vibrant and growing aviation industry. Brisbane is home to Virgin Blue and Cairns is home to Australian Airlines. Since 1998, more than 4,200 people have been employed in the aviation industry in Queensland. That is Smart State thinking; Smart State achievement; the Smart State working.

The Aviation Australia Technical Training Centre has been established in Brisbane, as the Minister for Employment knows, and construction is under way on Virgin Blue-FlightSafety Boeing's aviation training centre and Qantas's Boeing 767 heavy engineering maintenance facility, as the Minister for State Development knows. Recently, Hawker Pacific and the Cairns Port Authority agreed to establish a centre of excellence for aircraft maintenance, which will deliver about 50 new jobs to Cairns. Smithy, I am sure, would be proud to know that exploits like the great flight he and Charles Ulm undertook 75 years ago helped lay the foundations for an exciting aviation industry.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Queensland 400 Business Directory; Food Processing Industry

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.35 a.m.): This morning I had the opportunity of launching the *Queensland 400* business directory. It recognises the achievements of the local heroes of Queensland's privately owned companies. I

had the chance of addressing their conference this morning and I table a copy of the publication, *Queensland 400*. These are the innovators who are driving the economy. They are the engine room of Queensland. A few minutes ago I left them at the Convention Centre where they are talking about their achievements and the future of this state.

One of the areas that I want to talk about today in terms of innovation is food processing in Queensland. Queensland's food processing industry is highly export oriented, growing quickly and facing unprecedented opportunities as consumers increasingly expect a greater variety of pre-prepared combinations, ready-to-eat products and healthier takeaways. Our food processing industry employs over 35,000 Queenslanders and has an annual turnover of almost \$9 billion. The sector is becoming an important exporter with overseas sales generating almost \$4 billion every year.

Queensland is home to a number of Australia's most innovative food processing firms. We would expect that in the Smart State. They include companies like the Australian Garlic Bread Company, Snap Fresh and Food Spectrum. The Australian Garlic Bread Company is one of Queensland's shining lights. I recently opened its new food processing factory in the electorate of the member for Capalaba. In just nine years, the company has gone from producing less than 500 garlic bread rolls a fortnight to 1.2 million and exports to Singapore, Hong Kong and New Zealand. My government assisted this company through the Department of State Development's Queensland Industry Development and Food Smart schemes.

Queensland is also home to Snap Fresh, Qantas flight catering's state-of-the-art food manufacturing facility located just south of Brisbane in Logan city. Snap Fresh produces fully prepared meals for a wide range of airlines, as well as non-airline clients like schools, hospitals and aged care facilities. It opened in 2002—and I had the honour of opening it—and now produces around 20 million meals every year.

Food Spectrum is also making its mark. Food Spectrum celebrates its 20th anniversary this year and is a leading exporting firm, last year winning the Premier of Queensland's export award for large advanced manufacture. The Minister for Employment Matt Foley knows them well.

**Mr Matt Foley:** Absolutely, and a very fine electorate.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Indeed. The business is located in the electorate of the Minister for Employment. He and I were there together for the opening. There is great potential for expansion in the food processing sector with the Asian food market growing and diversifying rapidly and import barriers falling as a result of international agreements. That is why my government is working so closely with food processors across the state. We want to capitalise on these opportunities.

Our \$2 million Food Smart Queensland initiative is designed to help food processors become more competitive by partially funding their strategic expansion into other Australian and overseas markets. The Queensland Industry Development Scheme is also helping companies to pursue their strategic business growth plans. In the near future we will help many of Queensland's food processors through our new \$26 million dollar manufacturing development plan, which targets food processors as one of its key sectors.

Queensland has a well deserved global reputation for producing clean, high-quality, environmentally friendly food. The Smart State is again leading the way. We are adding more value, creating exciting new product lines and selling our first-class products around the world. I want to thank the Minister for State Development, Tom Barton, for his initiatives in areas, supported by the Minister for Employment and Minister for Primary Industries.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### E-Democracy

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.40 a.m.): Australia is one of the world's leading nations when it comes to using the Internet to conduct government business, and Queensland leads the other states and territories in the adoption of effective e-government strategies for service delivery. A recent survey by the leading consultancy firm Booz Allen Hamilton named Australia as a global leader in terms of government readiness to deliver online services and in the use of those services. The other leading nations were Sweden, the United States and Canada.

Queensland has undoubtedly boosted Australia's ranking with our Smart State service initiative. We were the first state government to develop and implement a comprehensive process

to provide people with 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week access to services and information. We have captured the e-government strategy lead in Australia because of our unique approach to delivering services. I am happy to report that, in terms of strategies pursued here, an example is *The report of the board of inquiry into past handling of complaints of sexual abuse in Anglican Church diocese of Brisbane*, which I tabled recently. It has attracted more than 97,000 hits on the parliamentary web site. So people are using it. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Smart Service Queensland is not just about putting information up on a web page; we are one of the few governments looking at providing fully integrated services through three different means—the Internet, the phone and over-the-counter.

It's not just in the service delivery area where the Smart State is showing the way.

Since the introduction of on-line petitioning to this Parliament, 14 petitions have been submitted in this way.

Almost 6,500 Queenslanders have put their names to those petitions.

The Parliamentary web-site is proving to be popular with people wanting access to reports and other documents tabled in the House.

For example, the report of the Board of Inquiry into Past Handling of Complaints of Sexual Abuse in the Anglican Church Diocese of Brisbane, which I tabled recently, has attracted more than 97,000 hits on the Parliamentary web-site.

Internet broadcasts of Parliament are attracting listeners not only from within Australia but the US, Canada, New Zealand, China, Japan and Nigeria to name but a few.

Between the introduction of the broadcasts on the First of April and up to the 3rd of June, there were 9,139 hits on the broadcast link.

This includes Budget Day when hits peaked at 677 between 2 pm and 3 pm when the budget was being broadcast live on the Internet.

Technology is making it easier for more and more Queenslanders to access Government and observe the democratic process at the click of a mouse.

In a state as decentralised as Queensland, technology is helping us overcome the tyranny of distance.

I am proud that my Government is playing a part in this and we will do everything we can to ensure the Smart State keeps leading the way in the use of information and communication technologies.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Science in Parliament

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.41 a.m.): Mr Speaker, thanks to you, and with your support, we are going to hold Science in Parliament again this year. Some of the world's finest scientific minds hail from or work in Queensland. Being the Smart State means saluting these achievers. It means encouraging Queenslanders to celebrate scientific success. That is why we held Queensland's first Science in Parliament on 20 August last year—with your full support, Mr Speaker.

Following the success of the first event we have scheduled Queensland's second Science in Parliament for 20 August 2003, during National Science Week. I am delighted that Nobel Laureate, and newly anointed Queensland Great, Professor Peter Doherty will speak on this occasion. He was born in Brisbane, attained his first degree from the University of Queensland and in the 1960s worked for the Queensland Department of Primary Industries. He won the Nobel prize in physiology and medicine in 1996 for his work on the immune system and he was Australian of the Year in 1997. I hope that members will support Science Week again. I seek leave to have the remainder of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Also addressing Science in Parliament will be the "father" of the Queensland event, Dr Joe Baker, Chief Scientist of the Department of Primary Industries.

Last year 188 scientists joined in Science in Parliament, and their response was extremely enthusiastic.

This year's event will be another opportunity to promote discussion and debate on topical issues in science and industry, such as biodiscovery and commercialisation.

We particularly encourage the involvement of young scientists, who will have their own discussion panel.

Invitations will soon be sent to key research bodies and to all Members.

Scientists interested in attending can go to the website: [www.iie.qld.gov.au/innovation/science.asp](http://www.iie.qld.gov.au/innovation/science.asp)

This is one of many significant gatherings of scientists scheduled for the Smart State.

Later this month, 1,500 scientists, mathematicians and other experts will converge in Brisbane for the 11th International Conference on Intelligent Systems for Molecular Biology.

Cairns will host the International Mycological Congress in 2006—a first for the Southern Hemisphere.

In August 2004, the International Congress of Entomology will take place in Brisbane.

Such events are a salute to Queensland's research excellence, and to our growing stature as the Smart State.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Smart Women, Smart State Awards

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.42 a.m.): While we are talking about Smart State initiatives I also want to announce today the inaugural Smart Women, Smart State Awards. Transforming Queensland into a global leader in the biosciences, engineering, and information and communication technologies is central to my government's Smart State strategy. I want to ensure all Queenslanders have the opportunity to pursue the new jobs of the 21st century. Women have traditionally been underrepresented in these fields and I want to encourage more women to have careers in these areas.

As part of our efforts to encourage and inspire women and girls I am pleased to announce that nominations for the inaugural Smart Women, Smart State Awards will open on 9 June. The Smart Women, Smart State Awards will recognise and reward the outstanding achievements of Queensland women and girls in science, engineering, and information and communication technology. We have many outstanding women working in these fields but, sadly, only 22 per cent of Queensland computing professionals, 35 per cent of professionals in the natural and physical sciences and six per cent of building and engineering professionals are women.

The award recipients will be valuable role models for other young women considering undertaking studies or pursuing careers in science, engineering, and information and communication technology. The awards will recognise Queensland's current champions and future professionals in these fields. I want to encourage all smart Queensland women and girls to nominate for these awards. Awards will be presented to the outstanding entrants in the following categories:

- secondary school students

- undergraduate students at TAFE, private training organisations and universities

- research scientists at universities, co-operative research centres or research institutes

- women in business, the community and public sector.

My government is assembling a panel of eminent Queensland representatives in the science, engineering, and information and communication technology fields to judge these inaugural awards. The winners will be announced at a special ceremony on 21 August 2003, during National Science Week. Smart women who want to enter the awards should send an email to [smartwomenawards@premiers.qld.gov.au](mailto:smartwomenawards@premiers.qld.gov.au) or contact the Office for Women. I want to place on record my thanks to my Parliamentary Secretary, Dr Lesley Clark, the member for Barron River, and to the Office for Women for identifying a need for these awards and for making them a reality.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Community Engagement Division

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.43 a.m.): The Community Engagement Division within my department is responsible for ensuring that Queenslanders receive effective public sector support via community engagement. I seek leave to have the remainder of my ministerial statement incorporated in *Hansard* so that members know what the division is doing.

Leave granted.

Mr Speaker, the establishment of Community Engagement Division did not involve any new funding—other than for e-democracy and the implementation of a regional Crime Prevention Strategy.

The Division was formed by bringing together existing units with a community focus, including Multicultural Affairs Queensland, Office for Women, Regional Communities and Crime Prevention Queensland.

The new E-Democracy Unit was formed to implement the Government's commitment to give Queenslanders access to Parliament and input into government decision-making on-line.

Today, I highlight some achievements of the Community Engagement Division.

As I speak now there will be Queenslanders listening through the Internet as part of a 12-month trial to broadcast Parliament. This is a result of the work of the E-Democracy area of the Division in close partnership with the Parliamentary Service.

This initiative followed on from the launch in August last year of online petitioning, which was an Australian first. To date, 18 e-petitions have been recorded—14 of which have submitted and four are still open for signature, with 11 Members supporting them.

Through its regional office network, the Department of Premier and Cabinet constantly engages with the community and is delivering opportunities for Queenslanders to participate in activities that influence government decision-making.

Thirty-two Ministerial Regional Community Forums will be run by the regional offices this financial year, with an anticipated 225 issues being raised with attending Ministers and referred for government consideration.

Recent outcomes from the Forums have included:

- the approval to lease up to four additional houses to the Department of Families from the Department of Housing to provide accommodation and support to youth at risk; and
- funding to the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE Youth Program 2003 to undertake a pilot Youth Program that includes formally recognised alternative learning and peer driven training outreach elements.

There are other examples of how regional offices facilitate community engagement activities, working directly with community groups, local government, industry, State Government agencies and local members; activities such as supporting the Springbrook—Gold Coast Hinterland—World Heritage Initiative, led by the Environmental Protection Agency.

This initiative was developed as a result of an event run by the Division's SEQ South regional office last year, providing the community of Springbrook with an opportunity to meet with a variety of government agencies to explore potential partnerships and the future direction of the community. The event was developed in collaboration with the Member for Mudgeeraba, who identified the potential for the pilot engagement event.

The Central Queensland regional office convenes the Gladstone Coordination Group which, works closely with local government, industry and local Members to identify and expedite solutions to local social infrastructure challenges created by the rapid industrial expansion in the area.

The SEQ North regional office has been assisting the University of the Sunshine Coast in positioning itself as a key focus for education, business and community services in the region.

In the Mackay/Whitsunday area, the regional office has a continuing involvement in the Mackay Alcohol and Other Drugs Community Partnership, whose achievements to date include the establishment of a residential drug rehabilitation service model which has since been adopted by Queensland Health.

These are all examples of local community engagement and the results that can be achieved for Queensland communities.

Effective community engagement is about recognising and responding to the issues that concern local communities and one issue that lies at the heart of community life is crime prevention.

That is why the Division is implementing a strategy to foster community involvement in finding the solutions to crime.

The Division's regionally based Crime Prevention Resource Officers are working with government agencies, local government, the Queensland Police Service and community groups to set up local actions teams called Building Safer Communities Action Teams and, during recent months, several workshops have been held to discuss how each can participate in preventing crime by working together.

This strategy will involve 38 State electorates and about 70 local councils and, so far, 19 Members of this House have attended these workshops or been involved in discussions about implementation of this approach to crime prevention.

Another major issue in these troubled times is that of maintaining positive community relations, respecting diversity and promoting harmony. This goal is supported by the Multicultural Affairs Queensland area within the Division.

A recent achievement of this area is the Community Relations Response Protocol which sets up a communications channel for ethnic community groups and government agencies in order to alleviate community disharmony and intolerance.

The Community Engagement Division has also approved 111 applications this financial year to distribute just over \$3.2 million dollars to activities across Queensland that contribute to this goal.

In particular I am pleased that this year has seen the signing of new agreements with 14 participating councils and the Local Government Association of Queensland under the Local Area Multicultural Partnership program.

Finally, the Division works with other government agencies to improve the ways that the public sector listens and works with the community for better policy and improved service delivery, and is developing a guide to community engagement which, I am sure, will be of great interest to Members of this House, as well as public sector agencies.

Another element of the Community Engagement Improvement Strategy for the Queensland Public Sector is showcasing the many different ways community groups, industry and government are engaging effectively.

In fact, a Pilot Showcasing Event took place in Ipswich late last month, with involvement of the local Members from Bundamba, Ipswich West and Ipswich.

One of the case studies examined was the Swanbank Community Reference Group, established by CS Energy and Thiess Services and involving local residents, the Environmental Protection Agency, Ipswich City Council and the media, to address community concern about the industrial activities associated with the Swanbank landfill and the 40 year old power station. The work of this Group has led to changed operational practices that have improved the quality of life of nearby residents

I urge all Members of this House to be involved in these events when they occur in their local areas.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Queensland Greats

**Hon. P. D. BEATTIE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.44 a.m.): I am so delighted with the Queensland greats this year that I seek leave to have incorporated in *Hansard* the record of achievement of five great Queenslanders of whom we should be very proud.

Leave granted.

Professor Peter Doherty.

Professor Doherty completed a degree in Veterinary Science at the University of Queensland and worked as a veterinary officer with the Department of Primary Industries. He went to Scotland where he completed a PhD in pathology at the University of Edinburgh Medical School.

He then joined the John Curtin School of Medical Research in Canberra and it was here that his work on "the nature of the cellular immune defence" led to his sharing the 1996 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine.

Peter was Australian of the Year in 1997. For the last five years he has divided his time between St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee and the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at the University of Melbourne.

He is a passionate advocate for biomedical research and education. This week, he and his colleagues at the University of Melbourne announced they are working on a new generation flu vaccine after discovering how the body's immune cells fight various strains of the flu.

David Malouf.

David's pride of place in Queensland literature is probably best summed up by the fact that when the Premier launched the Queensland Premier's Literary Awards for 2001, his novel *Johnno* was chosen as the definitive Queensland novel and Diane Cilento was invited to read from it.

*Johnno* is not the only novel by David which captured Queensland's uniqueness. *Remembering Babylon* is set in 19th Century Queensland, *Fly Away Peter* is set on the Queensland coast in 1914 and *Harland's Half Acre* is set in the Killarney district of south-east Queensland.

David Malouf was won numerous awards including the NSW Premier's Literary Award for *An Imaginary Life*, The Age Book of the Year Award for *Fly Away Peter*, the Miles Franklin Award for *The Great World* and the IMPAC Dublin Literary Award for *Remembering Babylon*.

Last week, *An Imaginary Life* was listed as one of Australia's Top Ten books by the Australian Society of Authors.

Angelo Puglisi

Angelo has been a major influence in the creation of the Queensland wine industry and in transforming the Granite Belt into a major tourist destination.

He defied the knockers who said that decent wine could never be produced in a tropical state.

Today his Ballandean Estate is an icon which was last year inducted into the Queensland Tourism Hall of Fame.

In 1977, Angelo won a Churchill Scholarship to study the wine industry. He spent two months in Italy and a month each in Germany and France, an experience which impressed on Angelo the importance of combining wine with tourism.

Angelo established the popular Brass Monkey Week which has become Brass Monkey Season. He has provided vision, drive and leadership to the Queensland wine industry.

Dr Evelyn Scott.

Evelyn is an inspiration to anyone who has ever felt that the odds were stacked against them.

Born in Ingham and raised to stand up for herself, Evelyn has been a tireless worker for Indigenous Australians for over 35 years.

As a 21-year-old, she campaigned long and hard in the 1967 Referendum which allowed the Federal Government to make laws specifically relating to Indigenous Australians.

Since that time, she has played a key role in establishing Aboriginal legal services, housing societies and medical services in Queensland.

She is passionate about protecting the Great Barrier Reef and is a member of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Board.

She is also passionate about education and is co-chair of the Australian National Training Authority's Indigenous Training Advisory Council.

R.M. Williams.

Reginald Murray Williams is famous for creating a style of bush wear recognised worldwide as uniquely Australian. He was also the driving force behind the establishment of one of our great tourist icons—the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame at Longreach.

In the early 1980s, R.M., then aged in his seventies, set up camp at Longreach and with his own hands helped construct the first sandstone building that would later evolve into the Hall of Fame. That building now houses the R.M. Williams library.

It is a measure of the humility of R.M. Williams that when he was asked last week what his greatest achievement was, he said without hesitation that it was raising nine, healthy, happy children who are all good citizens.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Preparatory School Year

**Hon. A. M. BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Minister for Education) (9.44 a.m.): This year saw the first trials of a full-time preparatory year of education get under way in 39 schools across Queensland. The 800 children taking part in the trials have just entered their 18th week of school. It has been a steep learning curve for everyone involved—for the children who are attending prep classes five full days a week, for their mums and dads who are adjusting to new routines and also for their teachers who are working hard to create a world-class early education program for Queensland and its children. These children, their parents, teachers, teacher aides and principals are working together to find the best fit with regard to curriculum, resources and the environments in which the trials are occurring.

Our government recognises that rolling out a full-time preparatory year across the state is a big undertaking. That is why we are running these trials. I congratulate each of these schools and their staff for their dedication and commitment to getting this right for Queensland. The reports I am hearing back from individual teachers and principals involved in the trials are positive. No doubt other members are receiving similar reports.

The teacher of the prep class at Goodna State School recently shared her observations that the continuity of the program, the play based curriculum and the learning resources supplied are having a positive impact on children's learning and development. Teachers report significant improvements in a variety of areas, notably in literacy and numeracy learning. Children's social skills have also benefited, particularly their negotiation and cooperation with others.

Inala State School's principal is very impressed with the language rich, play based learning environment offered within the preparatory year program. This has already effectively bridged the gap between preschool and year 1 for many children. The children are comfortable and confident with the routines of school. They are happy, inquisitive and enthralled by learning, and are becoming independent, confident and active learners.

In remote Doomadgee, regular attendance five days a week in a preschool or a preparatory program is promoting a range of learning and health practices and exposing young children to school language, routines, literature and materials that stimulate their learning and prepare them for formal schooling. Parents value the integrated nature of the learning that is taking place. The message from many schools, including St William's Primary School at Grovely, is that the child centred inquiry based curriculum results in improved learning, especially in literacy and numeracy.

Next year the trial will be expanded to a further 25 state and non-state schools, bringing the total number of schools to 64. Applications for the second round of trials closed in May. I am pleased to report that 119 applications from state and non-state schools were received. This included 111 from state schools, five from Catholic schools and three from independent schools. I look forward to announcing the successful 25 schools in July.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Education and the Arts Partnership Initiative

**Hon. M. J. FOLEY** (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts) (9.47 a.m.): There are 10,000 young Queenslanders aged 15 to 17 who are out of school, out of work and out of training. This is simply not good enough and we have to do better. One significant way in which new pathways can be provided for young people at risk is through the arts. But it is not as simple as that. This government realises there is work to be done to find out how young people can best be assisted through the arts. To that end, we are about to

embark on one of the largest and most comprehensive research projects into the benefits of the arts in education this state has seen.

The Education and the Arts Partnership Initiative will research how participating in the arts impacts on the lives of young people, particularly those who are experiencing disadvantage. More than \$400,000 has been invested into the project. It brings together Education Queensland—and I recognise the support for this project of my ministerial colleague Anna Bligh—Arts Queensland, the Queensland University of Technology and the Australia Council. It will particularly focus on the lives of young people aged from nine to 15 years from at-risk or disadvantaged environments in Queensland.

The Education and the Arts Partnership Initiative reflects the commitments to safe environments, job opportunities and creative and innovative citizens outlined within this government's cultural policy Creative Queensland. The project is in two stages. The first stage involves quantitative analysis of data from over 1,300 schools which will help to identify any links between participating in the arts and student achievement. The second stage is more qualitative and involves four case studies from selected communities across the state to gain more detailed information about schools and communities with exemplary arts programs.

The research teams will talk to students, teachers, families, artists and communities who deliver arts education programs for young people. The research, as part of a national strategy of collaborative projects around Australia, will help to determine long-term outcomes for education and the arts by the Australia Council. In Queensland, we will be able to develop arts policies and programs that specifically address the needs of those young people most at risk in this state. The Education and the Arts Partnership Initiative is about more than just encouraging our young people to develop their creative skills; it is about helping our most vulnerable young people to pursue constructive ways forward.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Q 400 Awards; Model Projects Program

**Hon. T. A. BARTON** (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for State Development) (9.49 a.m.): This evening will see Queensland's leading privately owned businesses receive well-deserved recognition at the annual Q 400 Awards ceremony here in Brisbane. These awards honour the most successful companies in nine key industry sectors. However, my Department of State Development is also very much aware of the importance of tomorrow's business leaders—the business-minded school students of today. Once again this year, the department is providing funding of \$100,000 for the highly successful Model Projects program for secondary schools and education bodies. This is now a well-established program. It serves to encourage business prowess and enterprising thinking by providing seed funding to selected school based initiatives. It will be surprising if we do not again receive some outstanding school projects seeking financial support through this scheme.

Since Model Projects was launched in 2000 it has produced some tremendous school initiatives, a number of which are still going strong today. For example, Scots PGC College at Warwick began growing hydroponic roses two years ago and is now selling them in a number of markets and students at Proserpine State High School are going great guns with their barramundi farming venture which they started up six months ago in partnership with the shire council and Chamber of Commerce. These and other projects provide ample evidence of the scheme's inherent worth. For the students—and that is both private and government school students—it offers the chance to get valuable hands-on business experience. Because the funding is capped at \$2,000 per project, Model Projects enables the department to support a significant number of initiatives all over Queensland. Since the year 2000 the state government has provided more than \$400,000 to fund these projects. It is yet another way in which the Queensland government demonstrates its commitment to fostering business skills and enterprise education within Queensland's education system.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Crime Statistics

**Hon. T. McGRADY** (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province) (9.52 a.m.): I draw to the

attention of the House the Australian Bureau of Statistics *Recorded crime 2002* report which was released last Friday. I urge all members, particularly those opposite, to read the report because it contains some positive news for Queensland in relation to a reduction in crime. The report confirms Queensland is now experiencing its lowest levels of unlawful entry, homicide, armed robbery, unarmed robbery and motor vehicle theft in a decade. This report has found that the rate of crime in Queensland has reduced significantly under the Beattie government. Compared with 1997, the rate of unlawful entry is 16 per cent lower, armed robbery is 36 per cent lower, unarmed robbery is 10 per cent lower, motor vehicle theft is 15 per cent lower and homicide is 14 per cent lower. It certainly puts paid to the nonsense which both Mr Springborg and Mr Quinn spread on a daily basis about apparent spiralling crime rates in Queensland. These so-called leaders of positive politics have been doing their best to raise anxiety about crime throughout Queensland in recent weeks.

As members can see by the graph I am holding up, armed robbery, motor vehicle theft and unlawful entry are all at their lowest levels in a decade and have all substantially dropped since 1997 when, as I said before, the former coalition was in power. This Commonwealth report also noted that Queensland's crime rates compare more than favourably with national averages.

**Government members:** Sit down!

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Callide will resume his seat.

**Mr McGRADY:** What do we want? Lower crime. When do we want it? Now!

This Commonwealth report also noted that Queensland's crime rates compared more than favourably with national averages. In Queensland during 2002 assault was 30 per cent below the national average, unlawful entry was eight per cent below and armed robbery was 40 per cent below. This is the Beattie Labor government bringing home the bacon.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Gateway Bridge Duplication

**Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER** (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (9.55 a.m.): The Beattie government's plans to duplicate the Gateway Bridge and approaches have passed a significant milestone this week with the government's decision to establish a project team to develop a public-private partnership business case for the billion dollar project. Brisbane is the fastest growing capital city in Australia. Effective planning for future road infrastructure is therefore vitally important to support our rapidly growing population and economic needs. The Gateway Bridge and Motorway are expected to reach capacity around the year 2010. The Gateway—progressively constructed through the mid-1980s—continues to play a significant role in moving traffic between Queensland's north and south coasts and keeping congestion away from Brisbane's city centre. It also fulfils a major role in supporting the Australia TradeCoast by providing fast access for goods freighted to and from the port of Brisbane and the airport. A growing number of local, interstate and overseas businesses choosing to establish facilities at the port of Brisbane—

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Dry up, will you? Those businesses are citing the Gateway and the new Port Road—the member is the new Len Stephan of this place—as the major reasons for choosing to locate their businesses within the port precincts. The jointly funded state-Commonwealth Gateway Motorway and second river crossing planning study is now complete. The study, conducted over the past year, found the project had sufficient priority to proceed to the next step—the PPP business case stage. The government has therefore approved the formation of a government project team to progress the Gateway duplication via a PPP business case and to also investigate a suitable tolling strategy for the project, the potential timing and sequencing of the upgrade works, and the role of Queensland Motorways Ltd in the delivery and operation of the upgraded corridor. The challenge for the government project team over the next year or so is to find the most cost-effective and efficient method of delivering a duplicated Gateway Bridge and Motorway. As the Gateway Motorway forms part of the National Highway, the state government will approach the Commonwealth for a funding commitment as part of developing the business case.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### World Environment Day; Recycling

**Hon. D. M. WELLS** (Murrumba—ALP) (Minister for Environment) (9.57 a.m.): Today is World Environment Day. As part of World Environment Day celebrations, the state government, along with the Brisbane City Council, will be endeavouring to raise people's awareness about the benefits of public place recycling. At high noon today I will have the pleasure of signing a memorandum of understanding in the Queen Street Mall with the new Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Councillor Tim Quinn. The memorandum sets out how the state government and the Brisbane City Council will work together over the next two years to implement a trial of public place recycling in at least six Brisbane city sites, including the Queen Street Mall, Post Office Square, New Farm Park and the city Botanic Gardens. The community is very aware and supportive of recycling at home. We are very good at it. Indeed, the recent report I released, the *State of waste and recycling in Queensland*, showed that 86 per cent of Queenslanders actively participate in household recycling programs.

These programs recover over 150,000 tonnes of useful materials such as plastic containers, glass bottles, aluminium cans and newspapers each year. Last year Queenslanders recycled 70 per cent of newspapers—that is world's best practice—40 per cent of milk bottles but just 30 per cent of soft drink cans, beer and wine bottles. In other words, the later in the day we use these commodities the less likely we are to recycle them. Things that are found on the breakfast table at home are much more likely to end up in the recycling bin than the things people buy in a cafe or at a bar or at a public function.

Based on this information, there is clearly a need for programs and projects to encourage Queenslanders to undertake recycling when they are away from home. That is why, for example, the state government is developing the public place recycling trial with the Brisbane City Council. The state government, through the EPA, will contribute \$150,000 over two years to the public place recycling trial. The trial represents an important aspect of our continuing fight to divert as much waste as possible from landfill.

Yesterday I launched Wastewise at the University of Queensland's Unigreen Awareness Day. The University of Queensland is now the first university in Australia where there will be recycling stations in cafeterias, bar areas and elsewhere around the campus where students and staff gather. Last year I launched the Wastewise public place recycling at the Doomben Race Course. This facility now recycles two tonnes of empty bottles, cans, unwanted betting slips and form guides from each race meeting—materials that this time last year were contributing to landfill. This year the government has extended public place recycling to the Gabba and is planning to implement it at the new Suncorp Stadium. Just from the corporate areas of the Gabba more than three tonnes of glass, plastic and cardboard are being recycled from each match. Soon this figure will be boosted when recycling is available in all areas of the ground. With the continued effort and commitment of the state government and the establishment of partnerships such as this most recent initiative with the Brisbane City Council, we will maintain the drive to a more sustainable way of life.

I thank officers from the waste management units of the Brisbane City Council and from my department, the Environmental Protection Agency, for developing this important recycling partnership. I look forward to announcing more initiatives that arise from this spirit of cooperation among governments, councils and industry.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### Construction Industry

**Hon. R. E. SCHWARTEN** (Rockhampton—ALP) (Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing) (10.01 a.m.): Despite predictions of a downturn in the building industry through the media and in other states, residential construction remains strong in Queensland and does not look like decreasing over the next few months. The Building Services Authority has just released figures which show residential construction was far healthier than expected during May. Residential construction contracted for the month totalled more than \$598 million compared to only \$532 million in May 2002—an increase of more than 12 per cent.

Statutory insurance notifications for May on residential construction also showed no signs of the predicted downturn, with 6,596 policies issued on insurable projects valued at more than \$3,300. Today's figures are an improvement on May last year, with only 6,000 insurance

notifications lodged. These statistics suggest that during the upcoming financial year the industry will maintain a high level of activity for new homes, alterations and additions.

This is great news for Queensland as it means we should experience another strong year in the residential building industry generating continued employment for many Queenslanders working in the industry. In fact, the BSA issued 62,500 insurance policies in the 2001-02 financial year. As we approach the end of this financial year, the BSA has already issued 65,805 policies.

While residential construction in other states does appear to be on the decline since June 2002, this is not the case in Queensland, the Smart State. We are well placed to deal with increasing building activity, with one of the most efficient licensing, insurance, compliance and dispute management systems in Australia. We have the toughest contractor licensing regime in the country, and our home warranty insurance scheme is the envy of other states and ensures Queenslanders have greater security when buying or renovating their home.

Last night, the BSA concluded a series of 12 legislative reform roadshows around the state where contractors and subcontractors have been briefed on the changes to the Queensland Building Services Authority and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2003. This legislation comes into effect from 1 July, giving Queensland the toughest building industry regulation in the country—including life bans.

I am pleased to report that the road shows have been a success. Across the state more than 1,500 contractors have attended. I attended the roadshow in Rockhampton, which was well attended. From all reports the legislation received positive feedback and has the broad support of the industry.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### World Environment Day

**Hon. M. ROSE** (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (10.04 a.m.): I urge consumers to mark World Environment Day today by adopting environmentally friendly shopping practices. There is no doubt our individual consumption habits have a direct impact on the amount of waste sent to landfill each year. The Office of Fair Trading and Environmental Protection Agency will kick off their 2003 Shop Green campaign as part of World Environment Day celebrations in King George Square later today. This is the second time the two agencies have joined forces to promote green shopping habits among Queensland consumers.

There have been strong moves by government and industry towards more sustainable business practices. Queenslanders can support this push by driving demand for green products in the marketplace. Not only will we start to see more environmentally friendly products on the supermarket shelves; the prices of these products will become more competitive with mainstream products. Improving knowledge of environmental matters is the best way to become a green consumer.

OFT and the EPA have compiled a checklist to help people spot true green products quickly and easily. Last year we produced a great little shopping bag with the tips printed on it, and we will be using those again this year. Some of the tips include—

- compare the price, quality and environmental performance of different brands;
- choose refillable or reusable packs;
- avoid over-packaged goods;
- say no to unnecessary plastic shopping bags and reuse the ones you do obtain;
- choose recyclable products;
- avoid products that are used once and then thrown out;
- buy locally made products to reduce environmental damage caused during transportation;
- buy from manufacturers with a good environmental track record; and
- choose products made from paper, cardboard, aluminium, steel and recycled plastics.

Environmentally friendly activities such as recycling and composting are becoming increasingly popular, but 6,885 tonnes of solid waste is still being landfilled in south-east Queensland daily. Every product we buy and use contributes to this amount. For example, Australians use around six billion plastic bags a year. Only a small proportion of these bags is recycled. Those that go to

rubbish tips take years to decompose and are almost impossible to dispose of safely. By adopting some simple green shopping habits, we can help significantly reduce waste and environmental damage.

### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT** **SIMTARS Mine Rescue Robot**

**Hon. S. ROBERTSON** (Stretton—ALP) (Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Mines) (10.07 a.m.): Exploring underground mines following fires or explosions for rescue and recovery purposes has always been a very difficult and dangerous task. Research by my department's Safety In Mines Testing and Research Centre, or SIMTARS, at Redbank indicates that new generation artificially intelligent mini-robots may provide a safe answer to this problem.

Last year, the Queensland government formalised a joint venture agreement with the United States Navy to develop a low-cost mini-robot to safely explore underground mines following an explosion or fire. Following a visit to the US by SIMTARS Director, Dr Stewart Bell, arrangements were made to borrow a small robot from the US Navy in San Diego to investigate the atmospheres in underground coalmines following a mine fire or explosion. However, due to operational usage over the past 10 months in Afghanistan and Iraq, the US Navy was unable to release a robot for testing purposes. As an interim measure, the US Navy put SIMTARS in contact with the University of Southern Florida, which agreed to loan us a robot on behalf of the US Navy.

I am delighted to inform members that this small robot, valued at \$53,000, is now in Queensland undergoing assessment and modification by SIMTARS scientists. The robot looks much like a toy bulldozer. It weighs about five or six kilos and is small enough to fit down a 20 centimetre borehole. The robot will be initially equipped with a digital lowlight video camera and a basic gas monitoring package which will be able to detect explosive levels of oxygen and methane. The purpose of investigating this type of device is to allow the assessment of hazardous mine atmospheres without risking human life. Exploring a mine after a fire is an extremely difficult process and this device should make this task easier and safer. The robot has been loaned to SIMTARS for six months and any improvements we make to the device will be relayed back to the US where they are interested in possibly applying this technology to the US mining industry.

Our Queensland project will be a first because robotic mine emergency exploration devices are currently not available in Australia. Not only does this project carry all the hallmarks of this government's Smart State approach, it may one day prove the difference between life and death in the unfortunate event of a mine disaster occurring in Queensland.

### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENT** **Urban Search and Rescue Training**

**Hon. M. F. REYNOLDS** (Townsville—ALP) (Minister for Emergency Services and Minister Assisting the Premier in North Queensland) (10.09 a.m.): Queensland's ability to respond to building collapses and other similar disasters will be greatly enhanced following the completion of a three-week urban search and rescue training course currently under way. The course will culminate next week with a 48-hour exercise for firefighters and paramedics at the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service training academy at Whyte Island.

The USAR scenario will test the rescuers' skills under extreme conditions. The current course is the result of two years of evaluation of search and rescue procedures and training methods used both nationally and internationally. The current training program is now regarded as among the best in Australia, and already rescuers from across the country have come to Queensland to study and participate in technical rescue activities. Many others will be in attendance again for the exercise next week.

Learning aspects of the course include tunnelling, trenching and shoring, as well as vertical and confined space rescue, building construction, media relations and various other technical aspects that surround large-scale disaster operations. There are clear objectives to be achieved out of the exercise, including learning how to handle specialist equipment, systems and capabilities in the aftermath of a disaster, and how on-site operations should be coordinated and managed.

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service has the capacity to assemble a USAR task force within two hours of notification and can then send a team equipped with rescue gear and supplies anywhere in Queensland, across the nation or indeed the world. The course is just the latest in dozens held recently at the academy, opened last year by the Premier, which is proving extremely popular for training and professional development for Queensland firefighters and paramedics, as well as for interstate and overseas emergency professionals. Just this week, a large group of New Zealand firefighters have travelled across the Tasman to learn techniques here at the \$13 million-plus centre.

The courses held here in the Smart State are considered world's best practice. The state-of-the-art live fire pad has also been used widely by firefighters and by a range of private enterprises. One group which recently used the facility—BP's emergency rescue team—used the skills gained there to advantage during the major petroleum fire at Pinkenba earlier this week. The staff at the centre do an excellent job and I wish them well with this latest exercise.

### **SITTING HOURS; ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**Hon. A. M. BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.12 a.m.): I advise honourable members that the House will continue to meet past 7.30 p.m. this day. The House can break for dinner at 7 p.m. and resume its sitting at 8.30 p.m. The order of business shall then be government business, followed by a 30-minute adjournment debate.

### **PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES**

#### **Appointments**

**Hon. A. M. BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (10.12 a.m.), by leave: I move—

That Mr Horan and Mr Johnson be discharged as members of the Standing Orders Committee and that Mr Springborg and Mr Seeney be appointed to that committee; further, that Mrs E Cunningham be discharged as a member of Estimates Committee D and that Mrs Pratt be appointed to that committee; and, finally, that Mrs Pratt be discharged as a member of Estimates Committee G and that Mrs E Cunningham be appointed to that committee.

Motion agreed to.

### **PERSONAL EXPLANATION**

#### **Leader of the Opposition; Alleged Misleading of House**

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.13 a.m.): Mr Speaker, I refer to your ruling yesterday in relation to the matter of privilege raised by the Minister for Police and Corrective Services on 29 May 2003. I also refer to my letter to you of 2 June 2003, and to paragraphs 10 and 11 of the statutory declaration of Mr David Scott that I tabled in this place on 28 May 2003.

My question was based on what I believed to be a reasonable implication to be drawn from a document with legal status and consequences. As a consequence of your ruling that I did not deliberately mislead the House, I am therefore happy to correct the record in relation to matters raised by the Minister for Police and Corrective Services.

### **MEMBERS' ETHICS AND PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGES COMMITTEE**

#### **Progress Statement**

**Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (10.14 a.m.): I table a progress statement regarding the inquiry by the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee into communications to members, members' representations to government and information provided to members.

On behalf of the committee I wish to take the opportunity to inform the assembly of the current position of the committee's inquiry. The committee is currently finalising its recommendations to the assembly and is striving to complete its inquiry as soon as possible and present its report to the assembly in the near future. As well as addressing the key issues set out in the committee's Issues Paper No. 4, tabled in April 2002, the committee's inquiry has also addressed a number of related issues concerning freedom of information which was raised by the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee in its report No. 32.

**FARM DEBT MEDIATION BILL**

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—IND) (10.15 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to require mediation of farm debt disputes, and for related purposes.

Motion agreed to.

**First Reading**

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Mrs Liz Cunningham, read a first time.

**Second Reading**

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—IND) (10.15 a.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

Rural producers, our farmers, have variously been labelled 'landed gentry' to 'environmental vandals'. The reality is they are overwhelmingly hardworking families subject to the vagaries of both the weather and commodity prices. They are also subject to financial imposts as a result of government legislation.

Perhaps now, more than ever, farmers have been enduring very tough times. Whether they grow grain, cattle, dairy or other product, each has had to cope with prolonged drought forcing up fodder prices (where fodder could be purchased) and forcing down returns. Protracted drought in turn drains financial reserves to the point where banks are more and more foreclosing on properties.

The ability of a lender to protect their investment is not under dispute by the introduction of this bill. The process used is. Farmers and their families have, at times, been subject to a flawed process. In an already vulnerable situation, not only financially, but emotionally, farmers receive notifications from their lending institutions of an intent to commence foreclosure proceedings. It is the process which has been shown at times to be less than transparent.

Senate hearings which reported on shadow ledgers and the like highlighted the disadvantaged position farmers are negotiating from when endeavouring to restructure debt to avoid losing their farms. Indeed there are examples where a notional debt kept on shadow ledgers is greatly inflated in comparison to reality. These shadow ledgers are most often not revealed to the borrower. Some lending institutions have foreclosed on properties in circumstances where not one payment has been missed.

This bill primarily requires that prior to action being taken by a lending institution, mandatory mediation must take place in the presence of an independent mediator. Within the process of mediation, all books of the lending institution related to the mortgage to be dealt with must be audited by the Queensland Audit Office to ensure proper access to all documents is available to both the lender and the mortgagee for the purposes of mediation. The Queensland Audit Office would also identify whether appropriate accountancy standards are adhered to. I along with many do not regard shadow ledgers as appropriate accountancy procedures and particularly so when the actual debt accrued by the farmer is withheld from the farmers. Payment of audit costs would be the responsibility of the lending institution. Some time ago the Audit Office indicated their ability to do this work.

The bill is retrospective in that it will apply to mortgages already in place; however, will not apply to those properties currently subject to control under the Commonwealth Bankruptcy Act 1996; a property the subject of a bankruptcy petition; or a corporation which is an externally administered corporation within the meaning of the Corporations Law. This bill is, in effect, aimed at real farming families who now or in the future face financial difficulties.

The mandatory mediation required in this bill does not in any way remove any opportunities prior to the triggers for this bill for either a farmer or the lender to request voluntary mediation to avoid getting to the situation called up in this bill. The bill, however, puts a brake on the process of foreclosure by lending institutions to give both parties an opportunity to identify alternatives through the mediation process for the best result.

Should an agreement be reached through mediation, the farmer will be afforded a further 14 days cooling-off period to review those matters covered by the mediation agreement. It should be

remembered that the mandatory mediation occurs at a time of heightened emotional stress when, it could be argued, the farmer is in a disproportionate bargaining position. Information will be confidential.

The bill sets down those who may be part of the mediation, with third party representation allowed with the approval of the mediator. This bill also allows for a farmer to access legal advice through Legal Aid Queensland. This inclusion recognises that, in some instances, lending institutions may be represented by legally trained officers or, conversely, the farmer may require specific legal advice on particular matters. Again, it should be remembered that by this stage, the farmer's finances are in a critical state and the individual would, most probably, be unable to afford commercially available legal services. This bill is modelled in part on New South Wales legislation where it has shown its value.

Farming families work hard. Many have already lost their properties—and for those who feel cheated by the system, this bill will be too little too late. However, for families who may be struggling at present, this bill will afford them a transparent process for discussions prior to action by lending institutions. I commend the bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Palaszczuk, adjourned.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Ethanol

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition (10.20 a.m.): I rise today to address the disgraceful attack on the ethanol industry by the major oil companies in Australia and also by other motoring organisations and motor vehicle companies in this country. I contrast this with the situation in the United States, and I table two brochures distributed by Shell and Mobil in the United States which sing the praises of ethanol as a fuel and tell of its benefits to motor vehicles in that country.

It is very interesting that the contrast is significant between our country and the United States, particularly when there is a mandated amount of ethanol in fuel in certain states of the United States. I understand that mandate to be somewhere in the vicinity of 10 per cent. Yet here in Australia, where there is a current debate on this issue, exactly the same fuel companies—Mobil and Shell—are indicating to motorists that ethanol is damaging to their vehicles.

Let us look at what some of these companies say in the United States. Mobil, for example, in regard to ethanol says—

Q: How will ethanol affect my engine?

A: Ethanol is safe to use in any type of engine.

...

Q: Will ethanol plug my fuel filter?

A: Generally, no. Ethanol is a very clean burning fuel.

It is very safe. It goes on—

Q: How will ethanol affect my car's fuel injection system?

A: Ethanol helps keep fuel injection systems clean so they perform better.

...

Q: Will using ethanol help my car during the winter?

A: Yes. The ethanol recommended for use in motor fuels is a water-free—

or anhydrous—

additive.

...

Q: Does ethanol help reduce air pollution?

A: Yes. There is a significant reduction in both carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon tailpipe emissions ...

So we can see that there is a significant difference between Australia and the United States. In the United States ethanol is mandated and the oil companies are telling the truth; here in Australia they are not. The ethanol industry in this country needs to be given a leg-up and it does not need to be affected by this sort of misinformation.

### **Bayside District Gala Showcase Awards**

**Mr ENGLISH** (Redlands—ALP) (10.22 a.m.): State schools are great schools. On Wednesday, 21 May 2003 I, in company with the member for Cleveland, Darryl Briskey, and the member for Capalaba, Michael Choi, attended the Bayside District Gala Showcase Awards evening. And what an evening it was. We also had the pleasure of the company of the Executive Director (Schools), Ms Jan D'Arcy, and the Director General of Education, Mr Ken Smith.

The entertainment for the evening was provided by the fantastic Weenies Choir from Capalaba State School, the German Bells Group from the Alexandra Hills State School and a group of dancers from the Wellington Point State High School, which has a great reputation for its performing arts program. I think the highlight of the entertainment was the Signing Choir from the Redlands District Special School. I believe many members of the audience that night came down with a strange affliction such that they had a bit of dirt in their eye. There were a number of tears flowing while watching the choir sign to the Cyndi Lauper song *True Colours*. It was a truly moving experience.

I take this opportunity to congratulate all of the schools nominated for the awards evening. However, as is the case with any awards, there can only be a few winners. The successful schools were Ormiston State School with their eClass Xcellence program—

**Mr Briskey:** An outstanding program,

**Mr ENGLISH:** I take that interjection. Other successful schools were the Wynnum North State High School with its new approach to language learning and a school in my electorate, Victoria Point State High School, with its DDE in ICT—that is, the Design, Development and Evaluation in Information Communication Technology program.

As a result of this program, students were engaged in the following activities: graphic design and presentation techniques, basic programming, web page design, robotics and multimedia studies. This is a great example of our state schools working towards making Queensland the Smart State.

### **Public Liability Insurance**

**Mr HORAN** (Toowoomba South—NPA) (10.24 a.m.): The insurance reforms introduced by the Beattie government are not working. There are still hundreds of community organisations in this state that cannot access insurance or are faced with insurance bills which are absolutely incredible and terrible.

Recently a public forum was held in Toowoomba. Story after story came forward of community organisations run by volunteers which simply cannot access insurance or whose bill is just too much for the voluntary organisation. Take the great work done by Police Citizens Youth Clubs throughout Queensland—one of the best youth organisations in this state. This year they face a combined insurance bill of almost \$1 million. The Police Citizens Youth Club in Toowoomba had a 124 per cent increase last year and is facing an 85 per cent increase this year. How will a club like that raise \$70,000 per year through its volunteers to do the wonderful work they do with the kids of our town? There are some 2,000 members of that club. The blue-light disco organisation, which is associated with but separate from the PCYC, is having similar problems with insurance. Again, it has to put a surcharge on every child that comes to its discos in order to meet the extremely high cost of insurance.

In the area of professional indemnity, a financial adviser firm in Toowoomba has faced massive increases to the extent that premiums have gone from \$4,000 to \$13,000. A \$25,000 quote was given this year for professional indemnity insurance plus GST plus state government stamp duty.

This insurance problem is robbing our communities. It is affecting the very fabric and heart of our society. We have to do something about it. We have to make the legislation we have all supported in this House even tougher, harder and firmer. We need to review what is happening as a result of the legislation. Why can clubs not get quotes? Why are they being offered these extremely high premiums? It is a vacuum cleaner that is sucking money out of our state—

Time expired.

**Mr S. Darmanin**

**Mr POOLE** (Gaven—ALP) (10.27 a.m.): Some may remember that some weeks ago a young Gold Coast male was enjoying a night out with his girlfriend at Surfers Paradise when he was king-hit and set upon by two thugs. He was brutally bashed and kicked by these poor excuses for human life. As well as sustaining other injuries, he had his jaw smashed. Thankfully, the two responsible have been apprehended and face the courts. Unfortunately, Scott Darmanin has been knocked down again and this time kicked in the guts, not by wanton thugs but by an insurance company.

Scott was self-employed and decided that if he ever became ill or injured he should cover himself for loss of income whilst out of work. So he took out income protection insurance with Colonial Mutual Life Insurance. He filled out all the forms as required and as best he could. The trouble is that, when he responded to the question of how much he earned the previous year, he told them a gross amount of \$26,000. He misread the ambiguous bit about business expenses. Scott had bought some tools and other work items for his trade as a carpenter. His policy does not cover him if he earns less than \$24,000. Based on his net result he earned only \$17,247.

Colonial Mutual wrote back to him after he claimed on his policy as a result of the assault only to tell him that his level of income was insufficient to qualify for the minimum benefit and voided his policy. Colonial Mutual wrote back to Scott and told him that it had the right under section 29(3) of the Insurance Contracts Act and that it has decided to exercise that right. Consequently, it will not make any benefit payments.

Colonial Mutual also wrote and said, 'We have credited your bank account with \$475.18. This amount represents a refund of your premiums paid since policy inception.' I hope this is a warning for all holders of this type of insurance cover. Please check it out. But Scott is a battler, and he will survive.

**Queensland Conservatorium, *Music for 18 Musicians***

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (10.29 a.m.): I rise to commend students of Griffith University's Queensland Conservatorium, its director and several teachers for the Australian premiere of the Steve Reich piece *Music for 18 Musicians*. I do have to declare an interest: one of them was my daughter. I would like to put on record my appreciation. I went to the premiere and the performance was brilliant. It was directed by Vanessa Tomlinson. Two of the lecturers agreed with the vision of Rebecca that this piece could be achieved. It is a very difficult piece. It is a minimalist piece, in many ways the culmination of Reich's exceptional career, and I would have to say 55 minutes of non-stop playing is a challenge for anyone. It was done beautifully by these young musicians.

I would like to recognise on violin, Marijka Scheelings; on cello, Katherine Phillip; on clarinet, Rebecca Cunningham and Miranda Sue Yek; on vocals, Andrea Luttino, Kate Byrne, Kristin Berardi and Kristen Haynes; on piano, Kuniko Ishida, Ian Ho, Marcus Zografos and Gemma Turvey; and on percussion, Josh Hogan, Bradley Scott, Sam de Soto, Kay Liao, Paul Lin and Phil Cross.

These young people excelled in their performances and were commended by a number of people well versed in minimalist music. It is approximately, as I said, 55 minutes long and very little break is given to the players. Two of the piano players did not get any break at all; they played constantly. The first sketches were made in 1974 and it was completed in 1976. I would urge members of this chamber, if they get a chance, to see this piece. It is different and it is unusual, but it takes a great deal of talent. I commend the Conservatorium for its vision and the students for their excellence.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The time for private members' statements has expired.

**QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE****Chief Magistrate, Ms D. Fingleton**

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (10.30 a.m.): I direct a question to the Attorney-General. Given the sorry history of the politicisation of judicial appointments by his government and particularly his predecessor, former Attorney-General Foley, culminating in the conviction yesterday of the Chief Magistrate, Di Fingleton, an acknowledged Labor operative, adviser and campaign official, will he now implement the recommendation of Commissioner Tony Fitzgerald for consultation between

the Attorney-General and shadow attorney-general prior to judicial appointments as recommended at pages 132 and 133 of his report where he said that was specifically to avoid political appointments? I table that section. Or will the Attorney-General continue the Labor practice of making appointments to judicial office on grounds other than judicial merit?

**Mr WELFORD:** Let me make a couple of points about the matter that the Leader of the Opposition raised. Firstly, I doubt very much that Tony Fitzgerald, in making that recommendation, ever contemplated that a shadow attorney-general would conduct himself in the way in which the member has in this matter. Tony Fitzgerald would never have contemplated that a shadow attorney-general, let alone a Leader of the Opposition, would have so scandalised judicial officers in the way in which he has in this matter as to ever contemplate authorising his involvement in the appointment of any judicial officer.

Secondly, let me say that the assertion that the process of appointment of the Chief Magistrate had anything to do—anything to do—with the outcome of the court proceedings this week is a disgraceful slur upon my fellow minister. It has no basis in fact. It is a grubby and low political stunt by the Leader of the Opposition and demonstrates his utter incapacity to hold the office of Attorney-General, if ever the opposition were in government.

### Chief Magistrate, Ms D. Fingleton

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I refer the Attorney-General to the conviction yesterday of the Chief Magistrate, Di Fingleton, for retaliation against a witness and to the report in today's *Courier-Mail* of the signing of a letter by 50 magistrates seeking to prevent any return to office by Ms Fingleton. I ask: will the Attorney-General urgently bring an application before a Supreme Court judge pursuant to section 15 of the Magistrates Act 1991 to immediately suspend Ms Fingleton from office prior to her removal from office, thus terminating the salary and other entitlements that she is currently receiving?

**Mr WELFORD:** The Leader of the Opposition refers to the process under the Magistrates Act for the removal of a magistrate. As members are aware, I instituted that process in respect of another magistrate previously in relation to the conduct of that magistrate, who subsequently resigned.

The matter that was determined in the court yesterday is still subject to appeal. It is obviously inappropriate for me to comment on the outcome of proceedings in the District Court yesterday or indeed to interfere in the proper process for dealing with these matters pending an appeal being undertaken. These are matters for the court to finally determine. There is no final determination until the appeal—if there is one—and there are 28 days to allow for an appeal to be lodged. There is no final determination in this matter until that appeal is finalised. So it would be inappropriate for me to pre-empt the judicial process by instituting proceedings before that appeal is finalised.

I appreciate that it may be in the political interest of the Leader of the Opposition to seek to further destabilise the magistracy and the court system.

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order!

**Mr WELFORD:** The Leader of the Opposition and other members of the opposition may seek to make political capital out of their attempts to further destabilise the magistracy and the judicial system of this state; I will not. I will stand by the judicial system and the court system. I will ensure that proper and due process is abided by. I will ensure that all appropriate steps to deal with the Chief Magistrate or any other magistrate are taken at the appropriate time.

### Education and Training

**Ms KEECH:** I direct a question to the Premier. There is no doubt that the Smart State education and training reforms are making a real difference to Queenslanders. Is the Premier aware of any indications that these reforms are also being noticed interstate?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I thank the honourable member for Albert for her question, because I know that she has a very keen interest in education and training in her electorate. The answer is: yes indeed. Education and training reforms are turning heads interstate. Just yesterday I noticed an article—and the Minister for Education, Anna Bligh, and I discussed it—in that big-circulation Sydney newspaper the *Daily Telegraph*. A column by Maralyn Parker contrasted aspects of the

New South Wales education system with developments in Queensland. She wrote that in Queensland—and I will quote this with some pleasure—

... just about everyone involved in education was given the opportunity to have their say in the investment the state would make in education and where they would be in 10 years' time.

It turned the state education system around.

And this is a lovely part of the quote—

Our cousins to the north are now among the leaders in the world in beginning to deliver quality education in all of their state run schools.

I have to say that I could not have said it better, other than to simply say five words: Queensland is the Smart State. That is the way I would describe it. I would have to say that that is a tribute to the hard work of all cabinet members, but in particular the Minister for Education and Matt Foley, Minister for Employment and Training, because this is the way we act and this is the way we involve the community. We are determined to ensure that we build a future for young Queenslanders and, indeed, all Queenslanders.

Our education and training reforms are blazing a trail for the Smart State. They are our young people's ticket to the 21st century in jobs and better lifestyles. Yes, everybody with an interest has a chance to have an input into the reforms.

After releasing a green paper in March 2002, the government received more than 600 submissions, questionnaires and letters. Almost 8,000 people were involved in 39 community forums statewide over four months. There were 100,000 requests for information from the reforms web site and more than 1,700 calls to the hotline. Even before the green paper was developed, more than 10,000 people were involved in consultations.

We are continuing to listen to Queenslanders' views on education. The middle years of schooling are the topic of the first Consult Queensland Internet discussion which began on 6 May. There have been 621 unique visitors to the site and 318 people, including 231 students, have submitted responses about the middle years of schooling.

The most significant reforms in the history of Queensland's education system are in full swing. Thirty-nine state and non-state schools are involved in the trial of a full prep year. The trial will expand to another 25 schools in 2004. About 800 students are taking part. We are rolling out thousands of new computers and connecting more classrooms to the Internet. We are on track to meet the target of one computer for every five students in years 3 to 12 by 2005. More than 23,000 year 10 students in 200 schools and 11 TAFE colleges will take part in the learning or earning trials beginning in July. More young people are already staying longer at school. In 2002 the retention rate in Queensland state schools was 76.5 per cent—up from 73.6 in 2001.

#### **Chief Magistrate, Ms D. Fingleton**

**Mr QUINN:** My question is directed to the Premier. I refer the Premier to the conviction yesterday of the Chief Magistrate and the report that up to 50 magistrates have signed a letter seeking to ensure that she does not ever return to the position she occupied. As this constitutes public proof of the complete failure of the process of appointment to judicial office followed by Labor attorneys-general, what action does the government now propose to take to ensure that the public of Queensland can have confidence that appointments to judicial office by his government are based solely on issues of judicial merit and not on grounds of gender, ethnic background, sexual practice or political affiliations.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I thank the questioner for raising this issue because it is important we set out on the parliamentary record the exact history of this. All sides of politics, since the beginning of the statehood of Queensland, have followed the system of appointment followed by my government. In other words, the Borbidge government appointed judicial officers in exactly the same way we did.

**Mr Springborg:** We never scandalised the courts.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I would appreciate some courtesy from the opposition instead of their usual rudeness so I can answer this question.

**Mr Hobbs** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** The member and the truth have never been in the same room at one time.

**Mr Hobbs** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I warn the member for Warrego under standing order 123A(3). I now call the Premier.

**Mr BEATTIE:** I am trying to answer the question. We repeatedly have this rudeness from the opposition. This is a very serious issue confronting the state of Queensland. I would expect at least some courtesy to give an answer to the question.

We have followed the same method of appointment followed by conservative governments and followed by Labor governments since the beginning of Queensland. It is that simple. There is no argument about it. The issues raised before the court had nothing to do whatsoever with the appointment. There had been some faults with the appointment system in this state up until the arrival of the Goss government and my government. There have been some very significant faults which we corrected, that is, that not one conservative government in the history of Queensland ever appointed a woman to the bench. Not one.

Let me make it absolutely clear, I stand by my government's record in appointing women to the bench. I absolutely stand by it. I am proud of my government's record in advancing the cause of women in every aspect of Queensland life.

The tragedy here is very simple. The conservative forces in this state never appointed a woman as a judge. All they ever appointed was a small number of magistrates. They never appointed a woman. What the Leader of the Liberal Party is saying to me is that there was no woman good enough to be a judge in this state. The Liberal Party leader and the National Party leader are saying that no woman was ever good enough to be a judge in this state. That is a disgrace.

What we saw in the cabinet during the Bjelke-Petersen years was arguments. We saw the Douglas tragedy. We saw the politicisation of appointments. The National Party has a dreadful record when we look at what happened to the Douglas family. The Attorney makes recommendations to the executive council which, as Premier, I confirm. I stand by every appointment my government has made. We never had a Douglas scandal in my government or in the Goss years.

### Labour Force Participation Rate

**Ms STRUTHERS:** As a woman who stands in this House and who came into this House on merit it is my great privilege to ask a question to the Premier. Queensland is ahead of the pack on many economic measures and one of them is our labour force participation rate. Can the Premier inform the House of how Queensland's above average labour force participation affects the unemployment rate?

**Mr BEATTIE:** Labour force participation is one of many areas in which we outpace most other states and territories. The Queensland participation rate is expected to average 65 per cent in 2002-03 and 2003-04. The comparable national participation rate is 64 per cent. Queenslanders are ready and willing to work. The participation rate is probably influenced by the types of people who are moving here in droves. Most interstate people who become Queenslanders are young families and aged up to 35. They want to work.

How does the participation rate affect our unemployment rate? If the participation rate fell to the same level as nationally, our average 2002-03 unemployment rate would be 5.5 per cent. That is half a percent below the national average. That is the effect of the high participation rate we have. With average participation, the 2003-04 forecast for unemployment would be 5.5 per cent. I do not suggest for one moment that we want lower participation, but it is an interesting exercise. It highlights why we in Queensland are committed to working harder and smarter on job creation.

As I advised the House yesterday, we are continuing to forge ahead after hitting the 56,000 job creation bullseye of Breaking the Unemployment Cycle. We achieved this in less than five years—more than a year ahead of schedule. Remember, we also have astronomical population growth—more than twice the growth rate for the rest of Australia. Our population grew by almost 83,000 in the year to the September 2002 quarter—the highest annual increase for almost 13 years. Queensland is also the country's jobs growth capital, generating 60,900 jobs in the year to April. Over this period employment grew by 3.5 per cent—outstripping national growth of 2.8 per cent.

Employment growth in 2003-04 is expected to remain above the national average. We have every reason to expect the population will continue to grow and labour force participation will

remain strong. Latest Australian Bureau of Statistics data also show Queensland's state final demand for the March 2003 quarter was streets ahead of the rest. Our state final demand rose 7.1 per cent compared to average national growth of 5.4 per cent. To top it off, private investment in Queensland rose by 4.7 per cent for the quarter, as opposed to 2.7 per cent nationally. Over the year, private investment grew by a robust 22.8 per cent. The comparable national increase was 14.9 per cent.

I did not complete my answer to the question asked of me by the Leader of the Liberal Party. There is one part of the answer that I should have completed, but did not. He asked me whether we have any plans to change the current system of appointment for the judicial officers which is on recommendation by the Attorney-General to the Executive Council, which he and I agree to. The answer is, no, we do not.

### **Chief Magistrate, Ms D. Fingleton**

**Mr SEENEY:** My question is directed to the Premier. I refer again to the Labor Party mess that has destroyed confidence in the Queensland judicial system. In particular, I refer the Premier to the role of his ministerial colleague Mr Foley who, during his term as Attorney-General, appointed an unqualified Labor mate to the critical position of Chief Magistrate. When will the Premier ensure that Mr Foley takes responsibility for his ministerial failings and sack him from his cabinet?

**Mr BEATTIE:** I have already indicated to the House the process that is followed here. It is a process that I stand by. I stand by my minister. What he did as the Attorney-General was to ensure that, for the first time in real terms, women got a fair go when it came to judicial appointments. I stand by him on that. I stand by him in relation to advancing women in the way that they should be advanced—and which my government has done in every area of activity.

Let me make some other general remarks. Ms Fingleton was appointed as Chief Magistrate on merit after years of experience in the legal profession and almost four years as a magistrate. There is a history of magistrates' disputes ending up in the Supreme Court. As an example, the former conservative government appointed Chief Magistrate Stan Deer. An appointment he made was later overruled by the Supreme Court—that being his decision to transfer Magistrate Jacki Payne. He retired shortly thereafter. It is funny that Mr Springborg did not blame this on his initial appointment by a conservative government. If he had, it would have been nonsense, but he could have had the same argument. He should be consistent. In the history of Queensland, conservative governments have never appointed a woman judge and have appointed only very few women magistrates. I stand by what I said.

Mr Springborg's claim that the current court case was the inevitable consequence of some appointment process is false and absurd. It is absolutely absurd. Ms Fingleton has a fine record of service to the community through community legal services and legal aid. Ms Fingleton's service as Chief Magistrate has seen significant advances in the administration of justice such as the indigenous court and in the area of domestic violence.

Can I raise a very serious issue here: there are matters before the court. It is absolutely inappropriate that these questions should be asked when there is an—

**Opposition members** interjected.

**Mr BEATTIE:** Mr Speaker, earlier in the week you had to draw to the attention of the House that the Leader of the Opposition recklessly misled this House in the asking of a question. He recklessly misled the House earlier this week in relation to a question, and he is recklessly misleading the House today.

There is a matter before the courts. There is an appeal opportunity here. It is grossly inappropriate that these matters are being pursued in the parliament today. This is outrageous. The method of appointment by my government was the same as that adopted by conservative governments. There was the issue involving Stan Deer. The opposition suddenly wants to obliterate its memory of that. We had the absolute scandal of the Douglas intervention in the Bjelke-Petersen years. I am happy to compare my government's record to that corruption any day—any day. The current system, which is fair in advancing women, will remain.

### Education Funding

**Mrs LAVARCH:** I ask the Minister for Education: is she aware of comments made by the federal Education Minister in federal parliament yesterday about his government's support for Queensland government schools and, if so, what is her response?

**Ms BLIGH:** I thank the honourable member for the question. I have to say that as a general rule I do not pay too much attention to the words of the federal Minister for Education because, unfortunately, so much of what he says can be classed only as arrant twaddle. However, yesterday he attacked the Queensland government's funding record for government schools and he did so using data that can only be described at best as ill informed and at worst as a deliberate and dishonest misleading of the federal parliament, and I think it is important to set the record straight.

Yesterday the federal minister claimed that the Queensland government had increased state funding to state schools by only 2.4 per cent. I found this very curious because it does not comply with Queensland data and I asked departmental officers to advise how he could have reached this conclusion. The most commonly used dishonest manipulation of state budget figures by the Commonwealth over the last few years has been to compare actual spending in one year with budgeted spending rather than budget to budget.

While it is dishonest as a technique, it is at least transparently dishonest and so transparently dishonest that no respectable media outlet has ever repeated it. So this year the federal minister has had to go one better. That is not what he has done this time, because that particular lie would not have resulted in 2.4 per cent. Departmental officers have spent all day trying to work out how on earth he could have come to such a figure. They have removed salaries. They have removed enrolment growth. None of the permutations that could possibly have been used can conclude in the mythical 2.4 per cent. Whichever way one interrogates the data, nobody can reach the same conclusion as Brendan Nelson.

It is telling that he made no reference in his statement to what bizarre mathematics he might have used to reach the figure of 2.4 per cent. With these figures he could not achieve his own year 3 national benchmark in numeracy! So for the record the real story is this: far from being 2.4 per cent, the state government's increase in state funding to state schools is 5.1 per cent. I will concede that it is slightly less than the Commonwealth's percentage growth to state schools, which is 5.4 per cent. But is it any wonder that Minister Nelson wants people to look at the percentages. Because what do the dollars tell us? The dollars tell us that the Queensland state government will spend in recurrent funds this year an increased amount of more than \$170 million to state schools.

Members should compare that to the Commonwealth, which will increase funding to state schools by \$19 million—one-tenth of what we are putting in. Queensland state schools dream of the day when the Commonwealth government matches our government dollar for dollar in the state classrooms of our public schools. If the federal minister can tell the parents of state school students that he is going to increase state school funding by \$170 million, then we can have arguments that are in some way relevant. This is petty and pathetic. I would suggest that he get back to the real issues.

### Chief Magistrate, Ms D. Fingleton

**Mrs SHELDON:** I refer the Minister for Education to the conviction yesterday of the Chief Magistrate, Di Fingleton, for retaliation against a witness. Given that in this House on 7 September 1995 the minister thanked Ms Fingleton as a member of her campaign team and in November 1995 then Attorney-General Foley appointed her as a magistrate, will she now inform this House of any representation made by her on behalf of Ms Fingleton in relation to her appointment as a magistrate, or is this just another example of a political appointment that has now damaged our important judicial system?

**Ms BLIGH:** As much as I would like to thank the member for this question, I regard it as so disgraceful that I cannot do so. The fact that Di Fingleton is a friend of mine is a matter of public record, and has been so for more than two decades. I do not resile from that here and I do not resile from it in the face of the current distressing circumstances which she faces. The personal relationship that I enjoy with friends is not a matter for question time; it is not a matter of relevance to my portfolio and it is absolutely no business of the member for Caloundra.

My affection for a friend of 20 years will not alter in the face of these circumstances. What the member is entitled to ask about is whether I have ever used any friendship with Ms Fingleton or any other friendship with any other member of my circle of friends to in any way influence, advantage or take advantage of that friendship. I can confirm to this parliament that I have never sought to do so in relation to Ms Fingleton or any other friend. The suggestion is an insult to me and my personal integrity. It is an insult to the appointment processes used by this government in relation to appointments to the bench. It is a slur upon the integrity of my colleague and former Attorney-General, Matt Foley. But most of all—

**Mrs Sheldon** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Caloundra has asked the question.

**Ms BLIGH:** But most of all it is a slur upon a woman who has risen through the legal ranks, gained experience and achieved a position on merit.

### **Aviation Australia Training Centre**

**Ms LIDDY CLARK:** I refer the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth to the opening of the Aviation Australia Training Centre in Brisbane last year. How has the facility been received by the international aviation industry?

**Mr MATT FOLEY:** Brisbane is home to the newest and most advanced aviation training facility of its kind in the Asia-Pacific region. It has been well received by the whole region and by the aviation industry, and I note the member for Clayfield's keen interest in this facility within her electorate. The positive reception throughout the region is evidenced by the fact that 21 students from nine Asian countries have commenced studies in aircraft maintenance. The students are employees of Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific Airways and Dragonair. They come from Indonesia, Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand, the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, Singapore and the People's Republic of China. The two carriers selected Brisbane for training because Aviation Australia's training facilities are second to none.

Aviation Australia is a state government owned company which was established with industry support to offer and broker world best practice aviation training. Based at the Brisbane airport, this training centre provides its students with hands-on experience and has a number of leading aviation and aerospace organisations, including Qantas, Boeing Australia and Virgin Blue, as clients.

Aviation Australia is helping to position Queensland as the aviation hub of the Asia-Pacific region. It was established by the Queensland government with industry support. The \$5.2 million training centre completed in December 2002 and opened by Premier Beattie is now the newest and most advanced facility of its kind in the region. Nine of the international students arrived in April to do an English language intensive course for overseas students at the Brisbane North Point Institute of TAFE, city campus, before beginning their aviation maintenance training. The remaining students have now joined the initial group and all have now begun their 20-month course in aviation maintenance engineering in the mechanical stream, which leads to a qualification recognised by the Hong Kong Civil Aviation Department.

This outcome closely mirrors its European joint aviation authority equivalent—an accreditation being sought by Aviation Australia. It also means that Queensland has entered the world's aviation technical training market with globally recognised training qualifications and standards. It will provide jobs and training for young Queenslanders as well as training for staff from international airlines. Aviation Australia now has 109 students training in Brisbane and 21 training at its Cairns facility.

This government is committed to jobs, jobs, jobs. That means providing the necessary training infrastructure in those areas of important growth which will enable us to have a strategic advantage in the region. That is exactly what we intend to do.

### **South-East Queensland Forest Agreement**

**Mrs PRATT:** I refer the Minister for Environment to the fact that for the south-east Queensland forest area to comply with the QFA there would need to be a reduction of over 40,000 head of cattle, resulting in an estimated economic loss to the area's economy of \$20 million, which will be further exacerbated when the planned conversion of tenure of a further 375,000 hectares occurs. I ask: considering the enormous impact these demands will have on

councils, businesses and land-holders, what compensation measures will be made available to these stakeholders to offset impacts on these already struggling rural areas?

**Mr WELLS:** The honourable member's suggestions about the extent of herd reductions and the extent of financial loss are statistics about which people could argue a great deal. Much more could be achieved by improvements in sustainable practices and in the sustainability of the herd management process. My Sustainable Industries Division works with people in the agriculture industry in order to achieve greater levels of sustainability. I do not wish to enter into debate on this subject, but I do not accept the honourable member's statistics or anything even remotely like the honourable member's statistics or what they are based on.

Having said that, let me say that there are a number of parts to the South-East Queensland Forest Agreement, which is one of the great achievements of this government. One part is the process of forest tenure conversion. Another part is that presided over by my colleague the Minister for State Development, which is a process whereby people affected by a decision made under the South-East Queensland Forest Agreement get assistance in order to diversify their activities. There are a whole range of things that people in farming and rural communities are able to take on—smart 21st century type adaptations to situations—that would enable a diversification of the economic base of that particular rural area to occur.

Not very long ago I visited an area not very far from the honourable member's constituency and, as a result of that, I have initiated a number of conversations between honourable members, my departmental officers and the departmental officers of the Minister for State Development. These issues can be addressed. We are working through them. We will need to continue to work through them.

A fundamental basis for this is that the preservation of the forests of south-east Queensland, which has been achieved by the South-East Queensland Forest Agreement, will have some impact on some people in a number of industries. Those impacts need to be managed. We are keen to continue to work with those people to ensure that those impacts are managed.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before calling the member for Capalaba, I welcome to the public gallery students and teachers from Woodcrest College in the electorate of Bundamba.

### **World Environment Day; Loggerhead Turtles**

**Mr CHOI:** As today is World Environment Day, it is only fitting that I pose a question to the Minister for Environment. I ask: can he advise the House of the impacts of long-line fishing on loggerhead turtles in Moreton Bay?

**Mr WELLS:** Long-line fishing is regulated by the Commonwealth. Today I have written to the Commonwealth minister about the issue. We have an annual turtle rodeo, which is a health check on the marine turtles in Moreton Bay. Almost all loggerhead turtles breeding in the south Pacific Ocean have their origins in southern Queensland. Over the past 25 years the genetic stock has declined significantly from thousands of females to a few hundred. The species is now listed as an endangered species under both Commonwealth and Queensland conservation legislation.

During the turtle rodeo, turtle scientist Col Limpus found a large injured female loggerhead turtle that was 79 centimetres in length, which I saw. Lodged deep in the oesophagus of the turtle was a heavy stainless steel long-line hook trailing 10 metres of long-line. The hook and the attached line is identical to that used by the Australian east coast long-line fishing fleet. Long-line fishing is used for the take of tuna, swordfish and shark. This was a recent hooking. According to reports, the lack of corrosion on the hook, the lack of necrosis at the hooking site and the lack of smell on the hook all indicated that there had been a recent hooking, again consistent with hooking off the eastern coast.

Because this is regulated by the Commonwealth, I have written to Senator MacDonald about the impact of it. I have sought immediate assistance—

**Mr Palaszczuk** interjected.

**Mr WELLS:** I thank the Minister for Primary Industries. I have sought immediate assistance from him to reduce the unnecessary loss of loggerhead turtles. I have urged the Commonwealth minister to facilitate the introduction of changes in fishing gear and practices which are already being developed in other countries to reduce the turtle bycatch in the South Pacific. I have offered to collaborate in this matter with the federal minister. My officers are participating in international actions that will result in substantial reductions in turtle bycatch from long-line fishing, in particular the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species, which has taken a lead

role in promoting the reduction of turtle bycatch in the United Nations agencies. I am pleased to report that the turtle was released after a period of recuperation at Sea World.

**Mr Schwarten:** Have you named the turtle?

**Mr WELLS:** We have not named the turtle. On a brighter note, I conclude by wishing honourable members a happy World Environment Day. I advise all honourable members that in my office downstairs I have for all of them—we have them for all the citizens of Brisbane who appear in the mall today—some trees that they might care to plant or give to their constituents in order to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Queensland.

#### Water Licences

**Ms LEE LONG:** I ask the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines: as future water licences come due for renewal, will the Department of Natural Resources and Mines continue to issue reminder notices to the owners of those licences, or is it the intent that the onus will fall entirely on the licence holder to ensure renewal requirements are met on time?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Recently my attention was drawn to a couple of circumstances whereby licence holders who were due to renew their licences failed to do so, despite receiving early renewal advice from my department. In failing to do so, they used the excuse that they had forgotten about the renewal notice put out by my department in time for them to get down to the department and do the necessary paperwork. I am not aware of any changes to existing procedures. However, I would use this opportunity to urge all licence holders to look at the time limits on their licences, whether they be for water, vegetation or even mining, so that they can take responsibility, as much as my department does, for the renewal of those permits.

#### Tilt Train

**Ms JARRATT:** I refer the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads to the imminent start of the first Cairns tilt train service, and I ask: how are bookings for this new service progressing?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Only ten more sleeps until the first tilt train service leaves Cairns, and I have to say that following the success of the launch of the ticket sales—

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I am excited, too. I am like Big Kev today, I can tell you.

**Mr Barton:** Is it going to stop at Bowen?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Yes, it will stop at Bowen. In ten more sleeps the first service of the new tilt train will leave the Cairns Railway Station bound for Brisbane, and the bookings have been going gang busters. I reported to the House previously that the first service sold out in seven minutes. I can report to the House today that for the month of July almost 2,500 people have booked on the tilt train already, both northbound and southbound. Even the Minister for Tourism, I am pleased to say, has booked on the tilt train service southbound from Cairns to Townsville, and I predict that many people will travel on the tilt train for those inter-city journeys as well as people who want to enjoy the entire trip between Brisbane and Cairns or Cairns back to Brisbane.

In the month of August almost 2,200 people have booked on the tilt train, and over the next nine months alone 11,000 people have already booked on the tilt train service, and that is before it even starts. The advertising has commenced and many people will have seen the ads that are on TV. Next week we will begin a week of community celebrations from Sarina to Cairns, and we will showcase the new tilt train for people all the way through north and far-north Queensland.

Mr Speaker, you could join the member for Mackay next week for magic with the tilt, for example. You could join the member for Whitsunday for a brush with the tilt in Bowen. You could join the member for Burdekin for the all aboard the tilt in Ayr, or you could join the member for Townsville for a tango with the tilt, or you could come up to Cairns with me and some of the other members and you could have the carnival with the tilt. There are a number of other stops in between; that is not an exhaustive list.

I have to say that at a time when the tourism industry is struggling with the effects of SARS and other things, people in north and far-north Queensland are very excited about the initiation of the new Cairns to Brisbane via Townsville tilt train service. We want to make sure that everybody throughout Queensland, everybody throughout Australia and everybody throughout the world has

the opportunity to experience this fantastic new service, built by our own workers, I might say, at Walkers in Maryborough. We had a bash for the tilt in Maryborough just after the honourable member opposite was elected, when Henry Palaszczuk and I were there, to help the local community celebrate the contribution that Walkers has made.

There will also be a family day at Roma Street Station on Sunday 22 June, so I invite all members and everybody in south-east Queensland to come along and have a look at the new tilt train. It will knock their socks off.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Before calling the member for Surfers Paradise, could I acknowledge in the public gallery school leaders, principals and teachers from Burleigh Heads State School in the electorate of the Burleigh.

### **Police Resources, Gold Coast**

**Mr BELL:** My question is addressed to the Minister for Police. The minister has recently announced the allocation of additional police numbers on the Gold Coast, and particularly to the police post in Cavill Mall, Surfers Paradise. I understand that some of the additional personnel may already have arrived. I ask: how many of the additional police numbers have already arrived, firstly, to the Cavill Mall police post and, secondly, on the Gold Coast generally, and when will the balance take up their duties?

**Mr McGRADY:** I thank the member for the question. Yesterday, as I reported to the House, the members for Springwood and Redlands and, of course, the shadow minister for police joined with me to welcome 107 new police officers into the ranks of the Queensland Police Service. As I have said many times in this House, we are recruiting some 300 additional police officers every year.

In relation to the question from the member for Surfers Paradise, I am pleased to inform him that I have been advised that two extra sergeants and one constable have already been appointed. A further four constables will be appointed—

**Mr Seeney:** Did you get notice?

**Mr McGRADY:** No, I did not. What I do is prepare myself for this place. It is a pity that the member for Callide did not do the same.

**Mr Seeney** interjected.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! The member for Callide!

**Mr McGRADY:** Another four constables will be appointed next Friday and a further three constables will be appointed next month. There are also 18 first-year constables who are working at the Surfers Paradise division which, as the member knows, includes the police beat. Our commitment remains to allocate 16 extra funded positions to the beat by September and we are well on track to keep the promise that we made.

In relation to our commitment to increase the police numbers by 46, I can advise that about 14 extra officers went to the district during April and a further 18 were scheduled to go to the district by June. A further 15 officers are scheduled to go in July and September. This is all part of this government's plan to provide police officers right across the state. I have mentioned in this House on many occasions the promise that was made by the National-Liberal parties when they were in office, and I have also mentioned the number that they delivered. Their record in government was pathetic, to say the least. We made a commitment that we will deliver 300 police officers each year. We are meeting that commitment and we will continue to meet that commitment so that the member for Surfers Paradise and the other members on the Gold Coast can go back to their electorates and say to the people: we promised, we have delivered.

### **Youth Crime, Cairns**

**Ms BOYLE:** My question is to the Minister for Families. Will the minister please inform the House what the Beattie government is doing to address youth crime in the Cairns area?

**Ms SPENCE:** I thank the member for the question. I acknowledge her active interest in the young people in her electorate and her understanding of this particular issue.

The people of Cairns, like people in other towns and cities in Queensland, are understandably concerned about the levels of juvenile crime. But I think it is important that we

base our concerns on the facts rather than perceptions, and that is particularly so when it comes to talking about young people.

The youth justice data from Cairns for the period 1 July 2002 until February 2003 shows that our community based youth justice initiatives are achieving positive outcomes and helping to reduce crime and recidivism. During this period 173 young people made 413 appearances before courts in Cairns. This represents a 15 per cent reduction on the same period the year before. While any level of crime is unacceptable for society, what we see in youth crime in this state is that our programs are working. In the Cairns area we have a number of youth justice programs aimed at keeping young people gainfully employed or in training or receiving counselling.

Let us look at some of the programs that we have, particularly programs that deal with young offenders. Firstly in Cairns we have community conferencing, and that is yielding good results. From its inception in April 1999, 307 young people were diverted from formal court processes and, as we know, throughout the state, 93 per cent of our victims and our offenders say that community conferencing has been a very positive experience. Of those 307 young people in the Cairns area, 47 per cent were indigenous young people. This is due to our commitment to address the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in our detention centres.

As well we have a conditional bail program operating in Cairns. This program provides up to 32 hours of support for young people on bail. Since its inception, 16 young people in Cairns have received highly intensive youth worker supervision, making a total of 1,025 hours over a three-month period. As well in Cairns we have a bail support service which provides courts with supported accommodation options for young people who would otherwise be remanded in custody. Three young people have used this service in the first three months of this year.

No government in this state's history has done more work for, and given more attention to, the area of juvenile crime than the Beattie Labor government.

### **Drug-Driving**

**Mr JOHNSON:** My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. I refer to the recommendations of the Travelsafe Committee Inquiry No. 29 into Drug-Driving in Queensland tabled on 9 November 1999. Recommendation No. 11 was that the Queensland Police Service and Queensland Transport conduct a formal trial of the guidelines for impairment assessment by police. On 14 June 2001 the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and the Minister for Transport indicated their support for this recommendation. Has this trial been conducted? If so, will it be made available? And what policy is now in place to detect drug-impaired drivers?

**Mr McGRADY:** I thank the member for the question. As he said, there has been consultation between the Minister for Transport and me and obviously the two departments. This group has been set up, there have been meetings, and a number of recommendations will be forthcoming. The Minister for Transport and I, together with our respective departments, will act upon those recommendations at the appropriate time.

### **First Start Farm**

**Mr RODGERS:** My question is directed to the Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities. I refer the minister to yesterday's release of an Australian Bureau of Statistics report which found that young people were leaving the country at a much greater rate than they were arriving, and I ask: how is the Queensland government assisting young people interested in agriculture to get onto the land?

**Mr PALASZCZUK:** I thank the honourable member for the question. In responding to him, I would like to recognise the fact that the honourable member serves on the government's Rural Queensland Council and he has been very proactive in promoting the importance of rural youth.

In answering the honourable member's question I want to focus on the subsidised loan scheme called the First Start Farm, which is administered by the QRAA. This scheme is focused on helping young people buy their first rural property. Whilst this scheme has been long established, unfortunately over time it has been too restrictive, with a very low take-up. For instance, in 2000-01 only five loans, with a total value of \$1.2 million, were negotiated under this scheme. Prior to that, lending was even lower. One of the key restrictions was the equity

requirement. Under the current QRAA's board and management there have been a number of changes to the operation of the scheme.

In the past, First Start Farm concessional loans were available to only those people who could demonstrate a 50 per cent equity in the purchase of a farm, and this was seen as too restrictive, excluding many prospective borrowers. In response to that, QRAA is offering assistance to young farmers to get on the land in a staged process, such as through leasing or share farming.

In addition, QRAA has the ability to vary the level of equity required in certain circumstances, such as where stable off-farm income is available. The loan limit has been increased from \$300,000 to \$500,000. A new interest rate policy has kept the rates low. The current interest rates are 5.82 per cent for a one-year fixed period, 5.98 per cent for a three-year term and 6.22 per cent for loans fixed for five years.

I can report to the House now that the borrowing under this scheme has increased by 60 per cent compared with the last financial year. With almost a month before the end of this financial year, QRAA has now lent \$6.8 million to 32 applicants. That is 32 new entrants to Queensland agriculture; it is 32 first starts. At a time of difficulty and challenge for our primary industries sector, it is important that we encourage innovation and new ideas into our food and fibre sectors. We have tailored a program to assist young farmers get their first start on the land and they have responded.

QRAA has projected rural assistance to increase in the next financial year with \$55 million expected to be provided in subsidised loans and grants. When it comes to young farmers, we in the government are committed to supporting them to get onto the land.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! Before calling the member for Maroochydore, I welcome to the public gallery students and teachers from the Sacred Heart Primary School in the electorate of Toowoomba North.

### Radiation Therapists

**Miss SIMPSON:** My question is directed to the Minister for Health. I understand that Queensland Health senior bureaucrats will travel to England this month on a taxpayer-funded junket to try to attract more radiation therapists. Considering that radiation therapists have criticised the minister's attempts to address their issues to date as inadequate and so many have quit in the past year, does the minister not think that money would be better spent on retention?

**Mrs EDMOND:** I am delighted to inform the House that Queensland is leaving no stone unturned to recruit radiation therapists, wherever they may be. Contrary to the assertion that a bureaucrat will be going to Britain to do this, one of our top radiation therapists is going to represent Queensland—I understand there are also representatives from New South Wales and Victoria—in recruiting people at an international radiotherapy conference. Not only that, we have produced a package showing them what Queensland is like—a wonderful package saying, 'Come to Queensland. Enjoy the experience.'

We have also placed ads in newspapers. Yesterday's *Sydney Morning Herald* ran a great ad for Queensland radiation therapists. Contrary to the whingeing that we hear from the member for Maroochydore, they are going to an international radiation therapy conference to talk to international radiation therapists. They are not going to Taiwan and wasting taxpayers' funds. Going to Taiwan had nothing to do with health, even though there was important health legislation being debated in this House.

**Miss SIMPSON:** Mr Speaker, I rise to a point of order—

**Mrs EDMOND:** No wonder the member is irrelevant. No wonder she has been dropped to the bottom of the ladder.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I cannot hear the point of order.

**Miss SIMPSON:** The minister is misleading the House. No taxpayer dollars were spent.

**Mr SPEAKER:** Order! I call the minister.

**Mrs EDMOND:** No, I understand that the Chinese community had to fork out for it, and that is even worse. That was important. The Chinese community had to fork out, and I think they did not get value for money because they got someone who was totally irrelevant. The National Party has treated the member as totally irrelevant and has put her down the bottom of its list. That

shows what the National Party thinks about women members of parliament and it shows what it thinks about health. Health is now the lowest priority for the opposition.

In the budget we have announced a really exciting package—a recruitment and retention package for radiation therapists which will see some of those people getting a 29 per cent pay rise. That equates to a pay rise of \$15,000 a year for some. I am very proud of that. I think it is important that we recognise that there is an international shortage.

Radiation therapists in Queensland are currently—before receiving any benefits contained in the extra package—the second highest paid in Australia. Plus they get an extra week's leave—more than anyone else in Australia. Plus they have the best superannuation funds. There is also no evidence of many of them going interstate. One radiation therapist in the last year has gone interstate. There is a problem with therapists retiring. Quite a number have reached retirement age and have taken up that opportunity. They are people who are my age. It is a sign of the times that a number of them are ageing, but they have put in many, many good years for Queensland Health.

### Public Housing

**Mr FENLON:** My question is directed to the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing. One of the priorities of the Beattie government has been to improve the safety and security of public housing, which has largely been neglected by the previous government. Can the minister please advise the House of our progress so far?

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I thank the member for his ongoing interest in matters falling within my portfolio. This is the third question in a week that the member has asked me. We have responsibility for 120,000 Queenslanders in 50,000-odd homes throughout Queensland. So when my colleague the Minister for Industrial Relations brought forward an excellent piece of legislation on home security in terms of electrical safety switches, I was delighted to cooperate by ensuring that the necessary funding over the next three years, \$18 million, is put in place to secure those homes. Already some 18,000 homes that were constructed since 1992 are covered, and at this stage some 10,000 homes and \$5 million has been expended. That comes close on the heels of an initiative that I am pleased to give credit for to my predecessor—who I rubbished yesterday—Dr Watson who started off the smoke—

**An opposition member** interjected.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** It is not embarrassing; I know that. Dr Watson started the smoke alarm scheme. Since that time, we have completed that scheme and 65,000 of those have been installed throughout Queensland.

Honourable members would be aware that a couple of years ago we had a security issue with elderly ladies being molested in our seniors units. Since then we have spent over \$10 million ensuring that every seniors unit throughout Queensland has security screens. In fact, \$47 million has been expended on this initiative. People who live in the far north of the state would be interested to know that those areas with dengue fever have been set out as priority 1 areas in which to place screens on homes. We hope to get through all of those homes throughout Queensland over the next couple of years. That highlights our commitment to public housing for those people who need it in Queensland.

**Mr SPEAKER:** The time for questions has expired.

## APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

### APPROPRIATION BILL

#### Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from 3 June (see p. 2502)

**Mr SPRINGBORG** (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (11.31 a.m.): At the outset, I would like to table Budget Paper No. 4, an opposition analysis of the state budget. Members would see from it that today is Queensland red balloon day: today is a day of ballooning taxes, today is a day of ballooning deficits, and today is a day of ballooning unemployment for Queensland.

When the state budget was handed down on Tuesday, the first thing that I noticed about the truck load of documents delivered to this chamber was that every booklet, every budget paper,

had the word 'Smart' emblazoned across its cover. Smart indeed! I thought to myself, 'What is smart about a budget deficit? What is smart about creating the broke state? What is smart about being the highest taxing government in the history of Queensland? What is smart about raking in \$1.1 billion more in taxes than when this government first came to office, yet service delivery is going backwards? What is smart about a budget that meekly accepts that Queensland will continue to have the highest unemployment rate in mainland Australia? What is smart about a projection that says that the government will generate 12,000 fewer jobs this year than in the last year of the coalition government?' That is 12,000 fewer jobs this year than in the last year of the coalition government—a significant reduction.

Of course, there is nothing smart about this budget—nothing smart except for some very creative accounting techniques, some voodoo economics. Labor has governed this state for all but two of the past 14 years and it is about time that changed. Labor's budget delivers ballooning deficits, ballooning taxes and a ballooning jobless rate. It is a manifesto of broken election promises, a manifesto of economic mismanagement.

I know that it is traditional for opposition leaders to use their budget reply speech to probe, scrutinise and question the budget. I will do that in great detail, but as every member in this chamber knows, I am also about positive politics. That was my pledge to Queenslanders when I was given the honour to become the Leader of the Opposition earlier this year. So today I will pull apart this budget and expose it for what it is—and what it so obviously is. But I will also put forward some positive and progressive ideas on how a Springborg government would run Queensland, some ideas on how we would reduce the tax burden to Queenslanders—a tax burden that is \$1 billion more under Premier Beattie than it was under the National-Liberal coalition government. But I will talk more about these positive and progressive ideas later.

This government always likes to talk about its targets. It is timely that we do that. It is timely that we remind this parliament of some of the government's targets. I remember the 1998 state election campaign very well. I remember how sections of the media and political commentators criticised, and rightly criticised, some fledgling political groups and their leaders for giving false hope to voters—for making false and outlandish promises that they would never have to deliver. But it was not just fledgling political parties that were providing that false hope. There was another party and another person—a person who was promising that he could get unemployment down to five per cent in just five years if he was elected. He said 'Jobs, jobs, jobs'. Now, there is a phrase that we do not hear much of these days.

The party was elected and that five years will be up in under three weeks' time. The Beattie Labor government told Queenslanders that it would deliver five per cent unemployment in five years. The five years is up at the end of this month and the five per cent unemployment rate is nowhere in sight. Instead of a five per cent unemployment rate, this budget predicts that unemployment will average seven per cent this year—the highest level of unemployment in mainland Australia. Unemployment will be bogged at seven per cent in Queensland while the national average will be six per cent. Unemployment will be bogged at seven per cent in Queensland while other major competitors, states such as Victoria, will have an average unemployment rate of just 5.75 per cent.

When we talk about unemployment, it is easy to get flippant and dismissive with figures and statistics. After all, on paper the difference between a five per cent unemployment rate and a seven per cent unemployment rate can seem trivial. But I want to talk of it in human terms—what everyone can understand and what everyone can measure. To achieve a five per cent unemployment rate, this government needs to create 35,000 jobs in the next three weeks. Of course, they will not and, of course, they cannot. In other words, there are 35,000 Queenslanders out there today, most of them young Queenslanders, who have been failed by Premier Beattie and his Labor government. They have been failed because we have a Premier who believes that elections can be won by promising false hope. The five per cent unemployment rate pledge was not just made at the 1998 state election; the Premier reiterated that pledge in the 2001 state election. So he again prophesied that false hope to Queenslanders in the 2001 state election.

But we all know that sometimes it is okay not to meet our goals so long as at least we have tried to meet them—tried our very best. So let me look at how many jobs the Beattie Labor government hopes to create in Queensland this year. The budget projects that 37,000 jobs will be created. That is not good enough. Not only is that projection down on last year, but it is significantly down on the number of jobs delivered by the previous National-Liberal coalition government. In the first year of the previous National-Liberal coalition government—that is the Borbidge-Sheldon government, which was in power in Queensland between 1996 and

1998—45,000 jobs were created in this state. In the second year—our last year in government—there were 50,000 jobs created. Full credit must go to my good friends, Rob Borbidge and Joan Sheldon, for such an outstanding track record of job creation in such a short period and, I might say also, in extremely difficult circumstances when the average employment rate in Australia was much higher in percentage points than what it is today and also it was the middle of an Asian economic crisis.

Contrasted with today, the party that is led by a Premier who once proclaimed to be obsessed with jobs, is predicting that the job creation rate will slump to just 38,000—one of the lowest levels ever; an inexcusably lowest level. But Labor's failure to meet its jobs promise—or target, as the Premier now likes to call it—is not the only commitment that Labor has reneged on. For three years in a row, this Labor government with this Labor Treasurer has predicted that it would run and the Treasurer would run the Queensland economy at a surplus.

For three years in a row this Labor government, with its Labor Treasurer, has delivered three budget deficits. That is deficit after deficit after deficit. It is interesting to read the Premier's 2001 state election speech, in which he said—

It is the clearest possible choice—modest, affordable and fully funded election commitments or a billion dollar blow-out.

The Premier was right. A billion-dollar budget blow-out is what Queenslanders got. This year Queensland has had to incur a \$350 million budget deficit. Last year Queensland incurred an \$894 million budget deficit. The year before that Queensland incurred an \$858 million budget deficit. That is a hat-trick of deficits—not something that the Treasurer or Premier should be proud of.

This is all from a Premier, a Treasurer and a government that said that it could balance the books. Despite a track record of promising surpluses and delivering deficits, in the 2003-04 state budget we again see that this government is promising to return a surplus of \$153 million. Effectively, the Premier and Treasurer are saying, 'Give us a fourth go.' I would say that, based on their three failures in a row, their fourth go is going to be no different—that is, another budget deficit for the people of Queensland. Queensland's future will continue to be put on the Bankcard, but this Treasurer is asking the people of the state for a cash advance as well.

I want to take time to explore some of the assumptions that this government is using to sustain the argument that it will be able to deliver a small surplus. I want to explore the investment forecasts, the capital works budget and the taxation revenue projections. After making a three per cent loss on its investments for the previous financial year, this government is now basing its budget bottom line on achieving a 7.5 per cent return on its investments in 2003-04. That is a very big roll of the dice.

Effectively, the government is banking on a 10.5 per cent turnaround in the marketplace—that is, from minus three per cent to positive 7.5 per cent. Which other economist, which other market forecaster in the world, is game to project such a turnaround? It is false to base certain earning assumptions on such a grandiose and misleading forecast of growth. For the sake of Queensland's public servants, whose superannuation hangs in the balance, I sincerely hope that the Treasurer's projections come to pass. Few agencies have banked on a market turnaround of such proportions. Effectively, what we have is a budget framed around economic assumptions—assumptions about investment returns that are, at very best, highly optimistic. There is no margin for error.

We also have a budget, framed around capital works, that has embraced some strange new definitions. Capital works budgets have always been the centrepiece of any government budget paper because they represent the infrastructure investment of the government. They involve hospitals, roads, schools, dams and other infrastructure essential for the goodwill and betterment of the people of the state.

Capital works budgets have traditionally been about building projects—the major stimulus for generating jobs. But not this year. For the first time in history we are seeing a government artificially inflate the total value of its capital works by the purchase of motor vehicles for public servants. For example, we suddenly see \$152 million in purchased vehicles for Q-Fleet appearing in the capital works budget. What a nonsense! Capital works are about building things, not about buying things. It is about building dams, building roads and building hospitals. It is about building things, not about buying motor vehicles.

The Treasurer is reported in the paper this morning trying to justify this by saying that this is not quite the first time, that 'even though we did not say it in the budget paper last year we

started doing it towards the end of the financial year'. When has any government in this state included motor vehicles in the capital works statement? It is an absolute economic shambles. Once we include purchases of motor vehicles, where will it end? Are stationary acquisitions suddenly to become a part of the capital works budget as well?

The 2003-04 state budget was unexciting. It lacked any imagination or vision. It failed to commit to one single piece of new infrastructure of state significance that had not already been talked about. Where the budget did become a little more exciting was where it employed new, inventive and imaginative accounting techniques—techniques to fudge the figures; techniques to plug the holes. To plug up the holes this government has gone beyond using creative accounting techniques. It has milked every last cent out of every avenue to bring in the cash it so desperately needs.

**Mr Seeney:** Mortgaged the power poles.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** As the honourable member for Callide says, it has mortgaged the power poles. What will it mortgage this year now that it has raided everything it possibly can? The profits of government corporations have been raided—raided like they have never been raided before. Talk about corporate raiders! Energex has been raided. The Port Authority has been raided. Golden Casket has been raided. The Treasurer has defended these raids. I take this opportunity to remind the Treasurer and the Premier of some sound words of financial advice that were once imparted. I want the Treasurer to listen carefully as I quote. That person said—

Eroding the capital of government corporations by stripping their earnings puts higher charges on business which, in turn, affects their ability to create jobs.

That was an observant remark made by Peter Beattie in May 1997. What a shame the Treasurer did not heed the advice. What a shame the Premier did not remember his own advice to this parliament. What a shame the Premier has not lived up to his promise to make jobs his No. 1 priority. In this instance he has put cooking the books ahead of jobs.

Let us look at another important assumption the state government is using to predict that it will be able to achieve a small surplus in the 2003-04 budget. Let us look at tax. I am afraid to say that—and I have no doubt that this assumption will come to fruition—the government this year is predicting that it will rake in \$5.7 billion in taxation revenue. That is \$1.1 billion more in taxes than when this government first came to office. It is more than just the new ambulance tax—the new \$88 tax, a tax that is going to be a double whammy to owners of small businesses.

Labor's budget predicts that it will milk an additional \$70 million out of Queensland motorists in 2003-04 by way of taxes, fees and fines. Labor's budget also continues to renege on a promise it made in opposition to honour the previous National-Liberal coalition's commitment to phase in reductions of land tax. Not only has it failed to phase in reductions; it has actually increased land taxes. Its feeble efforts announced in the state budget, to be backed up by legislation, will in no way offset the enormous additions it will rake in via land taxes.

The government intends to introduce new water charges for licence holders. If this is not a big enough burden on our primary producers during these very difficult times, Labor has planned a whole raft of additional user pays fees for services once provided by the government. Under Labor's 2003-04 state budget every man, woman and child in Queensland will be paying \$4,080 in state taxes. That is \$159 per person more in taxes than just one year ago. That means that every person will be paying a 12 per cent increase in taxes—a 12 per cent increase in just one year under this Treasurer.

Talking about Labor's new and higher taxes gives me an opportunity to put forward some positive ideas—ideas on how a National-Liberal coalition government would relieve the tax burden on Queenslanders. As everyone knows, positive politics is a passion of mine. It is an agenda I will not be steered away from. Everyone knows that this government failed to fund our Ambulance Service properly. We all know that this government failed to cost its election promises properly. We all know that, as a result of Labor's bungling, we are all going to be paying a new tax—a new ambulance tax amounting to \$88 a year.

What makes this doubly unfair is that it is a double whammy. Under Labor tens of thousands of Queenslanders will be paying the tax twice, three times or even more and those people primarily are the small businessmen and women of this state who can ill afford that enhanced tax burden from this government. The National-Liberal coalition tried unsuccessfully in the parliament last week to amend legislation to make sure that people would only have to pay the tax once. But this government, using its massive and arrogant majority, voted down our amendments.

Today I am pleased to announce that a National-Liberal coalition government in Queensland will bring in amendments to ensure that the levy is never paid more than once—not ever. To ensure this commitment does not result in Queenslanders paying an even higher levy to make up for the funding shortfall, the National-Liberal coalition government will inject another \$23 million into our Ambulance Service to make up for the shortfall in revenue. This is a fully funded, fully costed election commitment. Under a coalition government, the tax will be paid just once. Labor's double-dipping will be abolished. So committed are we to abolishing Labor's double-dipping that we will introduce legislation within our first 100 days to ensure that the tax is never paid more than once. That is our commitment.

I have long been of the view that the Premier of Queensland does not need twice as many staff as the Prime Minister of Australia. The Premier of Queensland does not need twice as many staff as the Prime Minister of Australia. Surely one person to take his photograph, not hundreds, is enough. We have this extraordinary situation in Queensland where the Premier, through the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, has no fewer than 785 staff. When the Premier—that is, Peter Beattie—took office in 1998, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet had 607 staff. In the five years that he has held office, the number of staff has grown to 785. No Premier needs that many staff and no other Premier in Australia has that many, even in those Australian states which are much larger than the state of Queensland. The Premier of Victoria has half of that. The Premier of New South Wales has half of that. As I said, the Prime Minister of Australia has half that number of staff.

A National-Liberal coalition government will abolish 170 positions from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. They are not needed. Those people are not needed there. They are simply there as part of this government's—this Premier's—propaganda machine. The \$23 million saved will be diverted to the Queensland Ambulance Service. We make no apology for that—that is, that \$23 million saving funded as a consequence of that will be diverted into Queensland's ambulance services. It is a win-win for Queenslanders—that is, smaller government. We make no apologies for smaller government, less tax, a better Ambulance Service and a fairer ambulance levy. Those small businessmen and women around Queensland that those opposite do not care about, that they have loaded up with this ambulance tax not just once but twice and three and four times and even more, are going to be helped out unashamedly under this National-Liberal Party when elected to government in Queensland.

This is a win-win for them. It is a win-win for Queenslanders. It is about equity and it is about fairness. That is something that this government lost when it lost its alleged egalitarian way. That is what positive politics is about. It is about reducing the tax burden on people. It is about making sure that there are answers, suggestions, solutions and things that make the livelihoods of Queenslanders even better. Never let it be said that the National-Liberal coalition in Queensland does not put forward alternatives to Labor's high taxing policies.

I want to turn now to another issue important to all of us irrespective of what side of politics we come from. I have spoken a lot this morning about how Queensland compares with other states, but I also want to look at our place on the world stage, where we stand and how we are perceived. There are many international challenges facing Queensland and there are many international opportunities also presenting themselves and facing Queensland. But let us talk first about the challenges. The outbreak of SARS has been the latest blow to our tourism industry—as if the collapse of Ansett was not enough, as if the events of September 11 and the lingering reluctance of people to travel was not enough, and as if the uncertainty created by the war in Iraq was not enough. That is why I find it hard to believe that in this year's state budget Labor has again cut funding to Queensland's peak tourism promotion body, Queensland Tourism. It is absolutely unjustifiable.

Queensland Tourism's total grant this year will be just \$42.6 million. Not only is that down on the \$43.4 million it received last year, but it is well down on the \$47.4 million allocated in the last year of the previous coalition government. Five years down the track from when the coalition left government in Queensland the population of Queensland has actually increased significantly. We are faced with the fallout of September 11. We are faced with—

**Mr Johnson:** Domestic tourism.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** With domestic tourism, as the honourable member for Gregory says. We are faced with the fallout of September 11. We are faced with the problem of SARS. We are faced with competing growth in tourism funding and opportunities in other states in Australia, yet this government is abrogating its responsibilities. Five years down the track, what do we see from this government? A \$5 million reduction in monetary terms, let alone real terms, of the amount of

grant moneys which are made available to Tourism Queensland in this state. That is an absolute disgrace and an absolute indictment on this government and demonstrates the fact that it is not prepared to stand up for tourism in this state—one of this state's most significant economic and job employment generators. It does not make sense.

The government is spending less on tourism, as I said, compared to what it was spending five years ago. That makes no sense at all. In 1998 Queensland spent \$5 million on tourism marketing campaigns in Asia. Last year the funding was just \$1.2 million. I remind honourable members again that in 1998 that was a commitment from the then Borbidge-Sheldon coalition government. It was a good commitment and a proper commitment because it was needed, because there was an Asian economic crisis and tourism was coming under some degree of stress. So instead of going away and becoming a fortress Australia or a fortress Queensland and not reaching out and promoting ourselves to the rest of the world, we went out there and approached those people and we encouraged them to come here.

So what better opportunity do we have than at this time, when people are uncertain about travel, uncertain about the risk of terrorism and disease, when we have such a good place as Queensland with all its natural beauty and attributes. What better time to actually enhance our promotion of tourism in this state for international visitors and domestic tourism as well. It is a sad indictment on this government about how little it cares about tourism in this state. In 1998 Queensland spent \$2.7 million on tourism marketing campaigns in Europe. Last year that was just \$2.1 million. Again, that was an opportunity for those Europeans who are looking at travelling to other places throughout the world, particularly in light of the SARS outbreak. In 1998 Queensland spent \$895,000 on tourism marketing campaigns in the United States. Last year that was just \$758,000. In 1998 Queensland spent \$586,000 on tourism marketing campaigns in New Zealand. Last year that was just \$409,000.

At a time when Queensland Tourism has so much working against it, the last thing it needs is the government working against it as well. Within every single overseas tourism market we are spending less on promotion than we were five years ago. Those levels of funding will again be cut this year as the Beattie Labor government prepares to slice off another \$1 million from our tourism marketing budget. How do those opposite justify that? I do not think that they can. As I said earlier, there are challenges and opportunities when it comes to Queensland's position in the world. With the Beijing Olympics not far away, there are many infrastructure and marketing opportunities for Queensland companies. Equally, there are many infrastructure opportunities to come out of the efforts to rebuild in Iraq and also Afghanistan.

This is a time when we should be promoting our trade credentials, a time when we should be assisting our Queensland industries and companies look for new trade opportunities, and a time when we should be assisting them to position themselves. But that is not the view of the Premier, who is also the Minister for Trade. The budget of the Office of Trade, the office charged with trade promotion, will be cut by \$2 million in the 2003-04 financial year. It will be cut from \$24.3 million last year to just \$22.3 million in the coming year. What is the justification for that?

Let us also look at the home front. Let us look at how this year's budget fails our children. It fails our children because this government is broke. It is no secret that the Department of Families has been unable to keep pace with the ballooning number of notifications of various forms of child sexual abuse. The minister herself admitted in last year's estimates committee hearing that the number of notifications of child abuse to her department was expected to increase at an annual rate of eight per cent for the next 10 years. How many extra staff have been employed by the government this year? Zero! Zilch! Not one extra child protection officer is to be employed this year by the government.

Not one extra position has been allocated in this state budget for child protection services in this state. How is that about addressing those very many cases of human tragedy and need we have seen played out recently in the media and in our courts? Notifications in terms of kids at risk, even on the minister's admission to the estimates committee, are rising eight per cent each year, yet there is no extra commitment to front-line child protection staff from this minister. How can she justify that? She cannot justify that. There is not a single additional staffer, even though her department has already threatened strike action because of the existing backlog. This means that notifications of child abuse are not being properly followed up and investigated, and we know the unfortunate consequences of that. The government's failure to address the problem will compound the situation. Queenslanders deserve better.

Even the Premier has chosen to ignore our young. He is charged with the budget allocation and responsibility for the Commission for Children and Young People. Can honourable members

guess what has happened to its budget? Its budget will be cut by \$2.6 million this year, down from \$7.7 million. How does he justify that? Did he tell the backbench members of parliament that? The other day backbenchers and ministers walked out of this chamber saying, 'Cop that. Let's see you drive a hole through this one.' That is starting to happen already. How do they justify that? They cannot justify it because it is wrong, it is unprincipled and it fails our young people in particular.

In light of the government's pursuit of its Smart State agenda, I would have expected to see a budget focused on education for our kids. As a father of four, education is an important issue to me, as it is to many other Queenslanders, including other honourable members on both sides of the House. Several months ago I revealed that the number of guidance officers in our schools had remained unchanged. Guidance officers are the people charged with guiding our children into making the right subject and career choices—a critical area if we are truly to be a Smart State, which this government has talked about so much and which is emblazoned across its budget papers. But this budget fails to make any provision for extra guidance officers.

**Mr Malone:** Talk is cheap.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** As the honourable member for Mirani says, talk is very cheap. The budget also fails to make provision for additional behaviour management specialists—another major problem in our classrooms and schools which has been drawn to the attention of this government by parents and citizens associations and by the Teachers Union, who are struggling under the burden of dealing with behavioural management issues compounded by the issue of increasing class sizes. What about teacher numbers? There will be no additional teachers beyond enrolment growth. What happened to the commitment dragged out of the government by the Queensland Teachers Union for its last enterprise bargaining agreement? In other words, under Labor overcrowded classrooms are here to stay. That is not being a Smart State.

I have also looked at the capital works budget for Education in Queensland. To great fanfare earlier this year the state government announced that it would be increasing the school leaving age to 16 years. That means that students, if they are to be given proper education choices, should have the option to stay at high school until the end of year 11. I looked at the capital works budget to see what plan this Labor government has to expand the 57 schools in Queensland that offer an education to only year 10 by building extra classrooms where additional subject choices are to be taught. What is in the budget? Can honourable members guess? None of those schools appears anywhere in the capital works budget for expansions to offer year 11 as a part of the government's agenda. Not one of them! We support that agenda. We have said that we are prepared to support it. We have some issues with respect to how the government will do that logically and about curriculum opportunities. However, we support that. But what practical steps is the government taking in this budget to achieve that? In other words, the Beattie Labor government misled those 57 communities. Once again, it offered false hope by indicating that its high schools would be upgraded.

When we talk about our children, their safety and their opportunities, our attention is inevitably focused on other components of the budget that should deliver safer homes and safer streets. Not surprisingly, the 2003-04 state budget does very little in the way of assisting our policemen and women to protect our families and solve crime. Recently, our police received a well deserved 3.5 per cent pay increase as part of the enterprise bargaining process. But this year's budget funds only 86 per cent of that increase, leaving the remaining 14 per cent to be funded out of the police operational budget. We do not have to be an Einstein to work out the consequences of that for practical policing on our streets and what that does for community safety. In other words, just to make ends meet police will need to take \$6 million out of their operational budget—money that should be spent on police overtime and police equipment to provide the most effective 24-hour policing services that Queenslanders not only expect but also deserve.

Similarly with respect to Health, nurses were awarded a 3.8 per cent wage rise and Treasury has funded only 80 per cent of that amount, leaving Queensland Health to find the other 20 per cent. That money will need to be found in Queensland Health's operational budget. That means that, just to make ends meet, just to maintain existing staffing levels, \$40 million will be siphoned out of services—all because this government is too broke to pay nurses their entitlements. This Labor government is also too broke to maintain the very successful hospital rebuilding and hospital renewal projects that the former National-Liberal coalition pursued with great vigour. This year's capital works budget for Queensland Health is set at \$282.8 million. That compares woefully—

**Mr Mackenroth:** Rebuild them all again.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** There are other areas of need in Health around Queensland. That is a rebuilding program that addressed areas of immediate, urgent and medium-term need. There are other areas of significant need in some of our larger regional centres around Queensland. The Health capital works budget compares woefully with that for the last year of the National-Liberal coalition government, when my colleague Mike Horan, the member for Toowoomba South, oversaw a massive \$556.8 million capital works program in just one year to build and improve our hospitals.

Let us look at the government's own benchmarks for receiving hospital treatment. The budget papers reveal that nearly one-third of all emergency patients were not seen within the recommended 10-minute time frame. These are people with serious conditions who need to be seen within 10 minutes because their circumstances are life threatening. Equally, the budget papers reveal that nearly half of all urgent patients were not seen within the recommended 30-minute time frame.

However, it is not just in relation to our hospitals that this government is failing to provide essential funding for emergencies in the community. The fire vehicle budget has been cut yet again. After what we saw earlier this year in Canberra, New South Wales and Queensland, including in my area, who would have thought that any government would slash its fire vehicle budget? The budget for new and replacement fire vehicles is just \$17.7 million. That is well down on the \$21.5 million that was being spent on fire vehicles just four budgets ago. The need is increasing, not decreasing.

Let us also look at our Ambulance Service. We all know that the new Labor ambulance tax is about to be introduced and we all know that there are tens of thousands of people throughout rural and regional Queensland who are now going to be forced to pay an ambulance tax even though they do not have access to an Ambulance Service. I would have thought therefore that the Beattie Labor government would be making provision to build more ambulance stations in rural and regional areas.

After all, if the government is going to force everyone to pay the tax, including those who do not have access to a service, is it not right then that the government makes a genuine effort to actually provide the service? That would seem commonsense to me. Why is it that the Wellshot Hotel at Ilfracombe should have to pay the ambulance tax when the town has no Ambulance Service?

When I looked at the capital works budget for the Ambulance Service to see how many additional stations are going to be built, guess what I found? There are only two new ambulance stations in this year's budget, at a time when the Premier says that the population of this state continues to increase at a significant rate and also at a time when this government has introduced its universal ambulance cover.

There are only two new ambulance stations. They are, and I do not begrudge those communities, in the Brisbane vicinity at Narangba and Birkdale. Of course I am delighted for those communities, but should not the Beattie Labor government also have provided funding to expand the Ambulance Service to those rural and regional areas that have no service whatsoever? On one hand, we have the Beattie Labor government failing to provide services and, on the other hand, we also have it failing to fund essential infrastructure.

On that front I would like to draw to the attention of this House the funding of our roads. In the last year of the National-Liberal coalition government Queensland benefited from a massive \$1.2 billion in state road funding. It was a record roads budget delivered very well, very effectively, very efficiently and on time by my colleague the member for Gregory, but now this has been cut by a massive 25 per cent.

Notwithstanding what the Treasurer and the Premier say about the growth projections for Queensland, notwithstanding the population issues in Queensland, notwithstanding the need for capital works and also employment opportunities, it has been cut by 25 per cent. Road funding this year will be just \$778 million. I think it is important to understand that when we talk about the roads we are talking about essential economic infrastructure. If we do not offer the most modern and efficient transportation options in all its forms, then we cannot expect new industry and new business to seriously consider Queensland as an option. Even local government has been left out of the road funding equation.

When the National-Liberal coalition was in office, in our last year we provided \$35 million in funding to local government as part of the TIDS funding—that is the Transport Infrastructure

Development Scheme. This year Labor will give local governments a paltry \$4 million in TIDS funding. That is what Labor thinks about local government. But our side of politics has always valued local government. We have always delivered record funding. Local government is equally important to urban, regional and rural Queensland.

I would like now to talk about rural Queensland in particular. Families are going through some tough times. It is not easy and they do not need meddling, interfering governments. Nor do they need a government intent on stripping services. If you include the fire ant staff, the cuts to Queensland's Department of Primary Industries have been savage under this government. Since the Beattie Labor government took office there have been 670 staff cuts from the ranks of the DPI. The budget papers tell us that a further 13 will be cut this year. The department's staffing levels have been cut by one-fifth. The strange thing is that the bulk of these staff cuts have come from the food and fibre science innovation section. I would have thought that that would be the very section that this government would be about promoting because it talks about the Smart State. It talks about the need to innovate. It talks about the need to plan for the future. It talks about the need to diversify. It talks about the need to build and develop what we traditionally do very well in this state. Indeed the budget of this unit has been cut by some \$15 million.

The DPI budget, like so much of the entire budget of this government, has adopted a smoke and mirrors methodology. The government claims to have put aside \$25 million for drought assistance and recovery but has no intention of delivering on that. If you look over the last two years, this state Labor government has only delivered \$4.8 million in drought assistance. That is cash in the pockets of drought struggling farmers and their families throughout Queensland. By contrast, for the same period the Commonwealth government has provided drought assistance to Queensland to the value of \$171 million. That is its commitment to Queensland. Most of that is actual cash in the pockets of struggling drought farm families.

If we also look in the budget of the Department of Natural Resources we see more false hope. The government claims to have allocated \$75 million in compensation for tree clearing reductions. If I can just digress for a moment and say that that compensation, if in fact it comes about, is not about strengthening or rebuilding or properly compensating; that is about exit assistance. That is about getting people off the land. That is about destroying the livelihoods of these people.

What was the Premier's answer the other day when he was asked about this and what the government was going to do with regards to helping these people? He turned to the Minister for Primary Industries and said, 'Well, if they can't clear trees we're going to help them build those things—what are they called?' The Minister for Primary Industries said, 'Feedlots.' So feedlots are going to be really, really useful at Cloncurry. They are going to be really useful at Mount Isa. They are going to be really useful at Quilpie when we already have a situation where the intensive animal industry, so far as feedlots are concerned, is at a maximum level of what the market can take domestically and internationally due to high grain prices and those sorts of things. This goes to show the practical, theoretical lack of understanding that this government has about what it is seeking to do.

We all know that this \$75 million is a paltry level of funding because we all know that the Premier has taken to cabinet to keep secret a report prepared by his own government in 1999 which said that the impacts of tree clearing restrictions would cost at least \$500 million and probably a whole lot more. That is the restrictions we currently have. There is no compensation for those people. The \$75 million is part of a \$150 million promise on the part of the state and federal governments, which is about exit assistance. It is not about really genuinely underwriting and securing any lost value or viability for those farmers and their families.

The other thing about this \$75 million is that it is mentioned in the Premier's speech but it appears nowhere in the balance sheets of the department's budget. So it has mentioned it but it is not there. It is another pea and thimble trick from this Labor government, something which we have grown to expect under it. It is written into the press releases and it is written into the budget text, but it is not in the balance sheet. It is not there because the government is broke.

However, this government has managed to allocate \$8 million in a direct transfer from the Department of Primary Industries essential extension services—that is for animal and plant industries—to police its vegetation management and water use legislation. However, there is only \$1.8 million in additional funding to undertake essential work to manage water sourced from the Great Artesian Basin, work that would conserve water by capping bores and flows.

We know that this program has been enormously successful in Queensland over the last few years because it has preserved a great natural resource. It has preserved a resource that takes hundreds of thousands of years, if not millions of years, to recharge. It is something which deserves to be preserved, it is something that deserves to be regulated, and it is something that can benefit from capping. It is something that we have been committed to. It is something that this government has committed \$1.8 million to. That is absolutely paltry! If the government wanted to commit some real money, that is a place which could gain some benefit in so far as preserving that wonderful natural resource.

The budget paper also reveals that over the last five years of Labor only one resource operation plan has been finalised. These plans manage people's eligibility to take water. But it is not just the industrial side of Queensland that this government is hindering. This government is also tearing at the social fabric of our rural communities. This was demonstrated so clearly by the government's decision to scrap almost 200 race meetings across Queensland—a heartless, misguided decision from a government that does not understand and does not care about the racing industry in this state.

Does the government know that many of the great professional jockeys in this state and in this country and many of the great horses in this state and in this country have come from those race tracks in the past? Many of them have and many of them would have continued to do so, but limiting that opportunity limits those trainers, owners and jockeys participating in a wonderful sport. Not only is racing a sport; it is an industry which contributes something like 55,000 jobs directly or indirectly to this state's economy. It is essential to the social infrastructure of this state.

We do not see from the government in this budget one additional cent to assist racing clubs and picnic racing committees across Queensland to enable them to hold their events—events which are so important to those communities. I was in Cairns the other day. It has suffered a reduction in race meets from 36 to 12 a year. What about the impact across north Queensland? That is just the meets. We are not talking about races. That adds up to hundreds of races in that area alone. That limits the opportunity for owners, trainers and jockeys and it limits the opportunity for social participation.

This is quite clearly a government out of ideas. It is a government quite clearly out of vision and it is a government out of money. It has to be time that we consider a number of matters. It is a government that has been in office for all but two of the last 14 years. It has to be time for change. Labor says higher taxes. Labor says more deficits. Labor says higher unemployment. I say there has to be another way.

**Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (12.21 p.m.): I rise to support this Smart State budget, which delivers improved and integrated services in the areas of health, families, education, housing and law and order to achieve better outcomes for the people of Queensland. This budget will improve the lives of all Queenslanders and create sustainable opportunities for everyone.

The message from residents in the electorate of Mount Ommaney is consistently about issues such as education, families, health, roads and transport, law and order, jobs and the environment. This budget delivers on all of those issues by providing funding for activities that will impact on the lives of every family in the area. Delivering vital, fundamental and very important services to all Queenslanders is the keystone of this budget. I congratulate the Treasurer, the Hon. Terry Mackenroth, for acting on the priorities of the Beattie government and delivering our vision for Queensland.

The budget includes \$100 million over four years for a package of measures to increase the effectiveness of public and private research and development. This will provide more skills and boost innovation for industry, including that in and adjoining the Mount Ommaney electorate. The Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative will be extended, with an extra \$255 million over three years from 2004-05 plus an additional \$3.8 million to employ 300 public sector apprentices. Funding is provided for an extra 636 teachers in schools from 2004. As the second year of a \$188 million four-year initiatives package, \$32 million will help generate better outcomes for families and children by providing a safer and more supportive community.

The Queensland Ambulance Service will employ an extra 110 officers statewide and will commence or complete 17 replacement and four new stations. The number of police officers will increase by approximately 300 in 2003-04 as the Police Service progresses towards the achievement of 9,100 officers by 2005.

There is an additional \$2.6 billion over four years for health, including Commonwealth and state funding, compared to the 2002-03 Health budget, including additional investment and service enhancements in acute hospital care, elective surgery, home and community care and mental health. An additional \$290.5 million in state funding is provided over four years to Disability Services Queensland, including \$200 million to implement funding reform project initiatives.

I am pleased that the budget allocates nearly \$817,000 for a new respite centre and family support service in my electorate in Corinda. This shows that this government cares for the health and welfare of all Queenslanders. As part of a \$150 million Commonwealth-state tree clearing reduction package, the state will provide an additional \$75 million over five years.

At the community cabinet held in my electorate earlier this year, it was clear that residents were concerned not only with their individual issues but also with a wide range of policy matters that affect people of all age groups. This debate on the appropriation bills is also an excellent opportunity to talk about the Beattie government's great achievements in the electorate of Mount Ommaney. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

#### HEALTH

\$5.753 million in additional funding has been allocated for the Princess Alexandra and Mater Hospital Health Service Districts to enhance health services such as oncology, intensive care and home-based care as a special feature of the budget which will assist the needs of residents of the western suburbs.

A community health facility in Corinda was officially opened by the Minister for Health, the Honourable Wendy Edmond, on 6 June 2001. The facility continues to be a great asset to local residents as it includes services such as one-on-one child health consultations, positive parenting programs, nutrition advice, stress and pain management and medication awareness, open health clinics, community health nursing assessments, a baby health clinic, health education and home care for asthma and diabetes management. A 20 seat meeting room is available for use by community organisations in the area.

Residents contacted me about a respite service for the Oxley, Corinda and Sherwood area and lobbied the Health Minister at the recent Community Cabinet. It is pleasing to note that their concerns have been addressed as the budget allocates \$317,000 for a new respite centre and family support service in Corinda with a total expenditure for the service of \$816,700. This shows that this government cares for the health and welfare of all Queenslanders.

#### Ambulance

In October 2000, a new ambulance station for the Centenary Suburbs was achieved and in September last year I was able to honour my commitment to provide a 24 hour ambulance service to residents of the electorate.

#### EDUCATION

Education again received considerable enhancements with over \$785,000 being allocated for schools in the area. I continue to visit schools, P&C associations, their sub-committees and tuckshops on a regular basis to ensure that I am fully informed about all matters concerning the education of our children. This year all state schools received information technology grants and 41 new computers in the state schools. Some of the works provided in this budget and over recent years are listed below according to the school.

Mount Ommaney Special School was provided with an amount of \$60,000 in the last budget for work on the hydrotherapy pool. Recently the school had their classrooms repainted.

The Centenary High School stage 3 (a media and television block, a performing arts facility and a student centre with two international size basketball courts) and stage 4 (an eight classroom teaching block and a conversion to create a science classroom) construction was completed in April. Modifications to the school buildings will benefit from a \$275,000 rectification program.

The Corinda State High School's \$7.2 million renewal program was officially opened in early 2002 by the Minister for Education. Enhancements included a new technology learning centre and a performing arts centre incorporating the existing school hall. In addition, two of the existing buildings on the site were dismantled and new state-of-the-art facilities built. Last year's budget provided \$23,450 to finalise Corinda State High School's renewal program. Corinda will share in the \$220,000 repainting program with Jindalee State School.

Corinda State School's preschool centre was also officially opened last year. The new \$660,000 facility is a great asset to the school and the local community. It provides continuity of schooling for those children going on to the Corinda State Primary School located in the same grounds.

The \$170,000 State Government contribution to the library extension at the Middle Park State School continues to provide more room and a better study environment for students. In 2001, \$99,536 was allocated in the budget for a new amenities block. Last year, the State government contributed \$50,000 towards the construction of an "After School Hours Care" facility. This has now been completed. The seamless flooring in the tuckshop had been repaired recently and the grounds near the outside school hours care building have just been landscaped.

Improvements I have instigated over the past few years at Jamboree Heights State School included a handrail for the ramp at the rear of the hall, repair of drainage problems, \$27,000 for acoustic dividers in classrooms, \$48,448 for painting etc. Recently the Minister for Public Works provided \$17,000 to upgrade the electric cabling for the school which meant that the swimming pool is now heated.

Jindalee State School has previously received \$378,600 for two two-space relocatable buildings to accommodate the increasing number of students and, recently, battens under the modular buildings were installed. Funding of \$120,000 for a new car park was shared equally between the State government and the BCC. \$150,000 was

provided in the last budget for two new classrooms at the Jindalee State School. A lock-up bicycle compound was recently finished and students now have a secure method of protecting their bikes. An amount of \$260,000 has been provided in this budget for extra toilets and extensions to the school hall. The school will also receive \$30,000 for landscaping and playground equipment and some of the school buildings will be repainted.

All primary schools have received outside school hours care funding.

#### LAW AND ORDER

Crime fighting in Queensland has become a billion dollar industry under the Beattie Government, with a sixth record police operational budget of \$1.001 billion. Crime detection and prevention is clearly a massive responsibility and this Government has made it a key priority.

We will improve police numbers by about 300 this year, to increase police numbers to about 8700 by the end of this financial year. The Government will establish a 14 officer Tactical Crime Squad at Oxley at a cost of \$390,000.

About \$15 million has been set aside to improve police information technology to help reduce paper work and free up police officers for work out on the beat at stations such as Sherwood, Oxley and Mount Ommaney.

The State Government will also invest almost \$400 million in improved community safety through the Department of Corrective Services budget which will focus on improved programs and infrastructure upgrades at correctional centres including those adjoining the Riverhills residential areas at Wacol.

Key initiatives in this budget included \$2.6 million for the continuation of the Drug court trial in South-East Queensland and North Queensland, and \$1.7 million to continue the expanded use of urinalysis drug testing for offenders under community supervision.

Residents in the Mount Ommaney electorate are more secure knowing that additional funds have been allocated to deter, catch, prosecute and jail criminals.

Mount Ommaney Police Station continues to be a great asset to the Centenary suburbs and environs. Residents and Neighbourhood Watch groups maintain their dialogue with me in relation to policing matters and I actively pursue the issues with officers at the Station and the District Superintendent.

A police beat was established at Oxley and the local community have embraced the concept and Senior Constable Scott Uttridge has continued to be proactive in his approach to local crime. He has set up a "Business Watch" with the co-operation of local businesses at Oxley.

The Sherwood Police Station will be replaced at a cost of \$430,000 and I am sure local residents will be pleased that their deputations have met with success.

#### TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS

\$3.7 million was previously allocated to complete asphalt resurfacing of the Centenary Highway between the Ipswich Motorway and the Brisbane River. This is due to commence in August this year. Residents along the Centenary Highway will greatly benefit from resurfacing the road which will decrease the amount of traffic noise and improve quality of life for residents along the highway. \$2.3 million was set aside for completion of the Western Freeway bikeway between Centenary bridge and the Fig Tree Pocket turnoff and works will commence later this year.

In this year's budget, \$6m has been provided for infrastructure works to improve disabled access to Citytrain services. Last year the successful \$1.2 million upgrade of access to the Oxley Station was completed. Work on disabled access for Corinda railway station is due to commence in the next few months. People living in these suburbs will be pleased that improvements will enable better access for the elderly, parents with prams and the disabled.

Rail commuters at Sherwood will notice activity at the station as it undergoes a major upgrade. \$180,000 has been allocated to improve platform shelters and the pedestrian underpass.

The CityTrans project at Darra Railway Station and the recent upgrade of the car parking facility is working extremely well. A further \$40,000 was earmarked to construct another 23 parking bays at the station.

Motorists across the electorate will see an enhancement in our suburban roads. Local roads will be improved as \$111,000 has been provided in this budget for road and drainage works.

Traffic improvements along the Centenary Highway

This budget provided \$10 million towards the \$66M in National Highway funding to undertake planning and commence design work for the Ipswich Motorway upgrade from four to six lanes between Granard Road and Riverview. This will relieve traffic congestion along the Centenary Highway.

#### ENVIRONMENT

Green space in the Centenary suburbs has been increased with the State Government providing 47-hectare parkland north of Wolston Creek (part of the land used as a buffer for the former Moreton Correctional Centre) to the community. The land abuts the properties of Riverhills residents and Brisbane City Council has taken on management of the allotted parkland.

Oxley Creek Common or as it may be known as the old DPI site at Rocklea has also been handed over to the community for environmental purposes. The government has also provided \$2 million for infrastructure on the site and Stage One development of the site which includes access paths along the creek and across the site, environment interpretation facilities for Oxley Creek and environmental restoration of the Oxley Creek edge, will be completed by September this year.

#### COMMUNITY HOUSING

Jobs will be created in the local area through the allocation of over \$3.3 million in this year's budget to build additional public housing and to provide housing services in the local area.

\$2.796 million has been allocated to construct nine dwellings and purchase land on which to construct an additional 15 dwellings in the future. This investment will boost the levels of affordable housing for low-income earners in the area. A further \$230,000 will be invested to upgrade 17 houses and improve the liveability of the dwellings and appearance of the streetscape.

The allocation for maintenance in the budget for public housing in the electorate is almost \$280,000 and these initiatives will help provide a better quality of life for low-income families or individuals.

#### OTHER ISSUES

The former Oxley Secondary College has received a new lease of life as the Fire Ant Control Centre. Many residents of the electorate reside within declared fire ant areas and recently fire ant nests were discovered in the grounds of the Corinda State High School. These have been successfully eradicated.

I would like to congratulate the Minister for Primary Industries and his Control Centre staff for the efforts they have made in communicating with members of the public and for increasing the number of DPI field officers to combat this dangerous pest.

Services at the Returned and Services League commemorative functions continue to increase in numbers. This year over 800 people attended the Centenary War Memorial service on Anzac Day and about 100 ex-serviceman and women marched in the parade.

Volunteers are an integral part of our local community. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the individuals and groups who give freely of their time to make these suburbs more comfortable for many residents.

Volunteer and other groups continue to improve their services through the Gambling Community Benefit Fund which provided \$88,141 for the 2003 June funding round. Organisations benefiting from the funding included:

- Canossa Care Diversional Therapy Fundraising Committee (\$8,757)
- Corinda Horse and Pony Club Inc (\$6,575)
- Good News Lutheran Primary School Parents & Friends Association (\$15,696)
- Jamboree Community Kindergarten & Preschool Association Inc (\$6,677)
- Jindalee State School Parents & Citizens' Association (\$30,000)
- YMCA Brisbane—Y West Centre (\$20,436)

This year's budget also included successful Sport and Recreation funding grants for the Jindalee Bowls Club (\$37,785 for the upgrade of the lawn bowling green) and the McLeod Country Golf Club (\$38,148 to construct an irrigation system).

I meet many volunteers often when I attend community meetings and visit local events and it is wonderful to have this opportunity to assist some of them for the invaluable contribution they make to the community in which they work and live.

The Government appreciates the participation of all volunteers, and I congratulate them all for a job well done. There are many volunteer groups in the Mount Ommaney electorate, and I have included a list of groups. Contact details are available from my electorate office.

These lists and other information about the Mount Ommaney electorate are available on my website—[www.julieattwood.org](http://www.julieattwood.org).

#### LIST OF GROUPS WITH MEMBERS IN THE MT OMMANEY ELECTORATE

5 June 2003

##### AGED CARE FACILITIES

CORINDA—Bethesda Caring Centre; Hopetoun Aged Persons

JINDALEE—James Ommaney Village; Jindalee Nursing Centre

OXLEY—Canossa Nursing Home

17 MILE ROCKS—Sinnamon Village Aged Complex

##### CHURCHES

CORINDA—Christian Brethren Assembly; Riverside Christian Church (Assemblies of God); Lutheran Church; Catholic Church

DURACK—Phap Quang Temple

JAMBOREE HEIGHTS—Church of Christ

JINDALEE—Catholic Church; Universal Apostolic Church

MIDDLE PARK—Uniting Church; Evangelical Presbyterian Church; Lutheran Church; Anglican Ministry

MT OMMANEY—Baptist Community Church; Cornerstone Christian Family Church; Kingdom of Christ Ministries; Salvation Army

OXLEY—Apostolic Church; Methodist Church; Presbyterian Reformed Church; Uniting Churches

SHERWOOD—Uniting Church; Anglican Church

##### COMMUNITY GROUPS

Apex Clubs—Jindalee

Bushcare and Environmental Groups—Centenary Riverfront Advisory Committee Inc., Mt Ommaney; Jindalee Bushcare Group; Oxley Creek Catchment Association, Corinda; Oxley Creek Environment Group, Sherwood; Westlake-Riverhills Bushcare Group, Westlake

Children's and Women's Groups—Centenary Community Connections, Jindalee; Focus on Youth Incorporated, 17 Mile Rocks; Kiwanis; Montrose—Queensland Society for Crippled Children, Corinda; Nursing Mothers Association, Riverhills; QCWA, Oxley; Young Widows & Widowers Support Group of Brisbane, Riverhills; Zoe Reed Little Bridge House Assoc. Inc., Brisbane

Girl Guides—Corinda; Jamboree Heights, Jindalee

Lions Clubs—Sherwood, Jindalee

Meals on Wheels Associations—Jindalee, Sherwood

Multicultural Groups—Al-Risalah Islamic Association Inc., Riverhills; Alliance; Communities Against Racism and Discrimination—ACARD, Riverhills; Borrel Club Brisbane, Corinda; Brisbane Marae Community Centre Inc, Jamboree Heights; Egyptian Australian Association of Qld, Jindalee; Hindi-Speaking Congregation, Jamboree Heights; Hindu Ahlaya Sangam Qld Inc, Middle Park; Islamic Society of Darra Inc; Latvian Arts and Crafts, Jamboree Heights; Linh Son Nunnery, Darra; Island Sensation Dance Group, Oxley; Qld Chinese Community Voice, Middle Park; Qld Sri Lanka Buddhist (Vihara) Temple Association Inc, Darra; Serbian Society Vuk Karadzic, Mt Ommaney; St. Paul's Antiochian Orthodox Church, Mt Ommaney; Taiwan Friendship Assn of Old, Sunnybank Hills; Tamil Senior Citizens Association (Qld), Middle Park; Tetun Cultural Assn Inc, Oxley; The Qld Kosciuszko Polish Association of Darra, Darra; Ukrainian Association of Queensland Inc., Oxley; Ukrainian Folk Dance Ensemble Kalyna, Riverhills; Ukrainian Senior Citizens Club, Oxley; United Vietnamese Buddhist Congregations of Qld, Durack; Van-Lang Cultural and Social Welfare Association, Darra; Veterans Federation of the Republic of Vietnam in Australia, Inala; Vietnamese Buddhist Church Association of Brisbane Inc., Corinda; Vietnamese Community of Australia (Qld Chapter), Darra; Vietnamese Forum for Multiculturalism, Mt Ommaney; Vietnamese Senior Citizens Association in Queensland Inc, Darra; Vietnamese Womens Assn of Qld, Darra; Women's International Zionist Organisation, Sumner Park; World & Asian Pacific League for Freedom & Democracy, Darra; World Lebanese Cultural Union, Darra; World Orthodox Buddhism Association, Sinnamon Park

Neighbourhood Watch Committees—Corinda, Jindalee, Middle Park, Mt Ommaney, Riverhills, Sherwood and Sinnamon Park

Other Groups with Mt Ommaney Electorate Affiliations—Anti-Graffiti Group, Westlake; ARAFMI Queensland Inc, New Farm; Association of Independent Retirees Inc (Brisbane West Branch), Kenmore; Benarrawa Community Development Association, Graceville; Brisbane's West by Southwest Historical Society, Jindalee; Carrington Boat Club; Centenary & Districts Chamber of Commerce, Sumner Park; Centenary Evening View Club; Centenary Local Ambulance Committee; Centenary Suburbs Historical Society; Citizen Advocacy South West Brisbane Association Inc; Corinda Bridge Club; Corinda Residents' Association; Graceville Anxiety Management Support Group; John Oxley District Orchid Society Inc, Corinda; McLeod Country Golf Club; Obedience Dog Club of Brisbane, Oxley; Pol-Art 2000—Brisbane Association Inc., Corinda; National Assn of Watch and Clock Collectors, Westlake; Seventeen Mile Rocks Progress Association; Sherwood Neighbourhood Centre Inc.; Sinnamon Park Residents Progress Assn; South West Brisbane Community Legal Centre; South West Interagency Committee; St Vincent de Paul, Corinda; Stroke Community Support Program, Salisbury; The Friday Club—Voluntary Care Social Respite Day Group, Sinnamon Park; Transport Options Project (TOPS), Corinda; University of the Third Age, Westlake; Wesley Central Mission, Sinnamon Park

P&C Associations—Centenary State High School; Corinda State High School; Corinda State Primary School; Darra-Jindalee Catholic School; Good News Lutheran School; Jamboree Community Kindergarten and Preschool; Jamboree Heights State Pre-School; Jamboree Heights State School; Jindalee State School; Middle Park State School; Mt. Ommaney Special School; Oxley State School; Sherwood State School; St Aidan's Anglican Girls School; St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Probus Clubs—Corinda, Sinnamon Park, Mt Ommaney, Centenary

Rotary Clubs—Jindalee, Sumner Park, Centenary

RSL Clubs and Associated Organisations—Centenary Suburbs RSL Sub Branch, Jindalee; Sherwood/Indooroopilly RSLA Sub-Branch, Corinda; War Memorial Gardens Committee, Mt Ommaney

Safety House Organisations—Corinda, Middle Park, Mt Ommaney

Scouts—Jamboree Heights, Jindalee, Corinda, Sherwood, Oxley

Seniors Associations—National Seniors Association Centenary Branch, Mt Ommaney; National Seniors Association Corinda Branch, Oxley; Senior Citizens Associations, Jindalee, Middle Park, Oxley and Sherwood

Sporting Groups—Brisbane Radio Yacht Club Inc., Corinda; Brisbane Strikers Supporters' Association, Jindalee; Brisbane Water Ski Club Inc., Mt Ommaney; Brisbane Wakeboard Association, Westlake; Centenary Canoe Club, Riverhills; Centenary Community Sporting Association, Jamboree Heights; Centenary Cricket Club Inc., Jindalee; Centenary Little Athletics, Jindalee; Centenary Netball Club, Riverhills; Centenary Rugby League Football Club, Jindalee; Centenary Soccer Inc, Mt Ommaney; Centenary Swim Club, Middle Park; Centenary Table Tennis Association, Jamboree Heights; Greater Brisbane Junior Tennis Inc, Indooroopilly; Jamboree Heights Swimming Club Inc. Assoc.; Jindalee District (Jags) Australian Football Club; Jindalee Ladies Bowling Club; Jindalee Men's Bowls Club Inc.; Jindalee Netball Club; Jindalee Pony Club; Jindalee Swimming Club Inc.; Oxley State School Amateur Swimming Club; Oxley United Soccer Club, Corinda; Queensland Darts Association Inc., Jamboree Heights; Sapphire Netball Club, Sinnamon Park; Sherwood AFL Club, Graceville; Sherwood State School Amateur Swimming Club; South West United Hockey Club, Westlake; Southern Cross Junior Rugby League Football Club, Graceville; St. Catherine's United Soccer Club, Mt Ommaney; St. Josephs Netball Club, Durack; Western Suburbs District Cricket Club, Corinda; Wests Baseball Club, Sumner Park; Westside BMX Club, Riverhills; Y-West Youth & Community Centre, Jamboree Heights.

**Mrs SHELDON** (Caloundra—Lib) (12.25 p.m.): In rising to speak to the appropriation bills, I would first like to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Springborg, on his concise and insightful speech which summed up very clearly the economic health of the state and what our

place in the world should be. As the shadow minister for tourism and the arts and also as the member for Caloundra, I would like to concentrate on a number of issues that are of importance to this state.

There is no doubt that the outbreak of SARS, September the 11th, Bali and the Iraq war all played a significant and contributing role to our tourism numbers being down. So it is very hard to believe that in this budget Labor has again cut funding to Queensland's peak tourism promotion body, Queensland Tourism. This year's total grant is just \$42.6 million. That is down on the \$43.4 million it received last year, and it is certainly well below the \$47.4 million allocated in the last year of the previous coalition government. So in actual fact the government is spending less on tourism today than it was five years ago.

The figures for marketing funds allocated by international region over the last five years—and these numbers were supplied to me by the minister's office—show the lack of commitment to marketing by this government in overseas markets. In Asia in 1998-99 it was over \$5 million and in its 2002-03 budget it is \$1.24 million. In Europe in 1998-99 it was \$2.3 million and in its 2002-03 budget it is \$2.1 million. In the United States in 1998-99 it was \$895,420 and in this year's budget it is \$758,848. In New Zealand in 1998-99 it was \$586,558 and in this year's budget it is \$408,989.

This is extraordinary considering the minister herself has said that our main markets now are New Zealand, Europe and the USA, because currently with the SARS outbreak there is a downturn in tourism obviously coming from Asia and into Asia. So in an environment where we should be increasing our marketing funds they have been decreased. This has been a progressive decrease over five years since 1998-99 to this current 2002-03 budget.

This is even more astonishing if we look to the last Bracks budget in which he has injected \$40 million more into tourism and \$10 million more over four years for international marketing. That shows there is more of a commitment from the Victorian Labor government to tourism than there is from this Queensland Labor government. Mr Bracks has said that the tourism industry is one of Victoria's important economic drivers, responsible for \$8.5 billion in economic activity and 150,000 jobs.

So Premier Bracks very obviously realises that tourism is an important economic driver. That fact does not seem to be realised by this government or, indeed, by this minister. Premier Bracks also mentioned that Victoria is funding \$3.6 million towards Australia's largest travel trade show, the Australian Tourism Exchange, in 2003-04. I just wonder how much representation Tourism Queensland is going to have at that trade show, because it is vitally important that we are out there selling our product at that Victorian trade show.

I also have a concern about the amount of spending on tourism on the Sunshine Coast. A little while ago I asked for some figures from the minister. They show that funding for tourism on the Sunshine Coast is really sitting at exactly the same level as for last year. That is somewhat astonishing when we consider the importance of tourism to the Sunshine Coast. It is the major creator of jobs for the Sunshine Coast and it is the major input into the area's economy. In 1998-99 funding for RTO was \$165,000; it is now only \$220,785. That is exactly the level it was at in 2001-02. So there has been no increase on last year's funding from the government for our regional tourism organisations. I just wonder about this 'jobs, jobs, jobs' mantra, because a lot of the jobs on the Sunshine Coast—in fact, all over Queensland—come from the tourism industry. Yet we are not seeing general funding increased in any way to tourism promotion to get the dollars from overseas or throughout the nation into the Sunshine Coast.

I note that the minister mentioned that the state was throwing \$26 million into the outcomes of a task force that would look at how the ailing tourism industry could be helped in Queensland. The industry itself is putting in \$9 million. The Bracks government put in \$40 million, yet we can put in only \$26 million. That figure seems pretty small in comparison. That makes me realise that tourism is not high on the financial or indeed political agenda of this Labor government.

Recently \$200,000 was taken out of Tourism Queensland. The government tried to say that it was going to help country racing through Queensland Events. Instead, the government sounded the death knell to country racing by stopping all funding. While I believe that country racing should certainly be helped, that \$200,000 should not have come out of an ailing Tourism budget. When we think that visitors to Queensland spend about \$14.6 billion each year and the tourism industry employs about 150,000 Queenslanders, we realise that the importance of this industry to our state cannot be underestimated.

I would also like to say a few words about the importance of adequate funding to the arts. The arts industry needs to be well supported. It is not only a creative industry and an industry that helps provide a soul for our community; it is also an industry that is an economic driver. It provides jobs. In many ways it also attracts money into this state. I am concerned that there is only \$1.1 million extra over four years for the Queensland Orchestra, the Queensland Opera, the Queensland Theatre Company and the Queensland Ballet. I know that is part of the major performing arts company funding agreement with the Commonwealth government, but I believe—I have said this to my federal colleagues and I will be saying more so in the next couple of weeks—that our arts industry needs more prominence and more funding both from this government and from the federal government.

It is important that our major performing bodies are adequately funded, because we do not get much benefit at all from tours of those national companies or from the Queensland tax dollars that go into the Australian Ballet Company and Opera Australia. Important as those companies may be, we very rarely see them in Queensland. Yet all Queenslanders contribute to their funding. Also, Queensland tax dollars provide funding to NIDA, which is vitally important. Nevertheless, the national base for the training of our young artists is located in Sydney. All of these things are important for the nation, but we also have to realise that Queenslanders are important, too, and that we need our fair share of the dollars.

I was pleased to see \$8.2 million allocated to the PFTC for film and television production. We must keep up that funding and increase and expand it. I certainly did when I was the Arts Minister. When we think of the economic spin-off that comes from film production in this state, we realise that it is very important. As minister I was responsible for securing the making of *The Thin Red Line* to Queensland. I went to America and saw the makers of that film, who were then going to make the film in the Solomon Islands. I went over to America with Mr James from the PFTC. We went to see the president and the vice-president of the film company that was planning to make that movie and informed him that Queensland had the same environment that he was looking for in the Solomon Islands. He wanted rainforest that came down to the sea, he wanted white beaches and he wanted reefs.

The film company was concerned about making the movie in the Solomon Islands because of political instability and lack of clean water and adequate housing for their actors and the support crew. I said that we could provide the environment that he was looking for at Port Douglas. We asked the makers of the film to come to Queensland. In the January of that year, they came over. We flew to Port Douglas with them and showed them what was there, and that sealed the deal. That is why *The Thin Red Line* was made in Queensland. So it is vitally important that we promote the film industry.

I was pleased to see \$1.7 million allocated to the State Library of Queensland over three years to continue the Online Public Access in Libraries program, which I instituted as Arts Minister in the former coalition government. I thought it was vital that our libraries were online. This government has continued with that program. It is very important for that program to continue so that people can access their libraries online, particularly those people who live in remote areas and who have access to a cable. Indeed, I promoted and put in place an Aboriginal program for the communities of the north based in Cairns.

**Mr McGrady:** And the north-west.

**Mrs SHELDON:** And the north-west. The minister is right. This government is continuing with that program. I am very pleased to see that.

I was also pleased to see \$100,000 in matching funding over two years for the first government arts curator in partnership with the Department of Public Works, because the former coalition government also put funding in place for public art. It is not coming on as strongly as it should. The funds that are allocated in the budget for it are often not spent. It is vital that those allocated funds are spent year to year, because they are not huge amounts.

There is also \$92 million allocated to the Millennium Arts Project. I am pleased to see that this project has finally got off the ground. Certainly Minister Foley has dragged his feet on this matter for a long, long time. It was the former coalition government's initiative. At that stage it was going to cost \$320 million for the major redevelopment of a modern arts museum and a cultural centre which would have focused on indigenous art and culture. But that is no longer going ahead. It also included an expansion to the library and the museum. Finally, we are seeing this project take shape. It will be a great and important art gallery and a boost for art, not only for the people who live in Brisbane but also for all Queenslanders and for the nation.

In the time left to me I would like to concentrate on funds that have been allocated to the Sunshine Coast and the electorate of Caloundra. At the outset I say that I really feel that the Sunshine Coast has yet again been let down. There is some money—and I will detail that—but major road funding was needed and the capital allocation has gone to other areas of the state. Although I believe absolutely that far-north Queensland deserves its money for expansion, the state budget injected \$453 million into Queensland's far north for capital works projects, but nothing like that amount of money has been injected into the Sunshine Coast.

The Sunshine Coast has a greater population, a more dense population. More people are coming into it on a day-by-day basis so there is a requirement for jobs and a requirement for services that that infrastructure would provide. I wonder why this government, which has two of its members there and would, I think, like to keep them there, is again ignoring the Sunshine Coast and not treating it in the manner it should be. One of the vital issues concerning roads in the area is the duplication of the Sunshine Motorway. An article in the *Sunshine Coast Daily* read—

Confusion reigned yesterday about \$4 million in Budget funding announced by Transport and Main Roads Minister Steve Bredhauer to ensure work started on duplicating the Sunshine Motorway.

Despite the allocation not being evident in the Budget papers, a spokesperson for the minister's office said it was definitely correct.

If that is the case, why is it not in the budget papers? Why would the government not trumpet this. It is not even mentioned in the media statement entitled 'Beattie budget funds for the Sunshine Coast' put out by the government for the Sunshine Coast. Nowhere is that mentioned, yet it is a major initiative for the Sunshine Coast and a major area of need. Is this a case of the government saying, 'Trust us. We are going to deliver?' I think we all know that if there is no money in the budget it does not happen.

The Sunshine Coast's inadequate road network is arguably the area of greatest need in the region, according to the local paper. Upgrading the Sunshine Motorway is top of the list. It carries about 30,000 vehicles a day, which is around 50 per cent above the top of the acceptable traffic level. There is also no funding even in the outyears to complete the four-lane duplication of the road from the Bruce Highway into Caloundra.

We put in place half of the road from Pearce Avenue into Caloundra, which has become the major access to one of the major tourism areas of the Sunshine Coast. The next step was to bring four lanes from the Bruce Highway to Pearce Avenue. It is nonsense to travel up the highway on a four-lane road then go into two lanes and then into four lanes. It does not take much imagination to see the bottleneck created there and the problems it creates for jobs, tourism and safety. I cannot understand why that is not in this budget.

I am concerned about the real lack of funds for health and hospitals. An extra million dollars has been put into allied health and a birthing suite at Nambour Hospital, the final phase of the hospital redevelopment project. Apart from \$1 million in extra funding, the money being used is still the \$26 million in capital money that I put in in 1997 to do this development at Nambour Hospital. That has really never been increased. I find that quite extraordinary when we look at the money that has gone into all the other hospitals, particularly the major hospitals in Brisbane.

I was very pleased that money was put in place for the courthouse. I say to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services that I am pleased \$1.1 million has been set aside for the construction of a new police watch-house in Caloundra. The courthouse with the adjacent police watch-house is very important. The land has been bought, although it was unfortunately taken from the health area. That land should be left to expand the Caloundra Hospital. However, it is important that the courthouse goes ahead. With this funding it should. I hope that is all completed in the next 12 months.

**Mr McGrady** interjected.

**Mrs SHELDON:** I would very much like to be invited to the opening. I would also like the minister to seriously consider a police beat for Caloundra. I heard the minister say yesterday that he had delivered some of these things in the last financial year without the funds being in the budget. Obviously, the minister has some money at his discretion. I would very much like, as would the residents of Caloundra, to see a police beat in the main CBD of Caloundra. At times there is a problem with crime and vandalism in that area. I know the good work that police beats do. Seeing the police motif, the police badge and the police themselves helps. The police do a very good job on the Sunshine Coast and Caloundra. It is often not an easy job. Everyone wants the policeman or policewoman when they have a problem themselves but the police are the first to get hit if anything goes wrong.

I was also pleased to see funding of about \$850,000 for Talara Primary School. That is important in order to upgrade a really good local state school and one which has been expanding rapidly. Additional education money has been provided for other things at Caloundra High School and Currimundi State School.

Some \$500,000 will go into upgrading emergency services at Caloundra Hospital. This is nowhere near the millions that is needed to provide the services and the equipment that is needed for that hospital. As a coalition, we extended the hospital through a \$14.8 million injection of capital money. The recurrent revenue that is necessary to provide the services to the people of Caloundra has never been put in. That means that there is a great strain on Nambour Hospital because people have to travel up there. There is a lack of public transport from Caloundra directly to Nambour. While that \$500,000 is important, we need a lot more to do what is commonsense, which is to create services in Caloundra.

**Mr LAWLOR** (Southport—ALP) (12.45 p.m.): I am pleased to support what the Treasurer described as a solid Labor budget. Again, it is a particularly good budget for the Gold Coast, and for Southport in particular. Major initiatives provided for in this budget for the Gold Coast include: \$64.39 million to complete the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre; funding to provide 46 additional police officers in the Gold Coast district, making a total of 80 new police officers over three years; \$7 million to complete the redevelopment of the Tallebudgera Outdoor Recreation Centre; \$2.703 million in additional funding for the Gold Coast health service district to enhance medical services such as oncology, intensive care and inpatient and home based care; \$234,000 for the Logan-Gold Coast Tactical Crime Squad to target known crime hotspots with an emphasis on property crime and drug offences; \$2.4 million to continue the duplication of the Ross Street Bridge over the Nerang River at the Royal Pines; \$1.632 million for books for public libraries; \$221,000 for the Gold Coast Tourism Bureau to undertake destination based marketing; and an additional \$528,000 to the bureau for business events promotion to coincide with the opening of the Gold Coast Convention Centre.

Initiatives which more directly impact on Southport include: \$497,000 towards stage 2 of the \$4.95 million Southport Library; \$357,000 for maintenance work including repainting and reticulation of the Southport State School and the Southport State High School; and a \$135,000 upgrade for the special education unit at Musgrave Hill State School. There is \$100,000 to refurbish the Southport Police Station and \$50,000 for refurbishments at the Southport Fire Station. In addition to what I have mentioned for health, \$1,256 million will go towards the upgrading of the Acute Mental Health Ward at the Southport Hospital. But one of the most pressing issues on the Gold Coast is the shortage of public housing. Minister Rob Swarten is continually addressing this shortage, despite a \$170 million reduction in funding in this area by the federal government. It defends these funding cuts by saying that it is increasing rental subsidies, but there is no point in getting a rental subsidy if there are no houses to rent or if rents have risen to such a level, as they have now, that even with a rental subsidy a home is still out of their reach.

This budget puts \$9 million into public housing in Southport and the immediate area. Some \$1.18 million has been allocated to construct 21 new dwellings and \$221,000 to complete 10 units in Pohlman Street. Some \$4 million will be used to purchase land for the future construction of more than 50 public housing units and \$1.2 million will be used to upgrade 39 Department of Housing dwellings. Some \$796,000 will go to the community rent scheme, \$345,000 to the Home Assist Secure Services, \$21,000 for crisis accommodation providers and also \$635,000 has been allocated through the Crisis Accommodation Program to construct a new youth shelter.

The accusations by members of the opposition that the Treasurer has 'raided hollow logs', 'lent on GOCs' and so on reeks of hypocrisy. They have short and selective memories. The previous coalition government was responsible for taking \$850 million in equity from the electricity sector in 1997-98 through capital restructuring. In doing this, the then coalition Treasurer, Mrs Sheldon—she has unfortunately left the chamber—stated—

About \$850 million will be raised by the release of equity from a capital restructuring of the electricity industry, which in Queensland has a relatively high equity to assets ratio. This will bring our electricity industry into line with the standard commercial practice of electricity authorities in other States and private sector operators. This continues the policy I initiated last year of obtaining better value from more effective and active management of the State's assets.

There we have it in her own words. When the industry was restructured in 1996-97 under the coalition government, it did exactly what it is feigning outrage over at the moment—that is, dividends were extracted from retained earnings. So not only did it take \$850 million out of the

industry through a capital restructuring, it received dividend payments in excess of 100 per cent of after-tax profits. For 1996-97 the dividend it received from Energex was equivalent to 115 per cent of after-tax profit. That is its entire profit for the year plus retained earnings. For the then South West Power it extracted dividends of 107 per cent of after-tax profit and it took dividends of 100 per cent of after-tax profit from most of the other electricity distributors that were to later become Ergon. So the maximisation of returns from the electricity sector has occurred under both the coalition and Labor governments.

There is another matter which I want to mention briefly in the context of this budget, and that is the unfair and unbalanced criticism directed at the Beattie government and Gold Coast members in particular by members of the Gold Coast City Council and in particular Mayor Gary Baildon. Gary is a friend of mine; I spent six years on the old Gold Coast City Council with him. I have always found Gary to be quite constructive and fair in his criticisms. But I cannot say that in relation to his criticism of the Beattie government in terms of the provision of infrastructure and services to the Gold Coast.

With the exception of Merri Rose, the Gold Coast has almost always been represented by the coalition. Indeed, for two and a half years the Premier was from the electorate of Surfers Paradise. One would think that with the Premier from the Gold Coast it would get things like a convention centre. Nevertheless, it took the Beattie government and the seven Gold Coast Labor members to get the convention centre under way, and construction of that facility is almost completed.

**A government member:** You're champions down there.

**Mr LAWLOR:** Indeed, they are all champions. For all those years the Gold Coast was taken for granted and neglected. Did we hear an outcry from the mayor and his mates? Not likely. The taxpayers of the Gold Coast had to endure the neglect of the coalition members. It was a standard joke that if a person wanted to speak to several of the local members in those days they had to join a golf club because that was the only place they would see them. Since 17 February 2001 all that has changed. Gary and his mates have found their voice and the Gold Coast, they claim, is suddenly disadvantaged.

The recent wail is that the state government should spend \$20 million on an upgrade of Carrara Stadium. This is notwithstanding the fact that there is no tenant for the stadium. Talk about putting the cart before the horse! The Premier and Treasurer in any event have said that they would look at a proposal when a tenant has made a commitment. The criticism is quite disingenuous and hollow. The seven Gold Coast members are delivering infrastructure and services as never before to the Gold Coast and deserve to be given credit for their hard work. I commend the budget to the House.

**Ms BOYLE (Cairns—ALP) (12.53 p.m.):** I am pleased indeed to rise to support the budget. It is an excellent budget. So far as Cairns is concerned, I have to say that it is even better than I had hoped and others had hoped. I want to address first, however, some key elements of the budget that will benefit all Queenslanders before I speak in more detail about the benefits for Cairns. I want to recognise the tremendous boost that is being given to the Health budget, not only for this coming financial year but over the next four years. There is an increase in the Health budget of \$300 million or almost seven per cent, and that is just this first year. Over the four-year period there will be an increase in spending on health of over \$2.6 billion. This is what the people of Queensland want. They want the absolute best health services to be provided to people living anywhere in Queensland, and that means a lot of money has to go that way.

I also want to recognise the important increase in disability funding. It is a bit tough for people to see so much money going towards disability funding now, but it has to in order to redress the dreadful wrongs of the past—the massive neglect that occurred for people with disabilities over those many years of National Party governments. Of course it will provide them with support and caring, but it will do more than that: it will also give people with disabilities a better quality of life and within that the opportunity to work, to engage in further education and training, and to participate more fully in the lifestyle that most of us in Queensland take for granted.

I want to recognise, too, the importance of the \$100 million that has been allocated over the next four years for the Smart State strategy. I have to tell members that the Smart State strategy is really catching on in Cairns, because for a long time we have known that we had not only smart young people in our schools but smart businesses and smart initiatives in the arts. This is now a

way that we can showcase those not just to people in Cairns but across Queensland. I am sure other communities are following similarly.

The budget for Cairns, though, is particularly good in a number of areas. It is certainly good in terms of tourism. I was a bit dismayed before to hear the remarks of the member for Caloundra, who was criticising our government for a lack of support for tourism. This of course was because she took it purely as though the way we support tourism is a matter of marketing and promotional dollars. While those dollars—very many millions of dollars—are indeed important for tourism and while there will always be calls for more millions we can spend, particularly internationally, in promoting Queensland tourism, at the same time what this government is doing is probably even more important than those marketing and promotional dollars—that is, putting in place the infrastructure that supports tourism, enhances tourism and encourages it. Cairns is a good example of where this government has been successful.

I know that some honourable members have already been to Cairns since the opening of the lagoon and the esplanade project. The upgrading of the esplanade and the building of the lagoon with a contribution of \$12.5 million from the Beattie government is a major contribution not only to the lifestyle of people in Cairns but also to tourism infrastructure. I was pleased to be with Steve Bredhauer, the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads, when he opened the Cityport development that is next to the esplanade development. That is increasing the wonderful marina and wharf facilities, the walkways and the restaurants around the seaport.

This first stage of Cityport has cost \$47 million. Yes, that benefits those of us who live in Cairns, but it is tourism infrastructure and should be counted as such. The Minister for Transport deserves particular recognition for all of the infrastructure components that he is putting in place. The parliament heard this morning of the coming of the tilt train to Cairns. That is tourism infrastructure and should be counted, in a sense, in the Tourism budget. Similarly, in other portfolios I am pleased to say that the infrastructure is clearly in place.

The most important thing to the people of Cairns in the present budget announced this week is the increase in health funding. There is an extra \$6 million in health funding for the Cairns health district. Of that, there is \$3.7 million in recurrent operational funding. That is a very big boost to the budget, particularly of the Cairns Base Hospital. The public has called for it and the staff have called for it, and they were right to do so. While there are some efficiencies undoubtedly that can be better put in place at the hospital and some money saved towards providing more and enhanced services, the boost from Queensland Health will help no end. Cancer treatment services, the emergency department and renal dialysis are some of the areas that will benefit. But the best news of all is the \$500,000 to start the rehabilitation unit at Cairns Base Hospital that has been so sorely needed. In fact, I am able to inform honourable members that the advertisement for the director of rehabilitation medicine at Cairns Base Hospital is in the *Courier-Mail* today. Queensland Health has taken that budget and is already implementing the increases.

The further increases in the health allocation for the Cairns health district will be put to equipment. As well as that money, there are the increases that have been negotiated through the enterprise bargaining agreement. That will also mean additional dollars, particularly on staffing costs, into the Cairns health district. There are some other marvellous increases in families and disability spending, in state development and the development of business opportunities through an industrial park. There are increases in police and increases in teachers. There is spending at our schools such as Trinity Bay State High School and Cairns High School and also at our primary schools. There is also funding for a special education unit at Woree State High School. There is very much indeed that the people of Cairns have to be pleased about, not least of which is the spending in terms of sports.

We have some six international-standard sporting facilities in Cairns and we are adding to that number with a major allocation of \$450,000 for Cairns basketball to complete a project of four airconditioned indoor courts in the city of Cairns and a further allocation for stage 3 of Barlow Park works. Barlow Park will become our sports stadium of the future.

Sitting suspended from 1.01 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

**Ms BOYLE:** I am pleased to continue speaking about the tremendous benefits in the budget for sporting facilities in Cairns. With the Cairns City Council we are creating a major stadium at Barlow Park. The amount of \$670,000 via a fifty-fifty contribution with the council to stage 3 will be much welcomed, as will the smaller but nonetheless important funding given to the Cairns PCYC and the Olympic Tennis Club.

Arts have not been forgotten in the budget. The \$2.4 million for the Cairns Centre of Contemporary Arts will provide for a facility which we hope will open in less than a year from now and which will be an important piece of infrastructure for the arts in Cairns. In addition, there will be \$180,000 in operational funding for local cultural organisations and another \$50,000 for regional arts development.

I am pleased, too, that the Minister for Housing is in the chamber as I am able to pay him a compliment on his contribution to housing right around the state. I especially say thankyou for the \$6 million that will be put into projects in Cairns. Funding of \$2.2 million will continue and complete the community renewal projects in Manoora. These have been a great success. Sporting and recreational facilities will complete the project over the next year. In addition, houses will be upgraded and new dwellings, which are sorely needed, will be constructed in this area.

Much is in the budget for business in Cairns—the development of the first stage of the Woree Business and Industry Park, the contribution in property works to the Hawker Pacific development at Cairns airport and some \$40 million of work at the Cairns airport in safety, security, expansions, terminal works and works on the infrastructure associated with the taxiways. There is also work at the Cairns seaport—a small but nonetheless vibrant seaport with a mix of activities such as tourism, fishing and trade. Those works and the further planning for the long-term works around the port will be matched by the next stage of the cityport development.

Cairns is also fortunate to have amounts in the budget for small organisations—valiant organisations such as the naval cadet organisation and the Coast Guard. We have not forgotten the TAFE and the perhaps less glamorous but important initiatives such as the recently commenced drug court program. I particularly wish to recognise the special grant under Local Government of \$1.95 million to the Cairns City Council for the botanic gardens and Tank Precinct redevelopment. The botanic gardens are beautiful tropical gardens visited by tourists and locals. They border the electorates of Barron River and Cairns and are a facility for all in the region. I have no doubt that that money will be well spent.

We are fortunate in Cairns to have a fine Police Service. A front-page article in today's *Cairns Post* highlights its excellent work in Operation Bravo Flown. Three men and one woman will be charged with some 300 charges of break and enter, wilful damage and stealing. This is welcome news. This morning I noted also that a total of 22 juveniles and two adults are soon to be charged with 126 offences, including 58 break and enter offences. Our Police Service is doing as much as possible to combat crime and provide for a safe community in Cairns. Therefore, I compliment the Minister for Police and welcome the additional 300 police officers who will be around the state to further improve the safety of Queenslanders.

This is an excellent budget. I wish to conclude as I started: by commending the Treasurer and the Minister for Health on the new funding in the four-year plan for increased services in Health. In addition to those areas that I mentioned at the beginning of this speech, I am pleased to see increased funding that will reduce waiting lists, provide more assistance for home and community care, expand dental care and improve the waiting lists in that area.

I congratulate the Treasurer, the Under Treasurer and Treasury. The bottom line is that we are still the lowest taxed state in Australia. In Queensland we pay \$1,480 per capita in taxes compared with \$1,892 per capita on average in the other states. This means that taxpayers in other states pay 28 per cent more tax than Queenslanders. That is because we have a government that is managing its money excellently, providing the services that people need and keeping tight control over expenditure. I commend the budget and all of those involved in its preparation.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Male): I call the honourable member for Logan.

**Mr QUINN:** Madam Deputy Speaker?

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The member for Logan was going to speak next.

**Mr MICKEL** (Logan—ALP) (2.36 p.m.): I would have welcomed the contribution of the Leader of the Liberal Party, because what we heard from the Leader of the Opposition today was entirely predictable—different jockey, same horse, same trainer, same poor form. Given the opposition's response to the Treasurer's budget, is it any wonder that the only two opposition Liberal MPs with any real understanding of budgets and state fiscal issues are leaving the parliament at the first available opportunity? The members for Caloundra and Moggill cannot depart the opposition ranks soon enough, and who can blame them?

Let me briefly outline the Opposition Leader's position. The opposition's ambulance levy policy means that in a budget sense it will be \$23 million short. He said today that he will make up the difference through sackings in the Public Service. Let the word go out to the Public Service that the old National-Liberal Public Service hit list is back in business. From what we heard from the Leader of the Opposition today, the hit on the Public Service has to be widespread to balance the books.

In the past in this parliament the opposition has indicated that it opposes dividend payments from state owned corporations, even though the Borbidge government, in which a number of opposition members were senior ministers, benefited from massive dividends and other one-off payments from state owned entities, namely, the power generation authorities. The Leader of the Opposition today complained about the lack of funding in Tourism, Trade, Family Services, Education, Police, Health, Local Government and Main Roads whilst at the same time making allegations that the state is broke. The opposition is also promising, as it has done through every division so far, to repeal and oppose the national competition policy reforms. This would have reduced money to the states. It also says that it wants to reduce state taxes and charges. To avoid serious attrition to the budget bottom line the opposition has to attack service delivery in spite of its protestations to the opposite. The opposition has to attack Public Service numbers or it has to privatise. It has said neither of those things today.

Let us go back to the Public Service numbers. The budget papers show that 64 per cent of general government employee expenses come from three departments—Education, Health and Police. To balance the budget the opposition needs to mount a sustained and savage attack on service delivery in the key areas of concern to Queenslanders. But the Leader of the Opposition did not say that. He has wrapped the punch in a velvet glove about a lack of spending. We can always tell how far an opposition is from securing government by the irresponsibility of its promises.

This is the best resourced opposition in Australia. It has more staff, more funding and more freedom in the spending of its funding than any other opposition in Australia. Every other state opposition has a resource—an upper house as well as a lower house. This opposition has more staff than it has members of parliament and only one chamber to resource. It really is about time the opposition started justifying the generous resources the Premier and Treasurer have provided it with.

The opposition is ideologically wedded to performance based employment agreements in the workplace. On the basis of what we have heard today from the Leader of the Opposition, he should be refunding the money to the Treasurer. Independents can be fiscally irresponsible because they never have to form government, but oppositions are elected to be responsible because they are the alternative government. It is more than time the opposition faced up to its responsibilities and became a genuine, credible alternative government.

The largest sectoral area in terms of funding in the budget is education. The total education budget for the coming year is \$5.5 billion followed by health spending of \$4.6 billion. Together these two areas consume almost half of the total budget. Education funding principally goes towards salaries of teachers, but there is substantial spending on school improvement and expansion and on school resources such as computers for students.

Today I want to make some comments about our teaching profession and about one aspect of the profession which causes me growing concern. The role of a school is a multifaceted one. It educates children to prepare them for higher education or for their working life. It contributes to local community life and it plays a pivotal role in the formation of the character and personal qualities of its students. Each of these roles is different but each is vital—vital for the children, vital for families and vital for the community. It follows that teachers have a multifaceted role—one which today goes beyond the traditional concept of teachers: standing in front of a classroom, writing on a blackboard and marking homework. Increasingly, and some would say sadly, there is a fourth role that a school and its teachers are called on to play.

The breakdown in the traditional family unit is a fact of life. It has great social consequences, and schools have been forced to adapt. Only yesterday the Australian Bureau of Statistics revealed that, while the traditional couple with children in a household remains the most common family unit, less than half of the five million families in Australia are now in this traditional category. There are many children in our schools today who come from single parent families. In some schools, including many in my own electorate, a clear majority of children come from single parent families or from arrangements other than what is known as the traditional family unit.

It follows that there are many boys in our schools who do not know the love and support of a father. Many have never had a stable father-figure in their lives. There are, of course, girls who do not know the love of a mother, but the problem of boys growing up without a father-figure is a particularly concerning one. The problem is exacerbated by the reality that male teachers today are in the minority, with the trend very firmly in the direction of even fewer male teachers, as measured by the ratio in our teachers colleges and universities.

I am advised that only 21 per cent of all primary school teachers are male. In secondary schools the figure is 42 per cent, but my fundamental concern today is with the teacher ratio in primary schools, where the impact of teachers on pupils and students is more profound. This year just 25 per cent of new teacher commencements were male, and the trend in this state is consistent with the trend in every other state in Australia. I know that the position varies from school to school, but there are many primary schools today in my own electorate where there are no more than one or two male teachers on staff.

A number of education authorities have sought to proactively recruit young men to take up the noble profession of teaching, but their efforts have been blocked. The Minister for Education and Education Queensland have sought to lead the way, in a responsible and sensitive manner, in lifting the number of male teachers, especially in our primary schools. Last year the minister introduced the Male Teachers Strategy, designed to increase quality male teachers in the state school system and to attempt to redress the growing gender imbalance in the teaching profession. The full implementation of this strategy has been severely limited by federal antidiscrimination laws and requirements.

The Commonwealth Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission has been aggressively opposing and blocking efforts by the non-government schools sector to specifically recruit male teachers, as well as similarly opposing reasonable efforts by state governments. For example, the Sydney Diocese Catholic Education Office was recently denied the right to offer special inducements to encourage more men to take up teaching positions in Catholic primary schools to redress an imbalance even worse than applies in the state school system.

The message I get from my electorate, and even from female teachers in my electorate, is that the imbalance between men and women teachers is undesirable and ought to be corrected, but corrected carefully. As an elected representative concerned that the reality of family life today means that father-figures and role models are unknown to many boys and young men in our community, it is a vital issue. We need antidiscrimination and equal opportunity laws. They have served us well in ensuring that women play a great role in the professions and in employment generally. They also protect minorities in a way that society supports.

Without equal opportunity and antidiscrimination laws and programs, women would not enjoy the role and status they have today in areas such as education, the law, medicine and other professions. Regrettably there remain in the work force, and even in some professions, places where women do not enjoy equality of opportunity. Those ought to be the continuing focus of federal and state antidiscrimination authorities. However, the intervention of the administrators of these laws to obstruct sensible endeavours by school and education authorities to restore some gender balance in the teaching profession is outrageous. It is a shameful abuse of processes set up for good and proper reasons.

It is equally regrettable, but unsurprising, that the Queensland Teachers Union is indifferent to the minister's program to actively recruit more male teachers and to retain male teachers in the state school system. The QTU, in an article in the media, said that it was not worried about the dwindling number of male teachers. In so saying the QTU, in my view, is out of touch with community thinking.

The success of an education system does not depend on OP scores alone. It is measured by a combination of factors, and one of these factors is the contribution that the system makes to the development of the personal qualities of boys and girls. Increasingly it is also measured by its capacity to respond to the reality of society and family life today. A system in which there is a growing imbalance between male and female teachers cannot adequately meet this latter measurement. It cannot help society adjust to the reality of the day—one in which the traditional family unit is no longer dominant and one in which single parent families are increasing. I detect an overwhelming desire by boys in schools, and by their parent or parents, to redress the imbalance. That is especially so in communities with a high level of family unit breakdown and social disadvantage.

I have also raised this issue with female teachers and with women who are leaders in our education system. As one of the state's most highly respected women educators told me just last week, equal opportunity laws enable women to achieve equality in the teaching profession, and it would be wrong for the same laws to prevent a redressing of the gender imbalance which has arisen in recent years.

I have enormous respect for the commitment, professionalism and tolerance of female teachers, often, in most circumstances, where discipline and respect are difficult to maintain. However, the female teachers I have spoken with share my view that the education system will fail many pupils and students while the current gender imbalance continues in teaching, and it worsens.

The initiatives taken by the Beattie government and by the Minister for Education to redress gender imbalance in the teaching profession deserve to be encouraged, as do those of the non-government school sector in this state and elsewhere. I find it deeply regrettable that these sensible, fair measures are being frustrated by antidiscrimination authorities out of touch with the real world and the hopes and aspirations of people, particularly people in my electorate.

This state has the best government school system in Australia—this budget ensures that we build upon it—but it will only remain so if the noble profession of teaching educates children well and offers the thousands of children who desire and need them as role models and even the father-figure that they, through no fault of their own, are denied.

Let me use one example to illustrate the enormity of the social problem we face in our community today. A little while ago children at a state school in my electorate were given a survey and asked to name the most influential male person in their lives. Some 30 per cent of the children named the school's male deputy headmaster, who was not a relative and who was not a friend. I invite honourable members to think back to their own school days. How many members would have nominated their deputy headmaster as the role model or the significant male figure in their lives? In my day the deputy headmaster had to be avoided at all costs. In my day when I was there with the Minister for Industrial Relations we spent an inordinate amount of time before deputy headmasters, usually because the minister had provoked me into some indiscretion. What I am saying is this: this is a social justice and an equity issue. It is one that I intend to carefully and responsibly pursue. I entrust that all honourable members will not be backward in joining me in doing so.

I might say in a general sense that this budget is responsible when I consider the alternative that was put up this morning by the Leader of the Opposition. It offers real hope to the people in my electorate. It offers extensive services that are well funded and can be provided for. That is what Queenslanders asked of us. They ask of us to look after the books, deliver the services and provide good quality government, and that is what this budget does.

**Mr QUINN** (Robina—Lib) (2.50 p.m.): To make a proper assessment of this budget we have to get behind the facade of the Smart State, behind the promise of more teachers, more nurses, more police and more of everything that the government has promised. We have to examine the foundation of the budget to see whether it is sustainable in the long term or whether it is a documented political convenience and contrivance designed to get the ALP past the next election campaign.

I take on board the comments of the member for Logan about Queenslanders wanting a government to look after the books. Yes, they do. But they want a government to responsibly look after the books, not put before the parliament some piece of political contrivance designed to get the Labor Party through the next election campaign in the best possible electoral shape. We have had evidence of that over the past couple of weeks. It has been revealed that the government has raided GOCs for special dividend returns, impacting upon their long-term ability to provide ongoing and high levels of dividends to the government. That, of course, has eroded the ability to plan into the foreseeable future in terms of recurrent expenditure.

When we look past the Smart State smokescreen we see a budget built upon a suspect surplus, a budget built upon higher state taxation, a budget built upon lower infrastructure expenditure, a budget built upon stagnant unemployment and convenient changes in accounting practices. All of these things together really cast a question mark over the long-term sustainability of this particular budget. I get back to what the member for Logan says: Queenslanders do want a government to look after the books; they do not want a government that fixes the books.

This government has produced three successive budget deficits, with the deficit in 2002-03 being \$350 million. This is on top of deficits in the previous two years of \$858 million and

\$894 million. These deficits are now approaching \$2.1 billion. What is of concern is that for each of the past three financial years the government has forecast a surplus. It has forecast or promised a surplus and has consistently delivered deficits. That is not looking after the books; far from it. Therefore, how can the people of Queensland have any confidence in the government's assertion that the budget surplus for this year, 2003-04, will come in as predicted?

Look at the government's track record. Where is the confidence there? There is none at all. Any reasonable assessment, as I will detail, of how this surplus has been arrived at will show that there should be absolutely no confidence that the government can achieve this budget surplus it is promising in this budget period, 2003-04, especially when this house of cards surplus is predicated upon presumptions of an increase in investment income of about a billion dollars, changes in the rate of depreciation of specific assets, further raids on government owned corporations and increased collection of state taxes.

The government has forecast a turnaround in the rate of return on government investments in 2003-04; a turnaround from the current level of minus three per cent to a positive 7.5 per cent by the end of the 2003-04 financial year. This equates to a turnaround of some 10.5 per cent over a 12-month period. Therefore, for every one per cent that the government is under target, over \$120 million will be taken away from the projected surplus. If the rate of return reaches only five per cent, which economists believe is a very optimistic outcome, then the government will deliver another budget deficit. So the government only has to miss its target by two per cent and it is down into negative territory again. That is why the \$1 billion forecast in terms of investment returns for the government is a very rubbery figure indeed.

The Treasurer, in what can only be described as a smoke and mirrors exercise, has also based the surplus on changes in the rate of depreciation for roads and public housing to the tune of \$198 million. Without this very timely \$198 million sleight of hand in the 2003-04 budget, the budget would immediately turn from a \$153 million surplus into a \$45 million deficit, and the current financial year budget would be in deficit not to the tune of \$350 million but \$548 million. So a very convenient accounting change has altered the prospect of this budget plus next year's budget, taking the government from a substantial deficit this financial year into a small deficit and then coming from a deficit into a surplus for the forthcoming budget.

This convenient change to the depreciation rate has also increased the net state worth by the same amount, and no doubt the member for Moggill will talk about that later on. This deficit would have been even greater if the Treasurer was not proposing to increase the tax take by some \$289 million over that period. Taxation in Queensland is expected to increase to \$5.66 billion in 2003-04, taking the total increase in taxation since 2000-01 by over \$1.4 billion, or simply a growth of some 33 per cent in those three financial years, clearly making this Treasurer the highest taxing Treasurer in Queensland's history.

It was very telling when I asked the Treasurer to confirm that fact in a question the other day. He did not deny it. He simply went on to justify why he needed the extra taxes. So there is no doubt in my mind and in the Treasurer's own mind that he has become the highest taxing Treasurer in Queensland's history. We only have to look at the chart put out by the Leader of the Opposition which indicates that this year for every man, woman and child in Queensland tax will increase by \$159. So it is a substantial leap in the per capita taxation on a state basis.

These rubbery figures are not confined to the revenue side of the budget; they also permeate through the capital expenditure. Capital expenditure in 2002-03 was reported at \$4.88 billion. However, this figure comprises \$153 million in government vehicles, an amendment of \$40 million to the contingency reserve and the inclusion of \$13 million from RoadTek assets. Without the inclusion of these items, the capital expenditure for 2002-03 would have been \$4.7 billion; therefore representing an underspend of some \$134 million.

The inclusion of spending on government vehicles for the first time into the capital statement is deceptive and again has been included in the budget papers at a time when the government's financial performance is coming under closer scrutiny. With all the attention that the budget or the government's financial record has been receiving over the past couple of weeks, the government knew it could not bring in another deficit budget so it contrived to bring in a surplus budget. That is what this is: a contrivance to get around some adverse publicity. The fact is that people are now understanding what this Labor government is about. It is about deficits. It is coming up for its fourth in a row. It is staring down the fourth one in a row. The capital expenditure figure for 2003-04 is budgeted at \$5.272 billion. However, this again includes \$155 million in government vehicles and \$13 million in RoadTek assets.

It has become plainly evident that capital works is not the primary focus of this government. Capital works, as a proportion of the overall state budget, has consistently dropped, with this being the sixth consecutive time under a Labor government that it has dropped. This year's capital expenditure represents 24.6 per cent of the overall budget. It is down from almost 30 per cent in the 1998-99 budget. This trend means that fewer resources have been put into the construction of new infrastructure and the maintenance of existing infrastructure throughout the state.

That is no more clearly evident than when one examines the allocation of capital towards roads. The capital allocation for Main Roads in 2003-04 is just \$717 million. That represents only 14.8 per cent of the overall capital expenditure for the Queensland government. In 1998-99, the percentage of road funding was 21.7 per cent of capital expenditure.

The consequences of neglecting to spend adequately on capital works is evidenced by the government's forecast that unemployment will stay relatively unchanged at seven per cent during 2003-04. This percentage—seven per cent— is one per cent higher than the projected national average and in excess of the projected unemployment rates of other states, with Victoria projecting a 5.75 per cent unemployment rate and Western Australia projecting an unemployment rate of 6.5 per cent. That just demonstrates further that the government has no appreciation of the importance of major capital works in a developing state such as Queensland and its importance in driving economic growth and activity in the private sector.

Is it any wonder that the state budget projects that only 38,000 new jobs will be created in Queensland over the next year. That figure compares woefully with the 50,000 jobs that were created in 1997-98 under the previous coalition when the capital works budget was much higher.

If there is one thing that we have learned in Queensland over a long period it is that major capital works programs in a state such as Queensland, which is developing its industries, which is developing new businesses, is an essential part of any state budget. The more money that we can pump into capital works, the more activity we will generate in the private sector, and the more we will increase job activity on the ground. That has been taken as a given by all state governments of all persuasions for a long period.

It was under the Goss government, when Queensland ran into economic trouble, that there was a pump-priming exercise where capital works were boosted, because it was recognised that capital works is a critical component of the economic activity in this state. By slashing capital works, even to limits lower than what it was five years or six years ago, this government is doing the unemployed in this state a great disservice.

**Mr Schwarten** interjected.

**Mr QUINN:** The minister can whinge and complain as much as he likes, but he knows that it is a fact. As the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing, he knows that it is true.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I rise to a point of order. I find the comment that I am whingeing and complaining offensive. I ask for it to be withdrawn. I am simply pointing out that, when the member was a minister in the Borbidge cabinet, that government had a \$500 million capital works freeze.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms Phillips): There is no point of order.

**Mr QUINN:** The minister does not like the fact that, as Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing, he has a smaller capital works budget than the coalition had when it was in government. That is what he does not like. The minister protests too much.

**Mr SCHWARTEN:** I rise to a point of order. The honourable member is misleading the House. What he has said is simply not factual. He knows it to be not factual. I ask him to withdraw it.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! There is no point of order.

**Mr QUINN:** To get back to my argument again—

**Mr Reeves:** Withdraw it.

**Mr QUINN:** If the member had listened to Madam Deputy Speaker, he would know that there is no need to withdraw. To get back to my argument, as I said before, this budget provides for an additional 38,000 new jobs over the next financial year. As I said before also, that figure is woeful when we compare it to what happened in 1997-98 when 50,000 new jobs were created with a capital works budget that was much higher. Even the 38,000 as projected in this budget is lower than the 40,000 that the government projected in its first state budget in 1998-99.

It is becoming clearly evident that the only jobs that this government is capable of creating are those jobs within the Public Service. When this government took office, the state's entire work force comprised some 1.6 million Queenslanders. That figure included a Public Service that employed 150,502 people, which equated to about 9.6 per cent of the work force within Queensland. The latest figures show that the Public Service in Queensland has grown by a whopping 29,000 people to reach a record total of 182,538 under this government.

**Mr Swarten** interjected.

**Mr QUINN:** The minister should just wait. Therefore, as at the end of June 2002, 20 per cent of all the jobs created in Queensland under this government were created within the Public Service. Everyone understands that that level of job creation within the Public Service is clearly unsustainable. That is evidenced by the fact that, since the government took office, as at June 2002, the wages bill for the Queensland Public Service increased by nearly \$2.9 billion.

I am not the only one who understands that. Even the government understands it but will not admit it. That is why, over the past 12 months since I first raised this issue on budget day last year, the government has put in place a number of programs within its various departments to reduce the level of public servants in Queensland.

**Mr Swarten:** Voluntarily.

**Mr QUINN:** Yes. It does not make any difference how it does it, but the government understands the problem. The government has increased recurrent expenditure as a result of the growth in the Public Service. It has an inability to fund that on a long-term basis because of its financial management. The government understands that that is impacting upon its ability to provide additional capital for its capital works programs, because all the money is going into recurrent expenditure. The government understands that as well as everyone else.

The government is now trying to do something about that. I will give it credit for that. The government is trying to do something about it by putting in place a range of VERs to try to reduce the level of employment within the Public Service. That is what it needs to do. I am not criticising the government for that, because it is understanding and acknowledging the problem.

As well, the government has something called aligning service and priorities, which is also about directing public servants into areas where they are needed. So the government understands the problem. It is trying to do something about it. But the government is not acknowledging that it has a problem in the public arena. That is the difference. We acknowledge that the government has a problem. We acknowledge that it is doing something about it. Yet the government cannot even acknowledge the problem in the public arena. Why?

**Dr Watson:** It's their strategy to deny.

**Mr QUINN:** That is exactly right. It is the government's strategy to deny that it has a problem. It does not even acknowledge that it has a problem. The government is too paranoid to admit that it has allowed the growth in the Public Service to rise to an unsustainable level. Yet the government knows that it has the problem and it is trying to do something about it behind closed doors.

How hypocritical can the government get? It comes into this place and complains and criticises the opposition for pointing out the problem publicly, but privately the government acknowledges the problem and tries to do something about it. How hypocritical can the government get?

As I said, the opposition does not criticise the government. We know that it has a problem. We encourage the government to do something about it. That is the only way that the government is going to get its budget under control. When the government gets its Public Service payroll under control, guess what? The Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing is going to get more money for his capital works program. That is where the extra money is going to go. It will be taken out of recurrent expenditure and put into capital works. That boosts the jobs activity and that starts to impact upon jobs and the unemployment rate in Queensland.

That is where the government had its budget strategy wrong all the time. It concentrated on delivering more public servants at the expense of putting the money into capital expenditure, which provides the private sector developments. At last the government understands the problem. It understands where it has gone wrong. It has taken the government only five years. The members of the government are a bunch of slow learners, but we forgive them. At least they know what the problem is now. As I said, we will forgive them for being slow learners, because finally they have got it. Finally they are trying to do something about it.

As I said, there are other issues in the budget papers that we could look at, in particular, the change to the net worth of the state, and I understand the member for Moggill is going to do some work on that and highlight that particular problem. That also is a fudge to show that the net worth of the state is improving when really it is going back. The Treasurer has done some very creative accounting—

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr QUINN:** I hope he does. I understand it and I know he understands it.

**Mr Mickel:** That is probably how Santo lost that preselection. I don't understand that.

**Mr QUINN:** Even the member for Moggill could not tell the member that one! But he can tell him how the net worth of the state is being fudged. Despite all the assurances in the budget papers about the increased net worth, there is really an issue there to be acknowledged.

In summary, what we have here is a budget, as I said, built on a very suspect surplus, on higher taxation, on lower infrastructure, on stagnant unemployment as a result of the lower infrastructure and on some convenient accounting changes that will get the government past the next election campaign. At the end of it all we could not see a starker contrast between this budget from a Labor government in Queensland, which is delivering higher taxes, higher unemployment and more deficits, and what we saw from Peter Costello and the federal Liberal Party, whose budget had lower taxes, lower unemployment and a budget surplus.

At the end of the day, as I said before, it is a contrived budget based on very rubbery figures that will get the government past the next election campaign in terms of providing more teachers, more nurses, more police and so on. But in the longer term it is simply not sustainable for the reasons I have outlined.

**Hon. G. R. NUTTALL** (Sandgate—ALP) (Minister for Industrial Relations) (3.11 p.m.): I am pleased to have to follow the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Deputy Leader of the Coalition because it has enabled me to listen to both the Leader of the Opposition and his deputy. I have been wanting to know what they were going to do in terms of articulating a vision for the future. If they want to take over the government benches they have to say to the people of Queensland, 'This is our vision, ' but there is no vision. I have not heard one thing from the Leader of the Liberal Party or the Leader of the National Party in terms of what they would do for the people of Queensland. Where is their vision in terms of families? Where is their vision in terms of the Police Service? Where is their vision in terms of health? Where is their vision in terms of the environment? Where is their vision for the whole of government, because it is not there.

It has been extremely disappointing. The Leader of the Liberal Party goes on about the growth in the Public Service. Of course there is growth in the Public Service when we look at us providing essential services in the area of police, health and education. We are articulating a vision and a future for the people of Queensland.

Let us look at what we have done as a government since 1989. It was said earlier today in this parliament that we have been in power all but two and a half of those years, and that is true. Let us look at what Labor governments have done in this state in that time. We have totally rebuilt the hospital system. We have had programs for rebuilding our high schools. We have had programs for rebuilding our primary schools. We have had programs to replace police stations. We have had programs to replace ambulance stations. We have had programs to replace fire stations. We have had programs to improve public transport. We have had programs to improve Queensland Rail. All over the state of Queensland in every electorate people can see where this government and other Labor governments since 1989 have poured money and resources for the betterment of all Queenslanders. That cannot be disputed. Members can travel to every single electorate and see what we have done.

**A government member:** Even in the bush.

**Mr NUTTALL:** Even in the bush; that is right.

Looking at what we are doing for young children in schools we see that we are providing one computer for every five students from years 3 to 12 by the year 2005. That is an outstanding achievement in anybody's language. There is more access to the Internet for our young people and more teachers. I know the Teachers Union has been critical of this government, but we have the best student-teacher ratio in the country. We committed ourselves to a better education system. We are pouring our money into the new learning years in terms of schooling. We are pouring our money into the health system. We are looking at the services for the betterment of all Queenslanders, and that is what our budgets have been about. Some people have said that this

is an election budget. The Treasurer yesterday morning at the business breakfast said it was not an election budget. He rightly pointed out that each and every budget that a Labor government brings down in this state is about the future of this state and about the betterment of our citizens.

I am particularly pleased. I would like to touch on a couple of matters that the budget provides for in my electorate. I have been fighting for a long period for some of the initiatives that have come out in this budget for people within my electorate. For a long time now I have been looking to improve the dental clinic within my electorate. The budget has allocated \$910,000 to refurbish and expand that dental clinic. I am particularly proud to be a member of a Labor government that puts money into that area there.

**Mr Reeves:** The Libs cut it.

**Mr NUTTALL:** That is exactly right; the federal government stopped funding for the dental health system.

The budget has provided \$1.049 million for the upgrade of telecommunication systems for residential aged care facilities in my electorate and \$168,000 for the Sandgate Home Assist/Home Secure Program. A large number of elderly residents reside within my electorate, and that program has been an outstanding success. I remember when we first started to trial that program a number of years ago. It has continued to grow and has been an enormous success in allowing elderly people to actually stay at home.

In the areas of education, \$675,000 was budgeted for a multipurpose centre at Bracken Ridge State High School—something for which we have been fighting since I became the member in 1992. Hopefully that building will be finished at the end of this year and for the very first time the year 12 students will be able to hold a graduation ceremony in their own multipurpose hall.

Some \$400,000 has been allocated for two new classrooms at Taigum State School. Taigum is at the top end of my electorate. It is the growth area, and the Department of Education has recognised that and is now spending \$400,000 on two new classrooms. Some \$350,000 has been allocated for a new toilet block at one of my schools, Shorncliffe State School. We have been looking for that for some time. Some \$307,000 has been allocated to help repaint a number of schools within my electorate: Norris Road State School, Sandgate State High School, Shorncliffe State School, Taigum State School. We are going to improve the water reticulation at Sandgate State School.

In the area of sports, last night I met with Trevor Barsby, who we all know is a great Queensland cricketer, and with Graham Dickson who is the CEO of Queensland Cricket and his brother Ken Dickson and Bob Toovey. Of course, people would know the Toovey family in terms of their cricketing prowess in this state. Together with the Brisbane City Council we are going to pour \$1.2 million into upgrading sporting facilities in my electorate at the Sandgate-Redcliffe Cricket Club—\$800,000 from the council and \$408,000 from us. We will have new tennis courts and some of the best cricket facilities in Brisbane. That is through a state Labor government. They are things we should never forget.

I have eight nursing homes in my electorate. We are going to pour \$3.6 million into Eventide Nursing Home, one of the biggest nursing homes, for two new 40-bed facilities. That is a recognition. Every now and then we hear that it is a safe Labor seat and that we take it for granted. All those initiatives in this budget show that this government does not take safe Labor seats for granted. Those of us who are fortunate enough to live in safe Labor seats know that in the dark days gone by when we were in opposition our electorates got nothing—absolutely nothing. Our schools were falling apart. Money would not be directed to any of those Labor seats.

**Mr Schwarten** interjected.

**Mr NUTTALL:** The member for Rockhampton is right. Those sorts of facilities were allowed to run down.

**Ms Keech** interjected.

**Mr NUTTALL:** They were terrible. It has been Labor governments and Labor budgets that have rectified those anomalies.

**Mr Reeves:** And good representation.

**Mr NUTTALL:** And good representation; that is right. I thank the member for Mansfield for that. I have worked very hard at that. The point I want to make is this: would that have happened

under a conservative government in this state? Would those sorts of things have happened? Would money have gone to people with disabilities in this state?

**Mr Reeves** interjected.

**Mr NUTTALL:** That is right. I was interested to listen to the contributions of the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Leader of the National Party to hear what vision they have and what they would do for the people of Queensland. What did we get? We got a diatribe about how terrible and awful the budget is. There was nothing there. If they want to be members of the government and if they want the people of Queensland to vote for them, they have to stand up and say, 'This is our vision. This is what we would do.' But it was not there. I have to say that I think that is disappointing.

Those opposite have given the conservative forces in this state—those people out there who want to vote conservative—no reason. The Leader of the Liberal Party and the Leader of the National Party have today had the opportunity to give them one, and they have given those people no reason at all to support them. I say to those people: look at what a Labor government has done for you. It is not about favours, either—and I say that quite proudly. We are not and never have been a government that favours just Labor seats. It is not about that. We are a government that has always treated all Queenslanders equally.

**Mr Pearce:** Sometimes that's a problem for us.

**Mr NUTTALL:** But it is the truth; that is right. The member for Fitzroy is right. Sometimes we cop a bit of flak for that as members of a Labor government, but it is the right thing to do. It is the right and proper thing to do.

**Mr Reeves:** Look at the money we put into Kings Beach at Caloundra.

**Mr NUTTALL:** That is true, and I have seen that. But it is the right and proper thing to do.

I have heard a lot from the opposition in this debate. But what I want to hear from the opposition is this: will it give a commitment if it ever comes into government to keep Q-Fleet? Will it give a commitment to keep Goprint? Will it give a commitment to keep Q-Build? Will it give a commitment to ensure that cleaners in schools stay in the public sector? Will it give a commitment that cleaners in hospitals stay in the public arena? Will it give a commitment that TAFE will stay in government hands? We did not hear any of that today, and I am proud to be part of a Labor government that has the capacity to ensure that we look after those people. We are very proud of that. As the member for Rockhampton has said on many occasions, we are the only government in this country that has a day labour force, and we keep that day labour force because we are committed to it.

**Mr Schwarten:** Three hundred and fifty apprentices.

**Mr NUTTALL:** As the member says, 350 apprentices. Where was its vision for young people? That is a good point that the member for Rockhampton makes. Where was the vision for young apprentices and young people for a future?

**Mr Pearce** interjected.

**Mr NUTTALL:** To me it is just disappointing. I want to know what future our young people would have under a conservative government. I want to know—

**A government member:** Don't hold your breath waiting to find out.

**Mr NUTTALL:** I hope I do not have to find out, because I hope we are here for a long time to come.

**A government member:** All they have offered us is a red balloon.

**Mr NUTTALL:** That is right; a red balloon. I think sometimes we need to reflect on and be proud of what we as a Labor government have achieved since 1989. We have done an enormous amount of good things. I know that there will always be critics out there who give Labor governments a hard time, but the runs are on the board for all to see. We have looked after the young, the elderly and those people bringing up families. We as a Labor government should be enormously proud to be able to achieve those things. It is tight. Yes, fiscally it is tight. No-one denies that.

Unions say to me, 'Gordon, it's not enough.' But what is enough? When is it ever enough? We have the best public hospital system in the country. No-one can deny that. The shadow spokesperson can stand up every day and talk about someone who has been hard done by, but by the same token we could probably stand up and name 100 people who have been to our

public hospital systems and who come out and say that they were well looked after and well treated.

**Ms Keech:** I receive letters every month.

**Mr NUTTALL:** That is right, and that does happen. We need sometimes to reflect on and be very proud of what we have been able to achieve. We need to stand up there and say that we have done a good job. We need to stand up there and say, 'As a Labor government we have got our priorities right.' And we should keep moving forward with that. We should not be frightened of those people who would knock us for trying to do the right thing.

The Treasurer said before the budget was brought down that he wanted to focus on the areas of health and disability. More importantly, we have strived to deliver on every commitment we made at the last election. Again, that is something that we should be extremely proud of. So when we do go to the people of Queensland and seek their support for another term as a government, we can proudly stand up and say, 'The things we promised you we've delivered on.' In closing, I am proud to be part of a Labor government that cares for the people of Queensland.

**Mr REEVES** (Mansfield—ALP) (3.26 p.m.): The date of 13 June 2003—a few days away—is the fifth anniversary of my election to represent the people of the electorate of Mansfield. It is a great honour and privilege to represent in state parliament the area one has lived in for their entire life. The 2003-04 budget will deliver further gains for the electorate of Mansfield and build upon the large number of achievements that have already been made since June 1998. In this speech I will outline the achievements of the past five years and what improvements the people of the Mansfield electorate will receive in the 2003-04 financial year.

#### Education

The Beattie Labor government places a strong emphasis on education. Over the past five years we have delivered on a number of commitments, including these specific achievements in the electorate of Mansfield—

- over \$100 million in operational funding, including salaries, for our local state schools;
- over \$500,000 extra funding for the upgrade of computers in all state schools;
- new activity centres at Wishart State School and Mount Gravatt East State School—and planning is well under way for the new centre at Rochedale South State School;
- extra classrooms for Mansfield State High, Mansfield State School and Mount Petrie State School;
- a major swimming pool upgrade for Mansfield State School;
- a new administration block for Rochedale State High School;
- community computer courses at Mount Gravatt East State School, Mansfield State School and Rochedale State High School; and
- \$40,000 per annum for outside school hours care in the electorate.

In this year's budget, local schools in the Mansfield electorate are big winners, sharing in a number of significant initiatives, including our share of 636 extra classroom teachers in our state schools for the start of the 2004 school year. Other initiatives include—

- \$280,000 each to Mansfield State High School and Rochedale State School for two new classrooms at both schools;
- \$200,000 for Rochedale State School to replace the existing sewage disposal system;
- funding for repainting at Mansfield High, Mansfield State, Mount Gravatt East State, Wishart State, MacGregor High, MacGregor State and Mount Gravatt High schools and funding for roofing works at Mount Petrie State School;
- \$5,000 to upgrade the special education unit at Mount Gravatt East State School;
- \$21,000 to help deliver special education services at MacGregor State School;
- \$1.8 million for a two-storey classroom block at MacGregor State School; and
- \$381,000 for phase 3 of MacGregor High School secondary school renewal.

#### Health

The Beattie Labor government has completely rebuilt most of our public hospitals. Our rebuilt hospitals such as the Princess Alexandra Hospital and the Mater Children's Hospital are the envy of every other state. We now have state-of-the-art facilities in our hospitals and can deliver first-

class health services to the residents of the electorate. Other major achievements over the past five years include—

- \$850,000 expansion and upgrade of medical equipment at QE II Hospital;
- extra funding to reduce waiting lists for public oral health;
- a new community health centre at Upper Mount Gravatt;
- \$125,000 for positive parenting programs at the community health centre; and
- school nurse programs at Mansfield High, Rochedale High and Mount Gravatt State High Schools.

The 2003-04 budget focuses on health services throughout the state, with a \$300 million increase in funding. This increase is part of the cumulative \$2.6 billion four-year increase in health spending. Local initiatives in this year's budget include—

- \$3.56 million in funding for Princess Alexandra Health Service District for new medical equipment, including—
  - several ultrasound units worth over \$860,000;
  - a steriliser valued at \$420,000;
  - an image intensifier valued at over \$100,000;
  - a bone mineral densitometer valued at \$160,000;
- \$1.8 million in additional funding for cancer treatment services for the PA district;
- \$1.175 million to expand renal dialysis services for hospital, in-patient and home based care in the PA district;
- \$1 million in additional funding for cancer treatment services in the Mater district; and
- \$900,000 in additional funding for intensive care units in the PA district.

#### Traffic and Transport

Traffic and transport is a major issue in the daily lives of many residents of the electorate. Over the past five years the Beattie Labor government has delivered many benefits in this area to the people of Mansfield electorate. I was committed to the South East Busway at its inception and still am today. As many know, I was the first paying customer to travel on the South East Busway. The Beattie government spent \$590 million on the overall South East Transit Project, of which \$350 million was spent building the busway. Its success shows that the Beattie government's commitment to public transport is matched only by that of the local community. An 80 per cent increase in bus patronage is nothing short of remarkable.

Other major achievements delivered in the Mansfield electorate over the past five years include—

- convincing the federal government to conduct a Brisbane urban corridor study;
- removing the dangerous goods route from Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road; and
- planning for major improvements on Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road at Mackenzie and on Logan Road at Upper Mount Gravatt.

In the 2003-04 budget the key initiatives for the Mansfield electorate include—

- \$7.6 million for improvements on Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road between the Gateway Motorway and Mount Cotton Road. This will include replacing the two roundabouts on this stretch of road at both Grieve Road and Mount Petrie Road with traffic lights. This objective will greatly improve the safety of the children, parents and staff of Mount Petrie State School, who will have new entry and exit points;
- \$1.17 million for intersection improvements at the corner of Padstow, Miles Platting and Logan Roads at Eight Mile Plains;
- \$850,000 for major resurfacing of Logan Road between Kessels Road and the South East Freeway, just outside Garden City at Upper Mount Gravatt;
- \$255,000 total project costs for improvements to the intersection of Newnham and Logan Roads at Upper Mount Gravatt; and
- \$21.4 million to progress an integrated ticketing system for south-east Queensland.

#### Sport

Sport and its valuable contribution to our society is recognised by the Beattie government. Over the past five years some of the achievements for our local community have included—

over \$5,000,000 provided to local south side sport and community groups through the Gambling Community Benefit Fund;

a \$520,000 youth recreation centre at Hibiscus Sports Complex, which is already in the detailed design stage;

\$92,671 was allocated in funding for the skate park at Klumpp Road, Upper Mount Gravatt;

\$6,000 funding for the hugely successful Junior Sports Expo held in February of this year; and

upgrading of tennis courts for community use at Mount Gravatt East State School.

In the 2003-04 budget the initiatives for the Mansfield electorate and surrounding suburbs include—

\$10 million to redevelop ANZ Stadium into the new headquarters for the Queensland Academy of Sport. It includes \$549,000 to establish a Centre of Excellence for Applied Sports Science Research at a total cost of \$2.584 million;

\$295,350 to construct a shade structure, installation of synthetic green and lighting at Mount Gravatt Bowls Club at Upper Mount Gravatt;

\$27,272 for the Brisbane Southern Districts Junior Soccer Association to replace lighting; and

\$4,763 to purchase Finnish-style baseball equipment for the Finnish Association.

#### Safer Suburbs

A safer, more secure community has been at the forefront of many of my achievements for the Mansfield electorate in the past five years. Some of these include—

142 extra police in the districts covered by the Mansfield electorate since June 1998;

Police beats for Garden City Shopping Centre and the Rochedale South community;

new pedestrian crossing outside Palmdale Shopping Centre on Logan Road, which has provided a safer crossing for Upper Mount Gravatt residents and shoppers, particularly our seniors;

our children at local schools have been given a safer way to be dropped off at school in the morning or picked up in the afternoon with new setdown/pick up zones at St Catherine's at Wishart, Mansfield State School, Wishart State School and Rochedale State High School.

The 2003-04 budget continues our commitment to a safe and secure community with a number of initiatives, including—

funding to employ a further 82 police officers in the Metropolitan South Region by February 2004;

\$348,000 for an upgrade of forensics facilities at the Upper Mount Gravatt Scenes of Crime Office;

\$142,000 for the Tactical Crime Squad that was established in the South Brisbane District with a strength of 14 officers in April 2003. The tactical crime squads target known crime hotspots with a strong emphasis on investigating property crime and drug offences;

The Beattie Labor government has delivered its sixth successive record Police budget, which will tip the billion-dollar mark for the first time through an \$84 million increase.

#### Jobs and Training

Jobs, jobs, jobs has been a major focus of the Beattie Labor government since June 1998. The benefits of our focus on jobs are demonstrated by a number of achievements delivered over the past five years, some of which include—

\$3.4 million in Breaking the Unemployment Cycle funding since October 1998, creating nearly 400 new jobs locally;

\$6 million in funding to the Queensland Manufacturing Institute at Brisbane Technology Park;

\$1 million upgrade and refurbishment of Housing Department dwellings in Mansfield;

The Mansfield electorate unemployment rate is down from 6.7 per cent in June 1998 to 5.3 per cent in January 2003.

The 2003-04 budget has important initiatives for jobs and training which include—

\$26.4 million for the greater Brisbane region to create an estimated 4,230 jobs through the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle program;

\$831,000 to continue the development of information and communication technology infrastructure at the Moreton Institute of TAFE at Mount Gravatt;

\$1.122 million for redevelopment and the establishment of a Fashion Centre of Excellence at Moreton Institute of TAFE at Mount Gravatt.

Looking after our Community

Since June 1998 I have been proud of the Beattie Labor government's commitment to our local community. Demonstration of this commitment can be seen through—

\$558,000 per annum for Flexi Care Inc;

\$409,000 for family respite options;

\$450,000 per annum for Multi Cap adult lifestyle;

\$137,000 per annum for Mount Gravatt Home Assist;

\$44,000 per annum for Mount Gravatt Meals on Wheels; and

\$143,000 per annum for South East Home and Community Care Network Podiatry Project.

The 2003-04 budget continues to show our commitment to our local community. Initiatives announced include—

\$3.412 million for book stocks in public libraries in Brisbane;

\$285,000 for Mount Gravatt district support as part of Home Assist/Secure; and

\$40,000 for local bikeways in Redland shire at a total project cost of \$296,000.

This budget clearly demonstrates that the Beattie Labor government and myself as the state member for Mansfield are focused on delivering for the people of my local community.

**Mr Pearce:** You're doing a good job, too.

**Mr REEVES:** I take that interjection from the member for Fitzroy. We as a community in partnership with the state government have achieved so much in the past five years and I will be proud to deliver these budget initiatives for the Mansfield electorate in the 2003-04 financial year and for many more budgets in the years to come.

**Mr WELLINGTON (Nicklin—Ind) (3.40 p.m.):** I rise to participate in the debate on this year's budget. In speaking to the Treasurer's budget, I acknowledge the difficulties that he has in trying to balance the books with the range of competing requests from around the state. I thank the Treasurer for his funding commitments for a range of services for the Sunshine Coast region contained in this budget. I do, however, take this opportunity to remind the Treasurer of the ongoing significant needs for improved state government services for the electorate of Nicklin on the Sunshine Coast.

Nicklin is at the heart of what is one of the fastest growing regions in Australia. This growth is putting tremendous pressure on all state government services, in particular health, roads, schools and housing. While I acknowledge that Health has received a much needed boost in this year's budget, the population growth is causing unprecedented strain on the health resources of the Sunshine Coast region. This rapid growth factor in Nicklin, coupled with an ageing population, has placed enormous demands on the Nambour Hospital. Let me first say that the hospital is one of the finest in Queensland, and I pay public tribute to the commitment and dedication of the hospital staff. However, although at times the staff give over 120 per cent effort, they can only do so much. The waiting lists for category 3 patients in particular are clearly unacceptable and are causing a great deal of distress to those waiting, often in great pain.

Only last week I spoke on that topic in this House and tabled a series of letters from one of my constituents who was placed on the hospital theatre waiting list last year for a hip replacement and is still awaiting that operation. Just yesterday I spoke with another constituent who told me that her mother had been waiting for more than two years for a similar hip operation. This is clearly unacceptable, and I hope that as a result of the increased funding for the delivery of health services on the Sunshine Coast these waiting lists will be slashed.

I am pleased that the need for improved health services has been recognised in this budget and welcome the \$1 million allocated for the completion of the \$26 million redevelopment of the Nambour Hospital. This will complete work on the allied health area and the chapel, where I understand work is due for completion in September this year. I also welcome the announcement of the \$270,000 to remodel the mental health in-patient unit, which will include a high dependency unit to improve safety for staff and patients. The renal services on the Sunshine Coast will also receive an injection of \$950,000. This is good news for many people in my electorate and beyond. I also applaud the announcement of the \$250,000 for oncology services, the \$100,000 for intensive care, a further \$100,000 allocated for emergency department services and the addition of four new clinical staff for mental health services.

I certainly appreciate the Treasurer's allocation of additional funding to the value of \$1.9 million for health technology equipment including a mobile x-ray unit, a patient monitoring system, a central monitoring station for the Nambour Hospital and operating theatre. While not going directly to the Nambour Hospital, I do recognise that other funding for the Sunshine Coast Health Service District will take the pressure off this hospital, and it is also very much appreciated. This funding includes the announcement of the \$525,000 to improve the emergency services at the Caloundra Hospital. This will also benefit my electorate by taking the pressure off the Nambour emergency unit, as will the \$660,000 for the Caloundra rehabilitation services. I also thank the Treasurer and the Minister for Health for allocating \$500,000 to relocate the Nambour Hospital breast screening facility. The current location is no longer adequate as a result of the growth in demand for these services.

Another area of health funding I wish to touch on relates to the difficulties many families experience when they need to seek help from the Queensland Health Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme. This scheme helps families by supplying equipment to people with special needs such as wheelchairs, hoists and so on. Over recent months I have been contacted by a number of my constituents who have told me that they are not able to get help from the scheme because, simply, it has run out of money. Can I say I am very pleased to find that in this year's budget there has been an injection of a further \$1.5 million of new money to the scheme to respond to this very real need.

I move on to education. I support the Treasurer's focus on increased funding for education and in maintaining the funding for the Triple R program, which provides money for repainting, reticulation and re-roofing enhancement of Queensland schools. A number of schools in my electorate have certainly benefited from accessing these funds. I thank the minister, all ministers in this government and the previous ministers for their support for this very worthy program.

The rapid growth of the region has certainly been reflected in student numbers at the Nambour Special School. This growth has placed increased demand on education facilities catering specifically for children with special needs. During the year I have had a number of meetings with parents, department staff and representatives from the minister's office to address this matter. At present the sad truth is that the Nambour Special School simply cannot cope with the number of parents seeking to enrol their children at the school. I am very pleased that the Treasurer has acknowledged this need and thank him for allocating \$820,000 for educational facilities in Nicklin to respond to this call for help.

This budget has attended to the immediate need of the Nambour Special School by providing additional classroom space. It also dedicates funds for planning a much needed four-space permanent building in the future. While the immediate need has been met, the temporary accommodation for some of the students is less than satisfactory. I urge the Minister for Education to ensure that the permanent building is capable of being delivered in next year's budget.

I was pleased to note that the additional maintenance needs of other schools in Nicklin have also been recognised. There was Chevallum State School, through the replacement of the sewerage disposal system, and repainting to be undertaken at Bli Bli State School, Burnside State High School, North Arm State School, Palmwoods State School and Yandina State School to mention a few.

I also recognise that the allocation of \$235,000 to upgrade special education units at Caboolture East State School, Currumundi State School, Noosaville State School and the Noosa District State High School, while being outside my electorate of Nicklin, will play a major role in relieving the pressure on the Nambour Special School.

I also draw the Treasurer's attention to the significant population growth in my electorate at Palmwoods. In fact, the Palmwoods State School is almost full. Growth is continuing with many new houses popping up daily, and this will continue to put tremendous pressure on the school for next year. I hope that next year will see the allocation of significant new money for the construction of new classrooms and new support facilities.

As I mentioned earlier, my electorate is undergoing major change as a result of the rapid population growth which is putting much pressure on all of our state government services. One area where we do see the effect is in roads. I am pleased to see that the government has allocated a further \$9 million to continue the duplication of the Commonwealth government funded Bruce Highway upgrade to four lanes from Yandina to Cooroy.

I would also like to put on the record my constituents' appreciation of the significant improvement of traffic flow along the Bruce Highway between Dohles Rocks Road and Boundary Road in the Brisbane area as a result of the recent widening of the road to six lanes. I travel this road when I am attending parliament, and I can speak to the improvements the roadworks have allowed in the flow of traffic. I understand further significant money has been allocated in this year's budget for continuing this road upgrade, and I can assure the minister that the upgrade will be appreciated by all users of this very busy and very important road.

Other roads in my electorate, which continue to be roads of significant importance to me and my constituents, are continuing to receive funding in the upgrading program. I specifically refer the Treasurer to the Eumundi-Kenilworth road. I am very pleased to announce to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads that roadworks are currently under way and going well despite the recent wet weather that we have experienced. The continued upgrade of the Kenilworth-Conondale road is also another matter of high priority to me. Design on the upgrade has been completed and I hope the Minister for Main Roads will be able to announce in the near future a date for the construction of the next section of this very important link road.

The old Bruce Highway, now known as the Nambour Connection Road, also continues to be a road of concern. The connections with the McKenzie Road intersection and the entrance to Woombye at Blackall Street are two intersections which unfortunately are the sites of many bad traffic accidents. Both intersections have very similar road problems. In relation to the McKenzie Road intersection, funding is needed to investigate ways of improving it. I hope to be able to present a solution to these problems by the end of this year for consideration in next year's budget. The Palmwoods to Montville road will also continue to be a priority road for upgrading.

I wish to record my appreciation for the allocation of significant dollars in the budget to help local government to upgrade roads and drainage services. This will certainly benefit a number of roads in my electorate. In particular I refer the Treasurer to the Yandina-Bli Bli road and the Kenilworth-Mapleton Obi Obi roads, which have been jointly funded by Main Roads and council for some time. I also appreciate further joint funding programs which improve the safety of bus drop-off and pick-up areas around schools such as Yandina, Palmwoods and Woombye. Although not technically in Nicklin, I appreciate the allocation of \$440,000 in the budget to help in meeting the cost of an aquatic complex at Eumundi. This will benefit many people living in and around that area.

I have previously spoken in this House about the initiative of the Great Walks through the Blackall Range, and I thank the Treasurer and the Minister for Environment for continuing the funding of this very important and worthy project with the allocation of a further \$465,000 in this budget. I understand that this money will be used to develop this world-class walking track, and I am certainly looking forward to taking locals on the first stage of this new track later in the year. I had the privilege of walking a section of the path last month, and it certainly has a world-class feel about it.

This new major tourism project will provide jobs and many new opportunities for business in the region, including bed and breakfast accommodation. I can see that the walk, which takes in the magnificent Blackall Range and includes lush vegetation, waterfalls and superb views, will attract visitors from all over Australia and from overseas.

I thank the Treasurer for the allocation of \$30,000 for vegetation mapping to determine the areas of high concentration value. This is badly needed in my electorate because there is no doubt—I stress, no doubt—that the current vegetation maps are not accurate and certainly need to be upgraded.

I thank the Treasurer for recognising the needs of those people, in particular our elderly, who prefer to remain in their own homes by allocating \$996,000 for Home Assist/Secure services,

which aim to help people feel safer in their own homes. With the increasing pressure that the growth in the region is putting on housing, I appreciate that the Treasurer has allocated \$22 million in this budget to a range of public and community housing projects for people in the region.

In relation to police, I note that there has been an allocation of specific funding for the provision of a number of new police beat services in Queensland and remind the Treasurer and the Minister for Police that by this time next year the Nambour central district will have undergone a significant change in focus as a result of the extensive redevelopment under way now in Howard Street. As a result of this redevelopment, I hope that in next year's budget the Treasurer might find the dollars to recognise Nambour's need for an expanded police presence.

I understand that \$178,000 has been allocated in the budget to continue the work of the regional tactical crime squad. I note that work is budgeted to start on the Pomona Police Station and the Gympie Police Station—both not in my electorate. I certainly hope that next year the Treasurer will be able to find money for work to expand and relieve the pressures on the Nambour Police Station. At the moment the police officers working out of the station have taken over all of the spare space in the adjoining former Nambour courthouse. I certainly hope that a redevelopment plan will be on the drawing board in the near future.

On the issue of rail, rail commuters continue to ask me to lobby the government for the provision of toilets on this very important network. I certainly hope that in the future we will see this matter addressed. I thank the Treasurer for recognising this important mode of transport by allocating funding in the budget for continuing the upgrade of the important Brisbane to Sunshine Coast rail link, in particular the Caboolture to Landsborough leg.

The provision of security fencing along the rail corridors continues to receive funding, and I thank the minister for that. I specifically note that there is a need for the installation of increased security fencing at the Palmwoods Railway Station. I certainly will be approaching the minister about accessing some of those funds to see if it is possible to have this fencing completed. However, I note that the budget has not allocated funding for the duplication of the rail line between Caboolture and Nambour, and I put the government on notice that I will continue to lobby for this much-needed upgrade. I also ask that the Treasurer allocate funds—oh, I have already asked him for that.

**Mr Mackenroth:** You know what: you might have to ask me again!

**Mr WELLINGTON:** All right, I will ask again. I again ask the Treasurer to allocate funds in next year's budget for toilets on the train network.

I am pleased to say that the bus/rail service which started four years ago is working very well and continues to provide a very important service to many residents living along the railway corridor. I thank the government for continuing funding of this very important service.

The school nurse program is also a huge success story in my area, but our nurse, who is shared by both Nambour and Burnside schools, has huge demands on her time. I hope that in the future the Minister for Education and the Minister for Health will see the merits of funding an additional nurse for this program.

I also thank the Minister for State Development for the commitment of \$1 million for land acquisitions at Yandina and for further expansion of the Yandina industrial estate. I understand that in this year's budget \$200,000 has been allocated to land development in the estate.

The provision of suitable crisis accommodation for women in the region has been acknowledged, and I thank the Minister for Families and the Treasurer for allocating in the budget \$900,000 out of a total commitment of \$1.45 million to construct a women's shelter in the region. The provision of safe crisis accommodation for women continues to be a priority, and I hope that this commitment will address the current need.

I note that the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing is in the chamber at the moment. I would like to pass on my constituents' appreciation for his recent support for the Nambour and District Historical Museum.

**Mr Schwarten** interjected.

**Mr WELLINGTON:** Yes, a number of my constituents are great supporters of the museum. We took an excursion up to the roof. I was a bit worried about what would happen, but everything went well and a photo was taken. We look forward to forwarding to the minister a photo of the members on the roof. The minister's interest in and support for this worthy cause certainly are genuinely appreciated.

I will read a letter I have received from one of my constituents. It states—

I am writing to you for your assistance in obtaining incontinency pads through the State Government Health Department.

I was operated on in Nambour General Hospital for Prostate Cancer in December, 2001, after which I was left partially incontinent, but after many problems and two further procedures to enable me to pass fluids I was rendered totally incontinent.

I applied for assistance from the State Government for incontinency pads through the Nambour Office of Health; the application was dated 18th July, 2002. I was told at the time that I could wait up to eight months, but now ten months have passed since I applied. I have rung the Health Department and so has my Specialist—

a doctor from the Nambour General Hospital—

and we have been told I could wait at least a further six months.

My wife and I are on an Invalid Pension and my wife receives a Carer's Allowance of \$87.50 a fortnight for me, but the cost of supplying the pads I require is extremely hard on us. I am paying out \$95 for pads alone and a further \$10 for freight per fortnight, which amounts to well over \$200 per month. With the pension being our only source of income it is extremely hard for us to live, pay for all my medications and my wife's medications, plus a mortgage. We are really struggling to exist.

Could you please make further enquiries for me as to the length of time I and others like myself are expected to wait for State Government assistance, as this length of time is not acceptable.

I have raised that matter with the minister's office today.

I listened with a great deal of interest to the contribution of the member for Sandgate. He spoke about the alternative government presenting an alternative vision. I listened with interest to the contributions of both the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Leader of the National Party. To be perfectly honest, I certainly did not see that vision of an alternative government, but who knows? I commend the Treasurer on the difficult task he has had in bringing down this budget, and I commend the bills to the House.

**Mr ENGLISH** (Redlands—ALP) (4.00 p.m.): I rise this afternoon to join in the debate on the 2003 appropriation bills. I would like to discuss this budget at two levels: firstly, the way in which this budget positions Queensland for the future and, secondly, how this budget has delivered for the residents of the Redlands.

In the mid-year review the Treasurer, the Hon. Terry Mackenroth, predicted a deficit of \$741 million. This prediction was based on an assumption that investment returns would be neutral at zero. The investment returns continued to perform badly and did in fact return a negative three per cent. Despite this worse than expected investment return, this budget has reduced the expected deficit to only \$350 million. This better than expected result was achieved by improvements in some revenue streams and reduced expenses. This confirms the Beattie Labor government as being sound managers of the state's finances. This fact is also reflected in all the major ratings agencies confirming Queensland's AAA credit rating.

When discussing budgets, it is easy to get lost in the mass of information and the amounts of money involved. But I am sure that we can all understand the following comparison: the budget predicts that Queenslanders will pay \$1,480 per capita in state taxes compared with \$1,892 per capita on average paid in other states. That demonstrates this government's commitment to maintaining Queensland's competitive tax regime. This tax system will continue to attract business development to this great state.

The Beattie Labor government is continuing its capital works program to grow Queensland. Queensland's per capita spending on capital investment is just over \$600, which is the best in the country. That figure compares with the second best state, Victoria, spending just over \$400 per capita on capital works and, of course, the worst state, Tasmania, spending just under \$300 per capita.

However, it should be remembered that Queensland is not made up of bricks and mortar alone; it is our people—Queenslanders—who are out there facing life's challenges whom we value the most. How has this budget delivered for the people of Queensland? Since 1998, spending on public order and safety has increased 45 per cent. Since 1998, spending on education has increased 39 per cent. This growth should be seen in light of an inflation rate of about 18 per cent. So that spending is well in excess of the inflation rate.

The budget for Disability Services Queensland has grown from under \$200 million in 1997 to a record \$380 million in this budget. From talking to organisations in my electorate, such as Phoenix Lifestyle and Horizon, I know about the difficulties facing people with disabilities and their families. This budget will continue this government's effort to correct the neglect of the past and improve the quality of life of these valued members of our society and their families. Having

worked in the child abuse unit, I understand the stress that working in this field can place on people. The budget for the Department of Families has also grown from \$200 million in 1997 to just over \$400 million this year.

The records do not end there. This year for the first time the budget for the Queensland Police Service has exceeded \$1 billion. This complements the government's commitment to continue to expand the Queensland Police Service by 300 new officers each year. The hard work carried out by the Queensland Police Service has seen a reduction in crime in many areas. I would like to congratulate the members of the Queensland Police Service on their hard work to achieve that result.

This budget is about many things: high finance, bricks, mortar, people and crime. But, most importantly, to me it is about my electorate, the lovely Redlands and the people who live there. I will now explain what services this budget has brought to my electorate, what infrastructure this budget has brought to my electorate and what benefits this budget has delivered to the people of the Redlands.

I remember studying the demographics of residents at the Moreton Bay Nursing Home at Wynnum. I found that over 60 per cent of the residents came from the Redlands area. I then wrote to the Health Minister, the Hon. Wendy Edmond, and asked her to consider building an aged care facility in the Redlands so that elderly people who lived in the area would not have to leave the area as they grew older. This budget has delivered \$3.39 million to begin construction of a 128-bed aged care facility at the Redlands Hospital.

I would like to compliment Shirley Wigger and the other staff at the Redlands Hospital mental health unit on the work that they perform. All the staff provide a highly professional and compassionate service for those people of the Redlands who from time to time suffer from a mental illness. This budget provides \$877,000 to construct a new building to house the mental health unit and to improve the delivery of mental health services to the Redlands area.

I would also like to compliment the Health Minister, the Hon. Wendy Edmond, for her ongoing support of the Bayside Initiatives Group. Following last year's community cabinet meeting in the Redlands, the minister provided some funding for the Bayside Initiatives Group. After some more discussions with the minister, recurrent funding was obtained. The minister, the member for Cleveland, the member for Capalaba and I will continue to support programs that provide services to people suffering from mental illnesses. This budget also provides \$300,000 for oncology services at the Redlands Hospital and \$200,000 to improve renal dialysis services for in-patient, at hospital and home based care.

Owing to John Howard's attack on Medicare, we will continue to see across the state a flood of patients into emergency departments. The regional community forum on which I sit has seen first-hand the huge rise in triage 5 and 6 cases attending public hospitals because they cannot access general practitioners for financial reasons. This budget provides an extra \$142,000 to manage demand in the Redlands Hospital emergency department.

New medical equipment valued at approximately \$493,000 will be delivered to the bayside health district. This will include a new X-ray generator for Redlands Hospital at \$125,000. Our school dental program will be boosted, with 12 X-ray units being purchased at \$6,000 each.

Along with the government's Education and Training Reform Program, which continues to enhance the reputation of the Queensland education system, this budget delivers for schools and students in the Redlands. This budget will provide an extra 636 teachers across the state. Dr Kevin McKennarney, the staff, students and the P&C of the Victoria Point State High School are thrilled at the allocation of \$1.55 million for a performing arts block. Once completed, this block will allow the current drama and visual arts program to grow further, to develop and expand. The recent Strut Your Stuff fashion parade was a fantastic example of the quality of the Victoria Point State High School drama and visual arts program.

The huge growth in the southern end of my electorate is impacting on the schools in that area. Last year, the government allocated \$400,000 to purchase land to allow Redland Bay State School to expand. Negotiations are still under way to obtain the required land. Redland Bay State School received a further \$260,000 for new toilet blocks to service the growing student population. The Triple R maintenance program will provide a further \$15,000 to continue repainting parts of Redland Bay State School.

With growth in and around Mount Cotton, there has been \$280,000 allocated to provide two new classrooms. Mount Cotton State School continues to go from strength to strength under the leadership of the principal, Jeff Bull. This budget reflects the knowledge of the Minister for

Education, the Hon. Anna Bligh, of my electorate. I acknowledge the effort made by the minister when she attended an education forum at Victoria Point State High School last year that was attended by staff, parents and students from all schools—state, Catholic and independent—within my electorate. I appreciate the minister's ongoing commitment to education within my electorate.

Public housing is an enormous issue across the state. Owing to the federal government's failure to maintain funding for public housing, the Beattie state government has stepped up to the plate and increased its commitment to those who cannot access that most basic of services, a roof over their heads. The Minister for Housing, the Hon. Robert Schwarten, has continually battled the federal government on this issue, and anyone who knows the minister would know that he is not afraid of a fight.

An amount of \$2.3 million has been allocated to purchase land in the Redlands on which we will later build 29 units and \$148,000 has been allocated to begin construction of 12 units. The government understands the social and financial benefit of people staying in their own homes in the surroundings that they are familiar with—surrounded by friends and neighbours whom they know. That is why the government has provided the Redlands Home Assist/Secure program with \$218,000.

Access to and from the beautiful Redlands has not been ignored either. For those residents and visitors accessing the northern end of the Redlands, \$1.48 million has been allocated to widen Redland Bay Road between Windermere Road and Vienna Road. This should be a comfort to residents who face those long traffic queues in the morning and afternoon peaks.

The staff, students and communities of Calvary Christian College, Carbrook State School, Kimberley College, Chisholm Catholic College and Mount Cotton State School, along with the residents of Carbrook, Cornubia, Redland Bay and Mount Cotton, will welcome the \$1.38 million that is allocated to upgrade the intersection of Mount Cotton Road and Beenleigh—Redland Bay Road. A road realignment and the installation of traffic lights will significantly improve the safety of this intersection. Along with many residents, I took a deep breath each time I pulled out of Mount Cotton Road and turned right onto Beenleigh—Redland Bay Road. That blind corner always appeared too close for comfort.

An amount of \$40,000 each has been allocated to the Redland Shire Council and to the Logan City Council for the expansion of bikeways in those areas. I believe that the Redland Shire Council area lends itself very, very easily to people being able to cycle around the shire and to and from work. The expansion of the bikeways program will go further towards people being able to do that.

An amount of \$252,000 has been given to the Redland Shire Council to assist in constructing shire roads and improving drainage around the area. An amount of \$183,000 has also been given to the Logan City Council to assist in constructing shire roads and improving drainage in its area.

The Minister for Primary Industries, the Hon. Henry Palaszczuk, has allocated \$3.5 million for the continuing fight against fire ants. As residents in my electorate understand, the battle against fire ants is one that we cannot afford to lose. I commend the minister for his work in that regard. An amount of \$1.7 million has been allocated to upgrading the facilities at Cleveland for the DPI centre for horticulture. The horticulture industry is a significant employer in my electorate as it contains a number of turf farms and nurseries. On that note, I would like to advise members that the grass on Suncorp Stadium was grown in my electorate at Thornlands. I encourage all residents of Redlands to attend, if possible, the State of Origin match and see a bit of Redlands transplanted to the CBD.

I acknowledge that a further 82 police will be employed in the Metro South region, which encompasses the Wynnum police district supporting Cleveland and Redland Bay police stations. I appreciate the increase in the staff and I will continue to work with the Minister for Police to see Redland Bay Police Station upgraded to 24-hour status.

The \$26.4 million spending on Breaking the Unemployment Cycle has created 352 new jobs in the Redlands already and I compliment the minister on his ongoing commitment to that.

I would like to highlight that the member for Cleveland, Darryl Briskey, the member for Capalaba, Michael Choi, and I have worked for a long time and I also appreciate the support of the Hon. Nita Cunningham, Minister for Local Government, and her department in providing \$2.75 million for a performing arts centre in the shire. This has been a long time coming and I think that this will help move Redlands further ahead.

In conclusion, this budget delivers services and infrastructure that will help to improve people's lives. Some people have said that this is an election budget. I say if you have a heart, if you have a social conscience, then every budget should be an election budget. I commend it to the House.

**Mr PEARCE** (Fitzroy—ALP) (4.10 p.m.): It is a pleasure for me to rise today in support of the appropriation bills before the House. The Fitzroy electorate is the seventh largest of the 89 electorates represented in the Queensland parliament. Based on coalmining and primary industry, the Fitzroy electorate and, in fact, the region can rightly claim to be a major contributor to the state's economy. This is sometimes used as justification for many people in the region to call for a greater share of the budget dollar. Of course, as the local member, I would accept with much pleasure if more funds were allocated to the central Queensland region. However, in saying that, it is important that the people of the Fitzroy electorate understand that government is aware of the contribution made by the regions to the wealth of the state. In fact, in this budget, 62.5 per cent of capital works funding is for the regions outside the Brisbane statistical division.

In my contribution to this debate I will spend some time on how funds are distributed in electorates like Fitzroy and how the people benefit over and above the big announcements made on budget day. I will then come back to the appropriation bills now before the parliament. First of all, let us take a quick run around the Fitzroy electorate. It boasts the major centres of Dysart, Middlemount, Blackwater, Moura, Mount Morgan, Gracemere, South Rockhampton—including the suburbs of Depot Hill, Port Curtis, and Allenstown—as well as the Aboriginal community of Woorabinda. Smaller rural communities within the electorate include Marmor, Bajool, Bouldercombe, Ridgeland, Alton Downs, Dalma, Westwood, Stanwell, Gogango, Duaringa, Dingo, and Bluff, which is the home town for train crews on the coal haulage line. If we look further south, there are the communities of Baralaba, Bauhinia, Banana, Goovigen, Jambin, Wowan, and Dululu and to the north of Rockhampton, the major housing developments of Glendale and Glenlee.

There are more than 50 schools servicing the students who come from within the boundaries of the Fitzroy electorate. There are five state hospitals, 11 police stations, 10 ambulance stations, six fire stations and several dozen rural fire brigades. Major state roads include the Capricorn Highway, Burnett Highway, Dawson Highway and Dingo Mount Flora Road, also known as the Fitzroy Development Road. Five whole shires and four part shires are situated within the boundaries of the Fitzroy electorate.

Before I go on to highlight how spending has benefited the people I work for, I want to congratulate the Hon. Terry Mackenroth, the Treasurer, for delivering a budget that focuses on the vision of a Smart State by meeting its obligations to current and future generations of Queenslanders. Putting money into health, education, families, housing, law and order, and jobs is what Labor governments are all about. I am proud to be a member of a government that puts dollars into improving opportunities and quality of life for all Queenslanders.

As a former mineworker and labourer, I have a great deal of satisfaction when I see that unemployment in Queensland has been reduced to low levels not seen for 13 years. This is despite more people than ever moving to Queensland over the last 12 months—some 36,500 from interstate, which is the highest level in more than six years, and some 26,000 international migrants. For Queenslanders, it is comforting to know that the state's finances are healthy with a cash surplus and that this government has maintained Queensland's AAA credit rating. It ensures that Queensland remains a low-tax state.

Bringing down a budget that delivers to all Queenslanders involves much more than what the Treasurer has presented to the parliament and what can be gleaned from the budget papers. It is also about how each of the government agencies disburses those dollars through the various programs over a financial year. To demonstrate just how that happens, I will identify how some of the dollars allocated in last year's budget benefited the people of the Fitzroy electorate. The following are examples of where taxpayers' dollars are spent over and above those funds required for the wages and resources of people employed in the delivery of state government services. I am pleased to have been able to play a part in securing the funding for many of these projects by providing the link between the community and government.

Given the time limits I wish to have the rest of my written speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

## Education

- \$224,248—ICT funding for 36 state schools;
- \$154,000—additional ICT funding for 36 state schools;
- \$2.5m—Round 4 Cooler Schools Program—12 schools;
- \$52,000—Bajool SS—School Improvement Assistance Scheme;
- \$8,000—Dysart SHS—upgrade car park;
- \$20,000—Gracemere SS—tennis court;
- \$6,600—Marmor SS—concrete path;
- \$4,200—Moura SS Special Ed Unit—new fence;
- \$15,000—Bouldercombe SS—Solar Schools Program.

## Employment

- \$20,000—Green Trainees Project—Moura, Theodore, Woorabinda;
- \$137,810—Skilling Mount Morgan Project.

## Environment

- \$10,000—Community Cultural Heritage Grant—Gracemere Homestead.

## Families

- \$122,000—DV & Court Support Services;
- \$4,000—Emergency Relief Funding—Blackwater;
- \$18,300—Disaster Relief Assistance following flooding—for families in Fitzroy, Banana and Miriam Shires.

## Health

- \$11,000—Blackwater Medical Centre—carpark sealing;
- \$47,338—Banana Health Service District—bonus funding to upgrade accommodation for Qld Health staff;
- \$40,700—Central Highlands Health Service District—bonus funding to upgrade accommodation for Qld Health staff;
- \$74,400—Moranbah Health Service District—bonus funding to upgrade accommodation for Qld Health staff.

## Local Government

- \$10,500—Banana SC—new public toilets Dululu;
- \$6,400—Mount Morgan SC—Capital Works Subsidy Scheme—sewage works;
- \$300,000—Fitzroy, Mount Morgan, Duaringa, Banana, Broadsound, Woorabinda Councils—RLIP Funding.

RLIP projects funded include major redevelopment of Baralaba RSL Hall; upgrading of grandstands at Mount Morgan swimming pool; community access pathways in Bouldercombe; lighting for the Gracemere Sports Club's football field; improvements to local halls including Bajool School of Arts, Alton Downs, Stanwell, Kalapa, and Wycarbah.

## Main Roads

- \$6.6m—Leichhardt Hwy works/new bridges over Dawson River;
- \$15.4 million (total works)—completion of 2 lane seal Fitzroy Developmental Road between Dingo and Mount Flora;
- \$500,000—Kabra-Mount Morgan Road upgrade;
- \$800,000—Rockhampton-Ridgeland Road upgrade;
- \$90,000—Moura street lighting project;
- \$1.5 million intersection upgrade/widening Capricorn Hwy at Stanwell;
- \$2 million widening Capricorn Hwy, btwn Neerkol Creek & Spring Creek;
- \$330,000—repairs to Alma Creek Bridge on Burnett Highway;
- \$150,000—upgrade intersection of Baralaba-Woorabinda Road adjacent to Dawson River;
- \$1.189 million—38 kilometres of bitumen reseals on sections of Dawson, Capricorn and Burnett Highways;
- \$160,000—upgrade truck parking facilities Dysart-Middlemount Road.

## Natural Resources

\$2,000 maximum subsidy each—for 19 Bajool residents—for rainwater tanks.

This subsidy was to assist residents who lost water supply from a reticulated system operated by Cheetham Salts which was no longer prepared to provide the water supply because of litigation concerns.

## Sport and Recreation

- \$40,000—Club Development Program—various groups;
- \$45,000—Local Govt Dev. Program—Dysart skate park;
- \$56,250—Local Govt Dev. Program—Moura skate park;
- \$17,950—Minor Facilities Program—Mount Morgan skate park.

## Treasury

- \$336,016—Gambling Community Benefit Fund—28 groups.

Examples include \$29,000 for Bauhinia School P&C for swimming pool; \$28,000 for Baralaba Show Society for new amenities block; and \$20,000 for resurfacing tennis court for Dingo Tennis Club.

Unfortunately, not everything that the community and I have worked for has come to fruition but that will not deter me from continuing to pursue a number of issues important to the people I work for in this Parliament.

For example, I have been patient on the issue of a new police station for Mount Morgan because of the huge effort required from Labor Governments to lift the number of police stations, increase police numbers, establish police shopfronts and police beats from the low level of police presence left to us by the 32 years of National Party neglect.

I believe it is now Mount Morgan's turn to get a new police station and I will be lobbying strongly for this to happen. I will also be working to lift the status of the last remaining unsealed section of the Fitzroy Development Road between Woorabinda and Bauhinia.

Some funds have been allocated to improving this section of road but it is nowhere near what is required and I will be lobbying to have the works included in future Roads Implementation Programs.

It is certainly better positioned than at any other time to be included in future planning and I will be looking for landholders, livestock transporters and other heavy transporters to continue their support for this project.

And I urge the Federal Government to share the cost burden of this road upgrade.

Another big ticket item on my agenda for future budgets is to win funding for the construction of the Austadium—the second stage of the Gracemere Saleyards expansion.

The Austadium will provide a venue for indoor horse events, sales and other entertainment and will be a significant asset for the region.

The Saleyards Board of Directors made an excellent submission but, in all honesty, too late to be considered as a serious contender in this year's Budget.

One of the first priorities for the people of Central Queensland is access to health services.

While rural and regional Queenslanders understand that not all services can be provided in all communities, they do expect to be able to access services within a reasonable travelling time and distance.

The Government acknowledges this expectation by allocating the funds, however, because of the shortage of medical professionals it cannot always ensure that the services can be put in place.

This year's budget increase of over \$300 million is certainly welcome.

\$175 million of this increase is for additional employee costs including new enterprise agreements and awards for nursing, non-nursing and visiting medical staff.

Like every Central Queenslander, I appreciate and respect our nurses and other health workers who are of the highest quality and deserve good wages and working conditions.

Disability Services is another winner in this year's Budget with a \$290 million increase which includes \$200 million in new funding. I know this announcement will have been welcomed by support groups in my electorate.

The education of Queensland's children is an issue about which we are all passionate and Government and the community accept that quality education requires a huge financial investment.

Recurrent expenditure for education has increased by 5.8% to \$4.488 billion.

From this Budget, Queensland will gain an extra 636 teachers, a figure which includes 327 teachers to meet usual annual growth.

Expenditure on capital works is \$257.2 million—up 4.8% on last year.

There is \$12 million in new funding to support students with disabilities.

And \$19 million for further air-conditioning of State and non-government schools???

There is also \$155 million for literacy strategies.

And \$162 million over 4 years to progress education and training reforms.

Better preparation for school trials and helping students stay at school are the two important steps that will ensure students get every opportunity to achieve at school and be better prepared for a work environment.

I am delighted to hear that police funding is up \$84 million or 9.2 % on last year's Budget. This takes the police operation budget to \$1.001 billion.

Police numbers will increase by 300 this year taking total police numbers to 8,700.

This year's Budget also provides \$1.41 billion for Queensland Transport and \$2.1 billion for Main Roads with \$1.27 billion of those dollars to be expended in regional Queensland.

Road improvements mean safer roads and enhanced opportunities for major industry expansion.

The State has allocated \$446 million for local authority subsidies to assist with major capital works.

Emergency Services gets a record \$607.6 million with the QAS to increase its workforce by taking on an additional 110 ambulance officers.

This figure includes 25 fully qualified officers and 85 student paramedics, four new stations, 17 replacement stations and 86 new vehicles.

I have mentioned only a few of the budget highlights.

But these are initiatives that continue to provide services for the people of Queensland.

We all acknowledge that every portfolio administered by the State could use more money but the reality is that there are only limited dollars available.

In the time remaining, I would like to provide a quick run down on some of the key funding allocations which will directly benefit those in the Fitzroy Electorate.

Those key allocations include:

\$135,000 for book stocks for public libraries.

\$6 million to provide rail infrastructure to assist in establishing common user rail freight facilities to industrial developments in regional Queensland.

\$1.27 million to complete rehabilitation and widening of the Dawson Highway (Gladstone-Biloela), east of Oaky Creek, at a total cost of \$2.04 million.

\$2.22 million to complete \$2.4 million shoulder widening on the Capricorn Highway, east of Dingo.

Under Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme, the following State Government contributions are provided on 50/50 basis for local govt projects:-

- \$190,000 to complete pavement and sealing works on Golden Mile Road, within Broadsound Shire, at total project cost of \$760,000;
- \$190,000 to complete gravel formation works from the Range to Baranga Road, within Duaringa Shire, at total project cost of \$760,000.

These works, I understand, are well advanced.

\$318,000 for repainting of school buildings at Blackwater State High School, Dingo State School, Goovigen State School, Gracemere State School, Jambin State School, Moura State School, Waraburra State School and Woorabinda State School.

\$300,000 to replace a sewerage plant at Mount Morgan Central State School.

\$20,000 to assist the delivery of special education at Blackwater Nth State School.

Confirmation of \$2.4 million in funds to meet the Government's 80% contribution for air-conditioning at Blackwater North, Dingo, Duaringa, Gogango, Goovigen, Gracemere, Middlemount, Mount Morgan Central, Moura, Port Curtis Road, Allenstown, and Waraburra State Schools.

\$116,000 for improvements to Blackdown Tableland Road at Tableland National Park.

\$80,000 for vegetation mapping in the northern area of the Brigalow Belt bio-region.

\$50,000 for vegetation mapping in the southern area of the Brigalow Belt bio-region.

\$52,000 for construction of toilet blocks at Rainbow Falls in the Blackdown Tableland National Park.

\$534,000 for local road and drainage works.

\$48,000 towards the development of the Blackwater Mining Museum Park and Visitors Precinct.

\$29,000 towards the development of the Bedford Weir Recreation Area.

\$42,308 to construct two additional courts with lighting at Middlemount Tennis Club.

\$11,444 to construct six outdoor courts for beach volleyball and touch football at Rockhampton's Athelstane Bowls Club.

\$9,900 to install safety fencing for motocross racing at Pink Lily for Rockhampton and District Motocross Club.

\$9,324 to develop a four-hole outdoor golf course for juniors and beginners at the Rockhampton Golf Club.

\$6,000 to construct 20 horse stalls for equestrian at the Alton Downs Polocrosse and Sports Club.

\$12,000 for four new patient beds at Baralaba Hospital and \$11,000 for a diathermy unit at Moura Hospital.

\$977,000 to construct 4 new public housing dwellings and \$58,000 to upgrade 11 public housing dwellings.

\$1.5 million for ongoing management of Mount Morgan minesite.

\$357,000 towards National Action Plan on Salinity and Water Quality in Fitzroy.

The Central Queensland region will receive around \$6.1 million to create an estimated 780 jobs through the State Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative during 2003/2004.

This builds on the funding already allocated to the Fitzroy electorate under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle, where approximately \$6.5 million has been allocated between October 1998 and March 2003.

This has resulted in 736 jobs being created for Fitzroy.

Mr Speaker, the 2003/2004 State Budget is positive, focused and one which has been well accepted by the taxpayers of Queensland.

**Dr WATSON** (Moggill—Lib) (4.14 p.m.): I rise to speak on the appropriation bills 2003 and to participate in debate on the budget. The budget certainly confirms that old adage—in fact, it gives proof positive—that you cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. That is despite the fact that we have been inundated with colourful books and brochures, glossy photographs, Smart State rhetoric and a record attempt to manipulate the perceptions by the use of accounting changes and format changes. Those accounting changes include things such as changes in the way that capital works have been presented, changes in the way the operating budget has been presented and changes in the way the net worth has been presented. I will deal with each of those seriatim.

Firstly, let me talk briefly about the change in the capital works budget and capital outlays by entities. This year entities included in the Public Works and Housing portfolio are Q-Fleet, SDS, Q-Build and Project Services for an amount of approximately \$159 million. One can argue that maybe they should be included in the capital outlays. There is probably an argument one can mount on that. What is very disturbing about the way it has been presented is simply that the changes were made this year. Last year's budget figures were also changed—

**Mr Mackenroth** interjected.

**Dr WATSON:** For comparative purposes, but there was no indication of that without going back and looking at last year's budget papers. To work it out we had to go back and do it. The perception that was attempted to be given is that the government had met its capital works budget for last year when in fact it failed to do it. That was the perception. I am not going to argue about whether or not it should or should not be in it; I think an argument can be made. One can make a comparative argument. The problem is that if the government is going to do that it ought to be transparent, it ought to be accountable for precisely that figure.

The same thing of course has occurred in the area of the operating result. Again, when we look at table 1.3 on page 10 of Budget Paper No. 2 the information it gives in the reconciliation of the operating result to the mid-year fiscal and economic review indicates that there are some changes because of policy decisions, which is acceptable, because after all that is what governments are elected for. For some things that are outside the control of the government, things such as investment returns, Commonwealth government general revenue returns—those kinds of things are perfectly acceptable. There is also an accounting change; a depreciation change. I am sure the Treasurer could make an argument as to why he changed the depreciation rates.

When we look at that the perception is that he has somehow managed to produce a surplus in this current budget and a smaller deficit in the current financial year but that has not been stated in a public sense—certainly not in anything that went out in terms of press releases or his budget speech. He did not indicate in that the kind of things the public hears. He did not indicate there that the reason he has been able to come in with a \$153 million surplus, the reason he has been able to get the deficit down to \$350 million this year in the operating result, is because he made a substantive accounting change. In other words, a book entry changed the outcome quite significantly. Along with the capital works, the perception was that everything was okay financially when in fact, at least on those two occasions—and I will come to net worth in a moment—they were simply a change in format or a change in the accounting presentation.

Why is the government doing this kind of thing? The reason the government is doing this is that there is a critical issue that underlies all budgets which this government is facing, as previous governments have also faced—that is, the issue of what is called gross fixed capital formation: how much money are we putting into the capital development of this state? It is fundamentally important for two reasons. If we do not have significant government gross fixed capital expenditure, then we are simply not, over time, going to encourage private investment into this state. If we do not encourage private investment, we do not encourage job creation and do not do anything about our standard of living. In fact, our standard of living will start to slip unless there is significant private investment. Gross fixed capital expenditure—or capital formation—is all about actually providing the fundamental infrastructure of this state. The concern that I have—the concern that has been expressed for quite some time—relates to the fact that this government and the previous Labor government have been running down the capital of this state. That has implications for the long run in terms of productivity, jobs and encouraging investment.

When we came to government after the Goss government we faced the same issue. Members would recall—and the Treasurer would recall, because he was a minister in that government—that a significant number of articles appeared in the newspapers at the time about the problem during the 1990s of the Queensland government not putting enough money into infrastructure development. When we came to government we addressed that issue, and we addressed it in an extremely responsible fashion. We privatised Suncorp but did it in a way which first of all reduced debt, so that we took away the implication of losing dividends from Suncorp in the future and put the extra funds into fundamental infrastructure—things like the hospital program and the Pacific Motorway.

A couple of weeks ago, during a speech I made on the adjournment debate, I said that one of the things that struck me when we did that was that the very day the Treasurer introduced the Suncorp Metway facilitation bill the ALP moved a motion in this House deploring the upgrade of the Pacific Motorway. Jim Elder moved the motion, but it was supported by everybody here. When Labor came to government it could not wait to take credit for that decision. But that was a courageous decision to ensure that the state's assets were used appropriately, that we actually freed up some capital to put into important infrastructure development. Since the Labor Party has been in office there has again been a significant decrease in the amount of gross fixed capital formation.

To see that, one only has to look at each of the budgets that the present government has brought down. In 1998-99 the amount was \$4.269 billion. In 1999-2000 it was \$4.257 billion, a

slight drop. In 2000-01 it was \$4.075 billion, a further drop. Of course, the big drop actually occurred in the 2001-02 financial year, but that cannot be calculated easily because, again, formats have changed. Whereas in previous budget papers gross fixed capital formation was actually declared and shown, in this set of budget papers what we have in place of it is the purchase of non-financial assets as a figure, and that is the figure which of course the government displays in all of its glossy little publications like *Smart State: Creating opportunities for the future*. That is what appears in that. What we have to do is adjust it for the fact that we have sales of non-financial assets, and of course there are some other adjustments. When we do that we get in 2001-02 a figure more like \$3.6 billion, which is a significant reduction. In 2002-03, again it is probably slightly under \$3.6 billion. This year—I will give the Treasurer credit—it looks like it is closer to \$4.5 billion.

So finally in this budget we recognise what the Labor Party has been doing over the past five years—that is, running down the capital formation and the infrastructure of this state, and we will pay for that for quite some time. The problem is that, when we ask ourselves how that is being financed, the reality is that that extra \$1 billion is basically being financed by an addition to the net debt of the state. If we look at the figures for net debt we see that net debt is projected in this year's budget to go up by \$889 million. Basically, the extra \$900 million of gross fixed capital formation is being financed by an increase in the net debt of the same amount.

Finally, belatedly, this government has recognised the problem with infrastructure development in this state. It is addressing it by going further into debt. Of course, the question that comes out of that is: precisely how long will it continue developing that kind of infrastructure and exactly how far is it going to go into debt? The reason it got into this situation was addressed by the Leader of the Liberal Party earlier in the debate. The government is in this situation simply because it has expanded the size of the Public Service significantly over the past four years. I will come to that in a moment.

The other point I want to make with respect to the issue of gross fixed capital formation is that, when looking at these figures, it came to my mind that there had been another accounting change in this process, and that was simply the calculation of net worth. Again, before the budget came down the Treasurer promulgated that we were going to have a \$600 million increase in net worth. In the budget speech he referred to that, and in this year's budget papers there is the \$1.62 billion increase in net worth. In both of those cases the primary reason for that increase is simply the revaluation of non-financial assets.

**Mr Mackenroth** interjected.

**Dr WATSON:** If the Treasurer looks at last year he will see that he reduced financial assets by something like half a billion dollars and increased liabilities by \$1.721 billion. The thing that made it add up was the increase in the non-financial assets, and that was made up of two parts: about \$1,075 million of new assets and about \$1.8 billion in revaluation. That is how he got his increase in net worth, and he has done the same thing this year. Even though there is a net worth increase of \$1.62 billion, he has in fact revalued the assets up again by about \$1.7 billion. If the Treasurer wants to do that, he can argue for that. But he should not go out trumpeting good financial management when all it is is simply a revaluation of the non-financial assets of the state. The revaluation of the roads, the land, the hospitals, the schools, the police station and the courthouses is what provides the increase in net worth.

As I said earlier, the reason the government has gotten into this problem is simply because it has increased the size of the Public Service quite dramatically. In doing so, it has simply taken money that would have gone into grossed fixed capital formation—in other words, into capital works—and transferred that into recurrent expenditure in the operating budget. That is what they have done. We know the government is sensitive about this because on Tuesday morning, the day the budget was introduced, the Premier came into this House and delivered a ministerial statement. Interestingly, in that ministerial he simply concentrated on the last two years. He argued that there has been an increase of 6,043 new full-time staff during that period, most of which went into Education, Health and Police.

When we look at the Office of Public Service Merit and Equity, those figures are confirmed. In the last two years we had an increase of three per cent and 0.93 of one per cent. But it was the previous two years, in 1998-99 and 1999-2000, where the big increases occurred. In those two years we had 6,405 full-time equivalent increases in the public sector—4.78 per cent—and in the next year, 1999-2000, 7,783 or 5.54 per cent. I have not seen the Premier come out and indicate that in those two years 60 per cent or 70 per cent of them were teachers, doctors, nurses or police. That is not the case. That is where he got into trouble.

Compared with when we were in government, this Treasurer has increased the size of the Public Service not in doctors, nurses, teachers or police but in other areas of the Public Service such as the Premier's media unit and things like that, and he increased it by an amount which is costing the budget \$700 million or \$800 million. That explains the significant fall that has had to occur in capital formation in order to fund the increase in the public sector. The question is how long that can go on for. As the Leader of the Liberal Party said, the Treasurer has indicated that he already understands that those kinds of increases cannot go on indefinitely. That is why he is going through VERs and other arrangements to get public servants and teachers to retire early so that we can start to reduce the impact.

However, when any government increases its recurrent expenditure like that it will get into trouble. What it is going to do in Queensland's case and what has been done under Goss and under Beattie has hurt the capital formation of this state, and that means it has hurt private investment and the standard of living of Queenslanders.

In the final couple of minutes let me turn to something that I have some responsibility for in respect of the Department of Innovation and Information Economy. In terms of capital works in that department—ignoring energy; it is a GOC—for Smart State capital works we find about \$25.5 million allocated. But for the sport part of the department we find \$37.5 million. When we look at the recurrent expenses in the portfolio, in the innovation and information economy policy area, we get \$78.8 million. But in the sport area we have \$132.2 million. If we want to be the sports state, the Broncos state, the Lions state or the Reds state, perhaps that represents an appropriate allocation of resources. But if we want to be the Smart State, the rhetoric seems incongruous with the financial reality. If we want to be the Smart State we would expect to see in a department which did those kinds of things a greater financial emphasis on things that are important to developing a Smart State. We would want to see less emphasis on areas that are important in developing a sports crazy state.

I will conclude where I started: we cannot make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. We can have all of the glossy brochures, photographs and rhetoric, but when it comes down to it, what has to happen is that the financial reality has to follow that. If he is going to talk the talk, he had better walk the walk.

**Ms MALE** (Glass House—ALP) (4.35 p.m.): Once again it is a pleasure to rise and speak to an appropriation bill that gets the balance right. The Treasurer has produced a budget which reflects our core Labor values. It is a budget which looks after the key areas of health, education and families—areas which affect our everyday lives.

I am pleased to be able to inform the people of the Glass House electorate that the Beattie Labor government is delivering for them. This is the Beattie Labor government's sixth budget and the third that has been delivered during my term. Reflecting back on last year's budget it is pleasing to see that the budget funding promises were delivered. As I look around my electorate, I can see the new two-storey teaching block at Elimbah State School being well utilised by the students; the Glasshouse Mountains State School covered area and tuckshop is, after a few delays due to weather and design issues, being built as we speak; the lights are up at the Landsborough Sport and Recreation Club; the Equestrian Centre at the Maleny Show Grounds was a magnificent sight at last weekend's show; the Northern Bypass first stage is just about to be opened; and there is the rehabilitation of roads such as the Mooloolah-Connection Road, the Brisbane-Woodford Road and the Peachester-Beerwah Road. The money spent on families, child protection, juvenile justice and policing is also evident and making a difference to our lives.

#### Education

This is a budget which continues Queensland's place as the Smart State. The government has made a commitment to 636 new teachers to start work across Queensland for the 2004 school year. These teachers will help to reduce class sizes and provide additional support for students with special learning needs and will help underpin further behaviour management strategies. Glass House will get its share of these teachers, which will improve the learning environment for local students.

This budget commits \$560,000 to Tullawong State High School for two relocatable classrooms. There is continuing growth at Tullawong, both at the high school and the state school, and this government recognises that there is an ongoing need for additional classroom facilities. \$200,000 has been committed to Elimbah State School for facilities, and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the current and past P&C executives and members for their very obvious dedication to the students at Elimbah. The P&C meetings always attract large

numbers of parents who are keen to be involved in their school community and they work tirelessly to raise funds and donate valuable volunteer time to value-add to their school's priorities.

I am particularly pleased to see that Maleny State School has had \$25,000 allocated to it to complete its master plan. Many people in the Maleny community are concerned about the issues of buildings, facilities, and road use. The P&C and the principal have been working closely with me and members of EQ, DMR and Department of Transport to deal with the issues. The master plan will put the school in a good position to progress forward with its facilities.

#### Health

Local health services in both the Redcliffe-Caboolture and Sunshine Coast health service districts will receive an increase of \$3.79 million. These funds are earmarked for many important areas of health services, and ones that impact directly on members of the public that use our services. This budget continues to address waiting times for elective surgery, including general surgery and specialty areas such as orthopaedics. There will be additional funding for emergency departments, cancer treatment services, renal dialysis services, intensive care units and, importantly, community mental health.

Those people who are interested in the political dynamics in Australia, and finding out the fundamental differences between Labor philosophy and Liberal Party philosophy, do not have to go any further than comparing the federal budget from several weeks ago to this week's state budget. The Queensland budget upholds the basic Labor fundamentals of universal health care, education for all, not just the rich, and providing a helping hand for those who need it most through increased funding for disability and family services.

The federal budget's focus was on dismantling the universality of Medicare and creating a two-tier, second-rate health system similar to the United States where doctors are more interested in our credit card than our Medicare card. Quality health care must only ever be available on the basis of medical need. It should never be rationed according to ability to pay. The federal coalition government's unprecedented attack on Medicare will eventually lead to the death of bulk-billing and an increased pressure on our emergency departments in public hospitals. We are already seeing an increase in presentations to emergency departments. They have coupled this attack on Medicare with a cutback in funding to the states to the tune of \$1 billion over the five-year life of the next Health Care Agreement. In contrast, the Beattie Labor government is funding health and health services. It is recognising the importance of good-quality health care to all Queenslanders.

#### Transport and Roads

This budget commits funds to fixing the Landsborough-Maleny Road, particularly through the 'icebox' section. For many, many years the Maleny community has been asking for an upgrade of this dangerous section of road. I was pleased that after representations were made at the community cabinet in Maleny the government sat down and thought through all the issues that were presented to it and came up with the funding. This last six months have been spent surveying and testing the various areas of the upgrade, and once this has been completed the \$5.7 million upgrade can start, with \$3 million being committed in the 2003-04 financial year.

Another major road project is the Peachester-Beerwah Road, with \$3.55 million being utilised to complete the rehabilitation and widening works, and working with council to ensure that the pedestrian pathways and bridge crossings they have funded are part of the completed project. It has been great to see this working partnership.

There are further road funding initiatives across the electorate, particularly the Caboolture northern bypass and the Brisbane-Woodford Road. There is also continued funding for the Caboolture-Landsborough railway upgrade for corridor identification works. Rail commuters are definitely grateful for the continued emphasis on this particular railway upgrade, and we look forward to seeing it continue into the future.

Due to the time constraints this afternoon, I would seek leave to incorporate the rest of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

#### Sporting Groups

To continue on from the funding for the Landsborough Sport & Rec Club which saw the lighting being installed, the government has again recognised the needs from the master planning process with Council, and has allocated over \$434,000 to construct a multipurpose recreation centre incorporating three activity spaces.

I was pleased to see that Glasshouse Mountains Sports Club received almost \$10,000 towards irrigation and additional spectator seating. This club has, for as long as I can remember, supported the community and local

schools in many different ways. I have fond memories of school sports days and other community events at the Grounds—and I commend the Club for its continuing and ongoing commitment to sport and the community.

The Caboolture and District Lawn Tennis Association will receive \$28,000 to convert two courts from clay to grass and install additional lighting, and the Suncoast Hinterland BMX Club will also receive over \$15,000 to install ancillary lighting. This should see an increase in users for these clubs.

The Beattie Labor Government wants us to be a smart state and an active state.

#### Housing

This Government is committed to boost spending on Housing services throughout the area.

In my local area, \$211,000 has been allocated to Home Assist Secure services through the Catholic Church. This program has become very popular as it provides information and assistance on home maintenance, repairs and security to people 60 and over or those with a disability of any age living in private housing. One of its most important benefits is that it allows elderly people to stay in their own homes longer.

The Government is also providing a further \$528,000 to further fund the Community Rent Scheme and the construction of 15 new public housing dwellings.

I am pleased that these funds will be assisting those in the community most at need.

#### Families

Queenslanders with disabilities, their families and carers will receive an historic funding increase to continue the reform of the disability section and improve services to support children, young people and adults. Also, the increased funding will progress a range of prevention and early intervention initiatives which will strengthen the state's child protection system.

Particularly, \$260,000 to fund the development of innovative prevention and early intervention models in Foster Care and Relative Support at Caboolture and Maroochydore.

\$200,000 has been provided for the expansion of Community Conferencing by the Department of Families. Community conferencing has been a success story through the provision of safe, supportive environments for victims of crime to meet the young people who have offended against them, and to hold them accountable for their actions. It provides a resolution process that leads to healing for the victim and accountability and prevention for the offender.

#### Jobs

And now the core business of this government—job creation.

Achieving success in the new economy relies on a commitment to innovation and education.

The Queensland Government's Smart State initiatives mean we invest in people through enhancing education and training. We are fostering innovation across public and private sectors to develop new and improved products, services and technologies and applying them across the economy. Supporting R&D, delivering improved labour market programs and extending the State's productive capacity and attracting significant business investment to Queensland are the cornerstones of our success.

There are more jobs than every for Queenslanders and these jobs are fuelling our economic growth—to the envy of all other States.

To this end, the North Coast region will receive around \$7.2 million to create an estimated 1,060 jobs through the Beattie Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative during 2003/04.

This builds on the funding already allocated to the Glasshouse electorate under Breaking the Unemployment Cycle, where approximately \$1.7 million has been allocated between October 1998 and March 2003. This has resulted in 284 jobs being created for Glasshouse.

Traineeships and apprenticeships will again be further targeted to ensure that our young people have every opportunity to access training and get a job.

#### Emergency Services

Further highlights of the budget across Queensland include a record \$607 million budget for Emergency Services to ensure that their vital contribution to the safety and wellbeing of every community in Queensland continues.

We will see an additional 110 ambulance officers across the state, further capital works infrastructure across our emergency services—including the final allocation of \$110,000 for the new Mooloolah fire station, additional funding for the Community Helicopter Providers on the Sunshine Coast and an increase in the Volunteer Support Package.

#### Police & Crime

Crime fighting in Queensland has received its biggest budget ever with an allocation of over one billion dollars.

Last year we saw the opening of the Tullawong Police Beat and all of the resultant community benefits that have been attached to this very important community policing initiative.

Funding has now been providing for the establishment of a fourteen officer Tactical Crime Squad based at Redcliffe, but which will service the Glasshouse electorate on an as-needed basis. These squads target known crime hotspots with a strong emphasis on investigating property crime and drug offences. This is a welcome addition to the excellent work provided by local officers at all levels.

Funding of \$2.4 million has been set aside for a new state-of-the-art court complex which would be built next door to the Police Station at Caloundra. These new facilities are much needed in the rapidly growing Sunshine Coast region.

There is additional funding across other Departments, all which go towards assisting the community statewide.

This is a solid budget which delivers core services and infrastructure across the Glasshouse electorate.

It is a caring Budget, a Budget with heart, and a Budget which provides the impetus for the State to continue to grow.

I commend the Bill to the House.

**Mr POOLE** (Gaven—ALP) (4.40 p.m.): This week Tuesday morning brought back childhood memories of anticipation. Those memories of Christmas morning when one cannot wait to see if Father Christmas delivered one's wishes of hope and possibly a bit of greed. I did get the goodies, and I do not mind admitting that element of greed when it comes to my electorate of Gaven. I will tell the House today what I got.

Nerang received almost \$1 million for a complete overhaul of the swimming complex. This allows for a new 10-lane, 25-metre pool and redevelopment of the existing complex. This is on top of the \$4 million already being spent on the Nerang CBD streetscaping and footpaths. It sounds like a nice place. You bet it is! Another \$570,000 is also in this budget for the relocation of the new Nerang library on top of all the funds it has previously been allocated. There is also \$3.4 million for the upgrading of the Nerang Beaudesert Road from two to four lanes from Oak Street to White Street in Nerang.

I must admit that this did not come by chance. This came about because a state member of parliament and a Gold Coast city councillor can work together and not play the weird party politics as a lot of the Gold Coast councillors do with my fellow Labor members. Councillor Peter Young and I have a great working relationship, and it was because of that cohesion and singing off the same sheet of music that we were able to lobby the Treasurer and his department for the good of our mutual areas. I believe that I am soon going to be sharing parts of Nerang with Councillor Bob La Castra and we can also work in the same way as I do with Peter Young.

In the northern end of my electorate of Gaven in the Helensvale/Pacific Pines areas we were able to have funding to the tune of almost \$6 million for stages 4 and 5 of the Pacific Pines State High School. This will deliver a combined general learning and commerce block, a student hall, music facilities, staff amenities and several conversions. Across the road at Pacific Pines State School, another \$1.5 million was given for a two-storey classroom block. The Smart State is certainly putting all its efforts into making a smart school system and I compliment it for that. At Helensvale High School we have another \$260,000 for additional toilets. The school will also share in \$51,000 for repainting with Nerang State High School.

They are some of the big ticket items we have for Gaven, but some of the smaller recipients who have received good news as a result of Terry Mackenroth's third budget are just as stoked. They include Coomera Water Sports in my electorate with a grant of \$27,000 and the Gold Coast Albert and Tweed Cycling Club based in Nerang, receiving more than \$30,000.

On behalf of myself and Peter Young, I would like to take this opportunity in the House to thank Treasurer Terry Mackenroth and his team once again for delivering for the good people of Gaven.

**Mr BELL** (Surfers Paradise—Ind) (4.44 p.m.): Last year in this House I criticised the budget and, perhaps by coincidence, I was not any longer on the Indy invitation list, so this year I will not criticise the budget!

The media asked me what I hoped for in the budget before the Treasurer brought down this budget on Tuesday. I indicated three things, apart from the continuation of existing projects, that I hoped would be in the budget. The first was that I hoped that the land tax scales would be adjusted to accommodate the massive changes in valuations. The second was that there would be provision for a government-run aged care facility on the Gold Coast in response to the 27,000 signatures which were presented by me to the House last year, and the third was funding to enable implementation of stages of the Gold Coast transportation plan.

I see that of my wishes half of each of two of my three wishes have been granted. I do not really criticise this budget in all seriousness. I have always said that a dull budget is a good budget, and this one is a dull budget, but it also, in my view, is quite a good one. It is a solid budget. It builds on what has occurred in the past and it does continue the works that are in progress or planned.

I note particularly in the electorate of Surfers Paradise funding for the Gold Coast Convention Centre completion, which is partially in my electorate, funding for the Indy and funding for extra police and tourism, all of which is extremely welcome indeed. In the wider initiatives for the Gold Coast there are quite a number of matters, and I will not repeat what the member for Southport and the member for Gaven have said, and perhaps others that I did not hear.

I would like to note two of the wider initiatives on the Gold Coast which I see directly benefit the electorate of Surfers Paradise. One is the drug courts at Southport. They are an important facility for people who reside in the electorate of Surfers Paradise. The other is the Tweed bypass, which enables the northward flow of sand which naturally replenishes sand on the beaches in the electorate which I represent. However, there are also disappointments. I am disappointed at the meagreness of the relief given to land tax. Certainly that relief which is given will be welcomed, but it is not much for someone who finds that, say, in the last two years the unimproved capital value of his property has doubled. A benefit such as is contained here is not going to go very far.

It is said around this place, and said quite accurately, that when valuations go through the roof the local council should bring down its percentage rate in the dollar to accommodate this. I realise it is not so simple on a state-wide basis, where valuations may fluctuate from place to place, but I doubt very much whether the meagre—I repeat that term 'meagre'—concessions given to land tax in this budget will correspond with the overall increases in value throughout the state. I signal that at a later time I will be asking a question as to the total land tax revenue from this budget compared with the total land tax revenue in a preceding budget to see whether in fact advantage is being taken of the increases in valuations by some less than fair means adding to revenue from exactly the same land.

I would also like to point out that the question of aged care on the Gold Coast is going to become an election issue. Those 27,000 people who signed the petition asking for a government aged care facility on Gold Coast have not forgotten. Lots of them are asking me what is happening and I have been saying to them, 'Look, you can't do anything outside of budget. Timing is everything in politics. Wait until the next election comes near'. I think members will see that there will be a movement on the Gold Coast from those people to say, 'We want to be heard'. That 27,000 signature petition was only one petition. I could have obtained many, many more signatures at that time.

I concede from the answer I received from the Minister for Transport to a question asked in the House this week that some of the aspects of the Gold Coast transportation plan are being implemented and funded in this budget. Perhaps it does not go far enough, but it would be churlish of me not to acknowledge that some of those matters have been addressed and substantial funding is going into road transportation on the Gold Coast. There are other issues, such as light rail and water transport, that desperately need to be addressed, and this is something that I will continue to take up with the Minister for Transport. I do not intend to go on and on, and I am not looking for a ticket to the Indy because I bought a unit on the track. But I would say to the Treasurer: on the whole, well done; it is not a bad budget.

**Ms BARRY** (Aspley—ALP) (4.50 p.m.): I rise to support the appropriation bills 2003. It is of course the third budget for me as the state member for Aspley. This third budget once again provides for the Aspley electorate in the key areas that make the lives of my community safer and better. It is also another Beattie Labor government budget that is good news for Queenslanders' thriving economy and our children's future.

The budget provides for the Aspley electorate across key areas of health, education, disability, families, transport, main roads, police, local community services and housing. Of course, a key feature for the electorate in the budget is the provision of the establishment of an Aspley police beat shopfront.

**Government members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms BARRY:** I thank honourable members. This is a community police presence that has long been on the Aspley residents' and businesses' wish lists for some time. The \$185,000 police beat shopfront provided in this financial year will work closely with the also newly announced 14-officer tactical crime squad at a cost of \$390,000 for Brisbane north. It is a squad that will target crime in the hot spots in my electorate, in particular, targeting property and drug offences, and will be there for the whole electorate.

I have to say that I am very proud to be the state MP and part of a good government that has delivered this significant community and tactical policing presence in the electorate of Aspley. I am also very proud to have been supported by local residents like the ever present Alan Guy, Neighbourhood Watches from Carseldine and Aspley led by coordinators Mario Marchese, Edna Lawson, Julie Ratnovich and by business groups such as the Brisbane North Chamber of Commerce, the Aspley Hypermarket and Aspley Acres Caravan Park—and added to those voices by retirement village associations from Aspley Court, Compton Gardens and Bridgeman Downs.

These are just a few of the citizens who have added their voice to mine in the call for a police beat shopfront in Aspley.

The decision to fund a shopfront will have a positive effect on my community and on their sense of safety and security. The area of Aspley and Carseldine is a unique part of my electorate. It has within a two-kilometre area a large 24-hour business precinct with a 24-hour McDonald's, a newsagent, a Nightowl, an extended hours shopping centre, a liquor store and a chemist. It contains one of the busiest coffee and restaurant precincts in Brisbane. It has a considerable business shopping strip. It has one of the largest retirement populations in Brisbane, with nearly 1,000 residents living within walking distance of the Aspley business precinct.

On top of that it has two large sporting complexes—the Aspley bowls and the Aspley AFL. The area is centred by busy Gympie Road. In fact, the Aspley business district is the gateway to Brisbane city from the north, and in my view there is no other area in Brisbane north that packs so many businesses, residents, cars and traffic into such a small space. All of this results in a busy area that is at times subject to unacceptable levels of crime, in particular traffic offences like hooning and speeding, graffiti and predominantly offences related to property and car theft and damage. Many communities can lay claim to far greater rates and natures of crimes than Aspley, I am sure, but it is the unique environment of Aspley that I have described that has made the decision to place the police beat shopfront and the tactical crime squad in Aspley such an important and commendable one. It will make my community feel safer, and that is what I want most of all.

The impact of crime on an older, retired population is very hard to measure, but for me hearing from residents who take such extremes as to bring in all their garden ornaments from their gardens overnight in order to protect them is heartbreaking. To hear them talk about the fear that they have that their homes and gardens are held hostage by those in our community who think that the beheading of garden gnomes, doing wheelies on front lawns and generally causing public nuisances of themselves is amusing is something that I was not prepared to tolerate as a state MP. I decided early in my term that taking steps to reduce this type of crime in Aspley—crime that caused residents nights of fear and apprehension, caused businesses costly repair bills, costly insurance claims and lost patronage—was the only course of action that was acceptable to me and the people I represent.

I have been overwhelmingly supported in my pursuit of stamping out this type of crime in Aspley by the Minister for Police, the Hon. Tony McGrady, who has visited my electorate many times, personally taking up the issues raised by Neighbourhood Watches, businesses and communities and delivering in this budget the police beat shopfront and tactical crime squad. I thank him in particular for the commitment that he has made to ensuring that Aspley is a safer community.

Of course, these types of commitments cost, and it is no wonder that we see in the 2003 budget a breaking of the \$1 billion barrier for police funding across Queensland. I have to say that the local Boondall police have been incredibly professional and always supportive. They are always prepared to answer calls and questions from my constituents, and I hope that as a government we have with these announcements made their difficult job just a little easier.

The Aspley electorate has done well in this budget. There is a multimillion-dollar commitment to schools and it continues with a further \$449,000 committed to the Aspley electorate schools. I especially thank the Minister for Education for responding to my calls for assistance for the Craigslea State High School. There will be funds to help repair the roof and repaint, and they are very welcome in this great state high school. That brings a total of nearly \$9 million in the past two years into the Aspley electorate for my schools.

Health is a big winner and very near and dear to my heart, with another nearly \$9 million being injected into the Royal Brisbane Hospital, Royal Women's and Children's and Prince Charles services. Across the state there has been another record budget. There will be the opening of two new wards at Caboolture and Logan, the expanding of the Burns Unit at the Royal Brisbane Hospital, expansion of pain services at the Royal Brisbane Hospital and in Townsville. This will mean over 100 front-line staff, many of whom will be nurses. There will also be an additional 40 mental health positions—again many of whom will be nurses. I am pleased to see that the areas of oncology, renal, cardiac, intensive care and emergency services, including home and community care, have been met by this budget.

Main Roads is another huge recipient of multimillion dollars again in Brisbane north and in particular in Aspley. We will see another half a million dollars in traffic management devices on

Gympie Road. Road safety is a big winner. Road safety is important in an urban electorate like Aspley, with \$195,000 to the safe walking and pedalling program and \$450,000 into the safe school travel.

There is a special announcement for Aspley in that the Carseldine QUT, the Carseldine Centre for Accident Research and Road Safety, will receive \$1.36 million for its research into road safety, including road safety on rural roads. The Pine Rivers shire in my electorate continues to do well. Youth homelessness receives a boost. For this I thank Minister Schwarten. The streetscape project stage 2 receives nearly \$1 million and our schools up there continue to receive funds as part of their multimillion-dollar programs. The Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative has seen 323 new jobs created in Aspley. I thank the minister. I understand that we will be discussing with my local businesses how we can help businesses even more.

The Treasurer has delivered a budget that I am proud to support. It shows a strong economic and fiscal responsibility and yet it takes the opportunity to build on Queensland's potential for growth in both business and human terms. It delivers a record budget for basic service provision, and yet it also delivers where it really matters in our local communities and in my local community. It shows a government that takes its job of listening to people very seriously. This has been particularly so for the electorate of Aspley. It confirms to me that there is an unbeatable combination that gets results for people in an electorate. That is a hardworking state MP, a government that listens and delivers for all Queenslanders and a community that is prepared to participate in how they are governed. We have all three of those in my electorate of Aspley, and in this budget we reaped the rewards and we got the results. I commend the bills to the House.

**Mrs CHRISTINE SCOTT** (Charters Towers—ALP) (4.59 p.m.): Once again the electorate of Charters Towers has scored very well in a core Labor budget brought down by our Treasurer, the Hon. Terry Mackenroth. The budget includes funds for a range of new projects and initiatives.

I was interested to hear the member for Southern Downs, who made disparaging comments in his speech about the funding for roads in Queensland. I know that my electorate has received more than \$25 million for roads. So I say to the member for Southern Downs that, since we all know that just under \$600 million has been ripped out of Queensland's roads budget over the past few years, if he would care to go to the federal government and get those funds back for us we will gladly spend them on the roads in Queensland.

My electorate has been the beneficiary of a number of initiatives, including two new police stations—one at Ravenswood and one at Mount Surprise. In the area of education my electorate has received almost \$2 million, plus over a quarter of a million dollars in Triple R funding. In the area of health my electorate has received over a quarter of a million dollars in health technology, including a mobile X-ray unit for Hughenden, which was sorely needed. The minor facilities grants have brought my electorate over a quarter of a million dollars, as well as significant upgrades of the Tieri and Clermont fire stations and a new ambulance station worth \$335,000 for Hughenden.

While we continue to spend about 60 cents out of every tax dollar outside of south-east Queensland, I know that my electorate will be funded very well. My electorate contains more than 40 schools; 22 police stations; 18 ambulance stations; 12 fire stations; 10 facilities that I could call a hospital, if I wish to count the BNA at Jericho; 400 rural fire brigades; and over 2,000 kilometres of state controlled bitumen road. There are more thousands of kilometres of railway line than I can count. So I know that my electorate has been very, very well funded.

Although some moneys such as the \$18.4 million to be expended in Townsville on new cattle wagons are not being spent in my electorate, the chief beneficiaries of these new rail wagons will be customers on the land and living at or near the rail corridor between Townsville and Mount Isa. They will be deeply appreciative of these extra rail wagons.

The western Queensland region will also receive around \$4 million to create an estimated 490 jobs through the government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative during 2003-04. That money builds on the funding allocated already to the Charters Towers electorate under Breaking the Unemployment Cycle. Approximately \$5.9 million has been allocated between October 1998 and March 2003. That funding has resulted in 551 jobs being created for Charters Towers.

This budget provides funds for real assistance to individuals and families and for resources that will enhance the quality of life in our communities. This budget has built on the economic strengths of the state and offered improved opportunities for businesses and job seekers. It also delivers real assistance to those people in our communities who are disadvantaged and need it

the most. I thank the Premier, the Treasurer and the ministers for looking after all Queenslanders and for never forgetting the people of my electorate. I commend the bill to the House.

**Mr FLYNN** (Lockyer—ONP) (5.03 p.m.): The economic strategy of this budget states clearly that it is focused on raising productive capacity, given its importance in achieving sustainable economic growth, higher living standards and greater employment opportunities. It also states that this government has a strategy of key economic and social policy priorities. That is commendable, but it would seem that it is for Brisbane and its suburban regions only. When will a Labor government depart from its city-centric policies and embrace the rural communities?

There are also anomalies within the government's small business strategies. First, I want to talk about Queensland's rural regions. Agforce President, Larry Acton, stated—

Residents of rural and regional Queensland are becoming frustrated and angry by this Government's contemptuous attitude towards them. This Budget will only increase that anger and frustration because the only thing it delivers to farmers is more money to persecute them.

The rural regions of Queensland have been under attack since 2000. Although the federal Liberals and Nationals have been the main instigators, they are successfully prosecuting their agenda through this government. We have seen the disgraceful demise of the dairy industry and we have just witnessed the brutality of the multinationals with their latest outrage of reducing the gate price of milk a further 3c per litre. How long do members think dairy farmers can survive with this nonsense that is driven by greed and nothing else? Why are these huge companies doing this to farmers? They are doing it simply because they can. Governments are doing nothing to stop them.

If this government were serious about sustainable economic growth it would expose the national competition policy that has been forced on it by the federal Liberal and National parties for exactly what it is: an all-out attack on our farmers to reduce them to numbers that would be only a token figure when all is done. Then in come the imports, and consumers will pay serious money for what we are able to produce here in Queensland. We do not need to import it; we can build it and we can produce it here.

We know already that this government has signed up to this backroom deal with the federal Liberal and National parties and that, indeed, this government was paid nearly \$148 million in the 2001-02 financial year, which included almost \$13 million for the 2000-01 financial year when this outrage began. As this government bludgeoned the rural sector of Queensland into submission by forcing compliance—and in support of this the distribution of national competition payments is population based and the payments depend upon the states making satisfactory progress with the implementation of the specified reforms—its payments increased from a little under \$139 million in 2002-03 to a little over \$146 million for the coming year. These payments are categorised as Commonwealth payments—NCPPS. The net effect of what national competition policy is doing to the rural sector—the backbone of this country—is already documented. For the record, I say that there is no level playing field and I suggest that any Australian politician who believes that there is would believe in the tooth fairy.

The sugar industry is in crisis and this government is legislating already to the negative. It will be only a matter of time before the multinationals have a hold of the sugar mills that are the lifeblood of the sugar industry. I see no help in this budget for these people. To think that both the state and federal governments could raise only around \$145 million, of which the net amount available in real terms is a paltry \$20 million—the rest going on bureaucrats, auditors, accountants and red tape! To think that this government just spent \$288 million on the refurbishment of a football stadium! Its city-centric policies indicate the perceived value of the sugar industry and any other rural industry on its priority list—and, come to think of it, their priority to the federal government as well.

We see that the GST grants or payments are higher than budgeted, because of higher than upward revisions in the Commonwealth budget, from a little over \$5 billion in 2001-02 to over \$6 billion in this budget—a rise of over \$1.15 billion in two short years. But still there are no significant cuts in state taxes. Instead, we see a small increase through growth and inflation. I have no doubt that I will be corrected if I am wrong—and I do not believe that I am—but we were told that the GST would reduce, if not delete, most of these taxes. What happened?

We see all sorts of wonderful things happening around this city with this budget. For example, in today's *Wynnum Herald* it is reported that one suburb is the recipient of an injection of \$140 million, including nearly \$33,000 for lighting at the Wynnum Bowls Club; \$7,898 for shade covers at the Wynnum Manly Leagues Club; about \$211,000 for bayside drainage works;

\$650,000 for Manly State School; \$642,000 for bayside district health; \$298,000 for telecommunications at the Moreton Bay aged care facility; \$183,000 for the Wynnum Home Assist/Secure program; \$57,000 for the Capalaba Soccer Club; and the list goes on.

**Ms Struthers** interjected.

**Mr FLYNN:** I have to disagree. We are not saying that this particular community does not deserve to have this funding package; we are saying that folks in rural communities can only dream of this sort of funding because it never happens for them.

We note that of this budget we are told that total government revenue is a little over \$21 billion for this 2003-04 year. We also see that in table 5.1, General Government Revenue, in the State Budget 2003-04 Budget Strategy Outlook, it is projecting for 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07. We ask: has the state Treasurer, Mr Mackenroth, spoken to Mark Vaile of the federal Nationals, who is on record as saying that he is signing off on GATS by 2004? If this is so, how can we possibly budget the projected incomes that simply will not happen? Queensland, along with every other state, will lose a significant income pool caused by GATS both federally and state.

Health in Queensland has been in crisis mode for a decade now. Although significant increases have been allocated by the state—I believe \$7.5 million—there is still a need for a more proactive strategy towards health to completely resolve our waiting lists and radiation therapy crises and many others. It is unacceptable that we should be witness to an incident in which children were denied treatment just this week, as mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition, by Brisbane Children's Hospital—children were turned away onto the street—because no beds were available for radiation therapy and no other treatment centre was available. I would suggest that perhaps the priority in health funding has been misdirected.

I turn to the subject of police. Governments, particularly in this state, are very keen to say that we have a net increase of 100, 200, 300—however many police—increasing us to somewhere over 9,000. The big problem is not necessarily the funding provided to employ these extra police but where these extra police are in fact employed. If they are employed in the wrong area, the financial input is negated. If government members went through regional headquarters, district headquarters and police headquarters in Brisbane, they would find that Brisbane is one of the most overpoliced cities this side of the black stump. There is no doubt in my mind whatsoever that if the government wants to save money in area policing, it should go around and take the project directors—take the people dealing with things that have anything to do with matters other than operational policing support—and it would save its money; it would be able to employ extra police.

Small business has been under an enormous strain in the last couple of years. I have to say that it has not all been caused by this government. The federal GST and the business activity statements have been responsible for this strain. However, there are things that could improve their lot with a rethink of many strategies. Commerce Queensland chief, Joe Barnewall, was reported as saying—

There is a distinct lack of recognition in this budget that small business creates wealth ...

Breaking into his statement there, I point out that the banks and the government seem to forget that small business is our greatest employer and our biggest producer of wealth for this country. Never mind the big companies, never mind the people from overseas, never mind the people who say they have more money in the bank; as individuals, small business creates the wealth of this country and it needs to be appropriately cultivated.

In fact, I understand that in the financial year 2002-03 small business was responsible for 80 per cent of employees. Where does that leave the much vaunted big business who are forever the recipients of financial largesse by this government and the federal government? We know from our surveys that businesses want a reduction in payroll tax and more tax breaks for establishing new small and medium businesses. Businesses are disappointed that there are no such breaks, but it is hardly surprising considering the recent sting on business through the very necessary ambulance levy that will be inequitably collected.

I have to admit that road funding in the Lockyer Valley has been largely affected by the federal National-Liberal Government withdrawing its support for the upgrade of the Plainlands intersection, which had been preceded by the federal budget cuts of around \$78 million the previous year. I hunted around the plethora of glossies provided by this government to MPs to trawl through in a day and the only area that shone through where savings could perhaps have been made was the redevelopment of the Suncorp Stadium—\$280 million.

I support sport and tourism development. It is important to have growth in our sport and tourism to create a dynamic state and city that people want to come and visit to watch games and say, 'Look what Queensland does.' In fact, I support the growth of this city through the development of Suncorp Stadium. However, I feel that it might have been better to spend some of that money on areas that had a higher priority. I wonder how many black spots could have been addressed with a little bit of a skim of the cream off the top of that project.

I then spied upon \$90.4 million for the new Magistrates Court complex in Brisbane. While I have no doubt that in due course courts must expand and develop capacity—and maybe it says something about our social structure that we have a need to build a Magistrates Court to deal with more and more crime; it may reflect upon our approach to dealing with law and order—I am certain that road safety, health and education must be higher priorities.

I have to say that I appreciate the state government's support for the development—and it is shortly to be completed—of the Gatton bypass. There are some people in the Lockyer area who have said that a road is only as dangerous as people make it and that it is their experience that the more dangerous the road, the more careful people are. I am not sure that is really a theory which I support. However, I have to say that we in the Lockyer are appreciative of the government having moved to sign off on and cooperate with the federal government to complete that road. In the area of funding, I would ask that the state Transport Minister talk serious turkey with the federal government and make sure that we do not spend money on lower priority items when we need money spent on a serious black spot such as the Plainlands intersection where people are dying and being seriously injured.

**Ms JARRATT** (Whitsunday—ALP) (5.17 p.m.): Earlier this week I saw a television report on the atrocities occurring in the Congo where men, women and children are literally being slaughtered in their hundreds. This was followed by a report on the uncertain future of political opponents to President Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe. Like any fair-minded person, I was deeply moved by the plight of these people and I was drawn to reflect on the stark contrast that separates their lives from ours. It is easy to say that we are just lucky to enjoy a democratic way of life that upholds our right to political expression and protects us from the vagaries of political despots, but I think there is much more to it than that. One of the common threads that runs through healthy democratic societies is a universal access to a quality education and an inclusive social policy.

The budget delivered by the Treasurer this week is a clear demonstration to the people of Queensland that the Beattie government is not just serious about maintaining a healthy economic position but, equally importantly, we are committed to improving our social and environmental capital as well. To put it another way, this budget responds to each element of the triple bottom line. It is a smart budget for a Smart State.

For the electorate of Whitsunday, this budget contains funding to ensure the delivery of all election promises as well as supporting our continuous community building activities. In particular, I welcome the budget's focus on providing increased funding for health. Depending on where they live, people in the electorate of Whitsunday access the services of either the Townsville, Mackay or Bowen Health Service District. I am therefore more than delighted to note that these three health service districts will share in an additional \$5.6 million.

This includes \$1.3 million additional funding for cancer treatment services, \$2 million additional funding for renal dialysis services, \$500,000 additional funding for cardiac services and an additional \$363,000 for funding of community mental health. In addition, both hospitals in my electorate have been allocated funding for state-of-the art health equipment to a total value of \$201,000. This equipment will make the jobs of the dedicated health staff at both Bowen and Proserpine hospitals just that little bit easier, as well as improving the range and quality of the service available to local residents.

As a former teacher, I am keenly interested in the education of our children and young people. As I said at the beginning of my speech, I believe that universal education is one of the key elements in the creation of a robust democracy. We are fortunate in this state that we have a system of compulsory education that ensures at a very minimum that every child has an opportunity to develop their skills and talents to allow them to be active and informed citizens. Having said that, I know from my own experience that teaching is not always an easy job. Some students are simply more challenging than others, so any decrease in the teacher to student ratio or any increase in support staff numbers, including behaviour management and special education personnel, should be loudly applauded, and that is just what this budget does. Some 636 new

teachers will commence work in 2004. This will cost the state around \$42 million each year, but it will be money well spent.

I know what a positive difference the extra teachers appointed this year have made to schools in my electorate, particularly in Bowen, where children of seasonal workers can now be more easily absorbed into existing classes. I also welcome budget confirmation of \$1.3 million in funding for airconditioning of Bloomsbury, Hampden, Narpi, Bowen, Cannonvale and Proserpine state schools and Bowen and Proserpine high schools. I know from my conversations with local teachers and students that airconditioned classrooms are worth their weight in gold, so I applaud the Minister for Education for continuing with this program.

Finally on the topic of education, I want to acknowledge and welcome the funding approval for repainting of school buildings at Bucasia and Proserpine state schools and repainting and reproofing at Eimeo State School. The Triple R program has been a huge success. Many schools in my electorate have experienced the boost in morale that a fresh coat of paint can bring, and I know that the three schools just mentioned will be no exception.

As I have explained at other times, the electorate of Whitsunday is characterised by its diversity. Each urban area within the electorate has its own specific personality and needs. Bowen, for instance, is emerging from a period of economic difficulty into an exciting period of growth and community development. While many factors have contributed to this turnaround, it was the Beattie government's \$10 million contribution to the local council several years ago that kick-started the process by creating jobs and giving the town a facelift. I have every confidence that Bowen's best years are ahead of it. This year's budget continues the Beattie government's tradition of support for Bowen by providing funding to support the town as a tourist destination. I am particularly proud that we are getting behind the annual Bowen Fishing Classic with a \$15,000 grant through the Queensland Events Regional Development Program. Whether we think of Bowen as the top of the Whitsundays or the Whitsundays as Bowen South, one thing is clear: both areas will benefit from this government's ongoing commitment to the funding of destination promotion.

On this topic, I proudly remind the House that Tourism Whitsunday is the current holder of the national tourism award for destination promotion. I have no reason to believe that this great track record is about to change. On the contrary, the General Manager of Tourism Whitsunday, Glen Ormsby, has just this week affirmed that operators in the Whitsundays were largely optimistic about forward bookings for the winter period. Much of this success is due to the professional way in which TW approaches its task. To that end, I want to place on record my gratitude to former CEO John Dean and to welcome Glen Ormsby to the position of general manager. In addition, I want to say thankyou to the former chair of the board of TW, Simon Latchford, for his enthusiastic support of his local industry. I welcome the new chair, Lyn Gregson, to the position and wish her well for her time at the helm.

I am proud that the Beattie government continues to support our tourism industry through financial support for RTOs, destination promotion campaigns and the various convention and incentive bureaus across the state. While this funding is really important, I have to agree with the member for Cairns, who earlier reminded us that the Beattie government also supports tourism through its commitment to infrastructure development. The development of six Great Walks throughout Queensland epitomises this government's commitment to infrastructure development that will boost tourism, which ultimately means jobs for local people. I could not be happier that our Great Walk of Whitsunday has received the balance of more than \$1.3 million in this budget. Work on the walking track for the Great Walk of Whitsunday has been under way for some time and will continue full steam ahead. This walk is set to become an icon attraction in the state, so I thank the Minister for Environment for his faith in our region and his commitment to the people of Whitsunday.

But wait, there's more! I was delighted this week to be able to inform Mayor Mario of the Whitsunday Shire Council that the Beattie government would contribute \$1 million as our share of the funding for the proposed Airlie Beach streetscape development. I applaud the council's commitment to the upgrading and beautification of Airlie Beach central. Together with other proposed developments in this area and the spectacular Airlie lagoon, Airlie Beach is fast becoming the must-visit centre of the tourism universe.

The southern extremity of the electorate of Whitsunday takes in the northern beach suburbs of Mackay city. The single biggest issue facing residents in this area is road access to the city. In the 2001 election this government gave a commitment to undertake intersectional upgrades and

road improvements on Mackay-Bucasia Road over a five-year period. The good news is that the vast majority of this work is either completed or under way as we speak.

This budget delivers \$3.7 million that ensures the current work between Eimeo Road and Sologinkins Road is completed in the very near future. I need to place on record my appreciation to the people of the northern beaches who have shown enormous patience and resolve during the past six months while this section of roadworks has been under way. One of the major problems is that this road is the only route for traffic coming from the northern beaches into Mackay and there have therefore been some considerable delays to morning traffic as we all try to negotiate the road into town between 7 a.m. and 8.30 a.m. The roadworks are expected to be completed by mid-July, and I feel very confident that at that time we will all be able to say that it was worth the effort. In the meantime, I urge the Mackay City Council to give serious consideration to the construction of an alternative road into the city. I understand that this is part of its strategic plan, and I implore it to give urgent priority to such a project.

I am proud to say that this budget delivers funding to complete all election commitments to residents of the northern beaches. Earlier this year, together with the Minister for Emergency Services and my colleague the member for Mackay, I participated in the announcement of the securing of a site for a brand new co-located emergency services facility that will service a large section of my electorate, including the northern beaches. Located just off Mackay-Bucasia Road in Beaconsfield, this facility will accommodate ambulance, fire and emergency response services in a single complex. It will be the first of its kind in Queensland and will hugely enhance the response times of these services to the northern beaches. The really great news is that this budget has delivered the funding to complete the construction of the facility.

Also now funded in full is the proposed 24-hour police station for the northern beaches and North Mackay. The Minister for Police and Corrective Services has assured me that we are very close to announcing the location of the station, but in the meantime design work is well under way. This has been a great budget for Whitsunday and a great budget for people right across the state. I look forward to returning home to my electorate, where I can continue to share the good news with individuals and community groups from Mackay to Bowen. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms NELSON-CARR** (Mundingburra—ALP) (5.27 p.m.): What a budget! This is a Labor budget extraordinaire addressing the real needs of Queenslanders. The contributions made by Treasury are worthy indeed, and I thank the Treasurer for targeting those most in need. The clear priorities send a good message to Queenslanders: we have a strong government, a stable government, and this budget will improve the lives of Queenslanders. The investment in health, disability, the Smart State strategy and education means a better quality of life and a strong, prosperous future for Queensland. The government's commitment to strengthen and build the regions is good news for Townsville, and the Premier has not wavered from this position. Despite a minority of whingers, this budget has been met with enthusiasm by the wider community and certainly in my electorate. The social responsibility we have shown in the real areas of need are set to benefit many families.

Mundingburra is an unusual electorate spanning several suburbs. However, while some may disagree, it does not have a centre. There are some hubs like Stockland, the university and even the new hospital, but it does not have a council epicentre like Townsville, Thuringowa, Burdekin, Charters Towers and so on. This is not a problem at all because Mundingburra benefits from the bigger picture, but my point is that Mundingburra represents middle Australia—that is, the family, the cornerstone of living. We have an excellent selection of schools, shopping centres, small business, a fabulous new tertiary hospital and a university which is internationally acclaimed and very much a part of the Townsville community. We have private hospitals, an energetic TAFE college and much more.

People who live in Mundingburra work there as well, but many work outside the electorate in the army, the railway, the copper refineries, Yabulu, the meatworks, restaurants, theatres and so on. They bring to the electorate a diversity of people power. But it is living in the electorate, in the family, that makes it so unique and I am proud to represent them. This is another reason why I am so proud of this budget which goes to the heart of what makes us tick—our health, our education and our environment. It also helps areas where it counts such as disability. This is not to say that other sustainable opportunities are not just as important; they are. That is why the Beattie government has generated average annual economic growth over five per cent, maintained a strong fiscal position despite turbulent world events, reduced the unemployment rates to levels not seen for 13 years, invested \$24 billion in improved infrastructure, enhanced

and improved key services and taken action to protect the environment. We have funded all our election commitments, yet we continue to deliver.

Let me be more specific. Just how well did Mundingburra fare in this year's state budget? Very well! I thank my staff and colleagues who assist me in lobbying the Premier, Treasurer and ministers to improve people's lives. A range of new projects and initiatives is included in the budget. Some of these have been announced already. This budget has the money and the commitment. Local projects include \$1.11 million for four classroom blocks at Anandale State School and \$87,000 to repaint school buildings at Pimlico State High School and the Townsville Community Learning Centre and roofing works at Pimlico State High School. There is also \$141,000 in ongoing funding to help local TAFE institutes deliver employment training to indigenous people in regional and remote locations, \$747,000 to construct five new public housing dwellings and \$534,000 for the community rent scheme in the local area.

Other initiatives in my electorate include \$6 million to complete the \$106.546 million Rockhampton to Townsville rail track renewal project. The scope of the work includes resleepering, flood-proofing, curve easing, earth works and drainage, and this means jobs—jobs for people in my electorate. \$26.88 million is available to continue the \$53.295 million Douglas Arterial project on the Bruce Highway between Ayr and Townsville. \$1.463 million is available under the Cooler Schools program for airconditioning at Heatley Secondary College, Aitkenvale State School, Cranbrook State School, Heatley State School, Mundingburra State School, Pimlico State High School and Vincent State School.

A \$2.775 million subsidy has been offered over four years to the Townsville City Council for stage 2 of the Ross River parkway. This is in my electorate. It is a fantastic initiative. I use this daily. It is a healthy and aesthetic way to enjoy the environment. We have \$9,000 for local road and drainage works; \$4.62 million to complete the \$7.15 million Mundingburra police complex with district and regional offices; \$191,000 for the Townsville Tactical Crime Squad to target known crime hotspots, with an emphasis on property crime and drug offences; \$75,000 to construct shade over the Jubilee Bowls Club, of which I am a member; \$74,280 to construct an ablution block and storeroom at the Townsville German Australian Club to support soccer, icestock and indoor carpet bowls; \$2.2 million to upgrade 90 public housing dwellings; \$1.2 million for community renewal activities in Vincent; and \$5.204 million in additional funding for the Townsville Health Service district to enhance services such as oncology, inpatient and home based care and intensive care.

The northern region will receive around \$5.7 million to create an estimated 870 jobs through the government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative during 2003-04. This builds on the funding already allocated to the Mundingburra electorate under Breaking the Unemployment Cycle, where approximately \$6.4 million has been allocated between October 1998 and March 2003. This has resulted in 783 jobs being created for Mundingburra.

In conclusion, I wish to turn to the areas dear to my heart—both as a professional, a mother, a wife and a member of parliament. The education of our young people is critical to our future and education providers are at the cutting edge to respond to the many and varied significant social and economic issues that are facing us. The 800 additional teachers for 2003-04 is an election commitment agreed to by the QTU and will help to reduce class sizes, support students with a disability and assist behaviour management strategies. The budget continues to support education and training reforms, including a prep year, ICT reforms and improving the senior phase of schooling. These will offer a flexibility to achieve higher standards and commitments not seen before. Reforms to the Senior Certificate, new approaches to the middle phase of schooling, support for behaviour management and support for students with a disability is a key focus for government policy and I congratulate the minister on her vision.

I was privileged to join the members for Logan and Hervey Bay in researching educational outcomes for children in care. I am pleased to say that these vulnerable young people will have \$800,000 per year matched with funds from the Department of Families spent on their core education related costs.

The big winner in this year's budget is Health. It will go a long way to assisting those most in need. I have already outlined the health budget for Townsville, but let me say as parliamentary secretary to the Minister for Health that the budget represents a significant investment in a healthy future for Queenslanders and a sustainable, quality, focused and safe health care system. The four priority areas include quality services, healthy communities, world-class infrastructure and the work force. These areas will strengthen the ability of the system to meet health needs in the future.

The scuttlebutt, misinformation and negativity spread by the likes of the member for Herbert and Townsville AMA representative William Frischman only serve to deter specialists and staff from coming to Townsville to live and experience our quality lifestyle. I would like to think that the AMA's state president, given her favourable response to this year's budget for health, would be extremely disappointed with Dr Frischman's extraordinary comments. Townsville and north Queensland generally have received major funding increases across a range of areas, including oncology services—\$1.3 million; renal dialysis, \$2 million; cardiac services, \$500,000; emergency department, \$300,000; and intensive care, \$900,000. All of these are recurrent funding allocations. These funding allocations will make a real difference to the delivery of health services in Townsville. But the point is that both the member for Herbert and Dr Frischman would do well to put blame where it belongs—with the federal government. As long as they support the drastic changes to Medicare, tear apart bulk-billing and peddle lies about the health care agreement Queenslanders will be the losers and our emergency departments will take the brunt of the GP services.

Finally, families in my electorate will benefit from the Beattie government's unprecedented budgetary package of \$290.5 million in new funding. The minister is to be congratulated, as are her staff, because they have worked tirelessly with community input to reform the disability service system. I commend the bill to the House.

**Ms LEE LONG** (Tablelands—ONP) (5.35 p.m.): The 2003 Queensland budget, worth in excess of \$22 billion, has left the tablelands, like much of the rest of rural Queensland with no real answers to many of the problems they face. The budget documents again reveal this government's concentration on the south-east corner. I know the point has been made that capital works funding of some 62.5 per cent is going outside the Brisbane Statistical Division. However, even using this self-serving definition, that leaves almost 40 per cent of all capital works spending going into a minuscule portion of this huge state. Simply, the bang for the buck in that part of the state is much higher. All facilities are much more accessible simply because they are geographically much closer together.

The rest of the state struggles to manage with underfunded road systems while this select part of the state gets millions for new bus routes and integrated public transport ticketing systems. As well, this part of the state is the only part with close, easy access to all sophisticated medical services. No matter which way the government wants to paint the division of funds, the fact remains that those Queenslanders who live outside that little dot on the New South Wales border are treated differently to those who live within that little black dot.

However, this budget does include some projects which will benefit the tablelands. They include a proposed tropical biodiversity centre for Mareeba. That facility will link existing government and industry resources, skills and infrastructure and will focus on breeding food and fibre species. This project appears to offer the region some promise of repositioning its agricultural industries in new ways to move forward. I encourage the government to move quickly on its establishment.

Other allocations include the \$700,000 for the revamp of the Atherton Hospital. It is part of the \$1 million the Health Minister has already announced as being fast-tracked to deal with a lead paint issue in the original maternity ward, which is soon to be permanently closed, much to the dismay of the electorate. We need to remember that there is no real extra money there at all, as the minister has confirmed that the \$1 million has to be repaid. I note there has been a \$300 million increase for health across the state. But I wonder how much of that also will have to be repaid.

This budget has allocated an additional \$600,000 for medical equipment for the Atherton Hospital. I thank the minister for that extra funding, as I am sure all tablelanders do. There is no detail of just what equipment that money is for. But I point out that the Tablelands Health Service District recently lost ophthalmic services at one of its other hospitals at Mareeba because the \$80,000 cost of replacing that piece of equipment was judged to be too high.

I trust that given the depth of the need on the tablelands we are in line for more than the 0.2 per cent of that extra \$300 million represented by the \$600,000 for equipment. For example, I note there is an additional \$4 million for renal dialysis services in north Queensland. I urge the minister to consider directing a portion of that funding to the delivery of dialysis services to the Mareeba Hospital in addition to those at Atherton. I have spoken in this place about incidents where people in need are now having to wait, I am told, up to five and six years for attention at one of our dental clinics. We have two dental clinics, including a new one at the Mareeba Hospital, but they are each manned only about two days a week. With the demand, the waiting

lists just keep blowing out. In this budget there is extra funding the minister has dedicated to addressing outpatient services, to improving the situation regarding radiologists and for oncology and cancer services, and the hope is that the tablelands will receive some of the benefits that that funding is expected to produce.

I have spoken often enough about instances where tablelanders have not had their needs fully addressed by the local health system. I recognise the commitment of some \$3.5 million annually to the Cairns Base Hospital, which is the default hospital for the tablelands. It is the hospital to which tablelanders have been forced to go for many of the services they can no longer find in their own local hospitals. The extra funding will, I hope, mean that the government will be able to reopen closed floors and wards and can address the concerns outlined so clearly in recent months by doctors and specialists working at the hospital. It is simply unacceptable for patients to have to wait in ambulances and for women to be turned out of hospital beds the day they give birth because of shortages of beds and staff. Tablelanders and all north Queenslanders will be watching closely to see how these problems will be addressed.

In the area of public safety and law and order, I note that there is a commitment to an additional 300 graduates per year from our police training facilities. On the tablelands the police station at Millaa Millaa was left unmanned for a significant period. The town and district had to rely on services which neighbouring stations were able to provide. While this did give some police presence, clearly the best solution is for staff levels to be maintained and for stations to be properly manned.

In fact at another tablelands town, Ravenshoe, the community became so concerned about the burden placed on its police that it requested an administrative assistant be appointed to the station to allow the officers more time on the beat. In rural areas, if local police are unavailable the next officer can be a significant distance away, assuming they are not also unavailable. Therefore I believe it is rural areas that should be the first to benefit from this increased number of police.

There are also to be an additional 110 ambulance officers across the state, and again the tablelands expects to be properly considered for extra staff. I note at this time the renewal of the Atherton and Mount Garnet ambulance stations, which have been listed under the provision of some \$11.8 million for such projects across the state. Of course I welcome this commitment, even if those are old promises. The ambulance station at Millaa Millaa is now complete and it is a wonderful facility. I thank the government.

As it is a regional area, transport is of vital importance to the tablelands. I note in this budget the allocation of \$9 million for the completion of a new South Johnstone Bridge and approaches. Once again, while it is welcome, this is old money. It was also promised last year. I understand that some \$500,000 has been spent on preliminary works and that the project is expected to be completed in this coming financial year. Whenever it is finally finished, it will be welcomed by both locals and travellers, and especially the many tourists who use the road to visit Paronella Park and other tourist attractions. The upgrade of the Kuranda Range road, linking my electorate to Cairns, is also eagerly awaited, and I recognise the allocation of \$900,000 for design work on that project.

Of course we have heard much about rail links recently, in particular the 'more expensive but slower than flying' tilt train running between Cairns and Brisbane. That might be a high profile rail project, but it does nothing to address a persistent difficulty in availability of stock wagons to service the Mareeba saleyards and the livestock sales there. In the past the Transport Minister has indicated that the conditions governing the availability of such wagons are entirely economic. The lack of such wagons has directly impacted on the economic viability of both the Mareeba saleyards and the grazing and pig industries which use it. I note the indication of an exploration of ways to improve the performance of the Savannahlander tourist railway, and I encourage the minister to ensure that is a rigorous process that is carried out as quickly as possible.

The past 12 months have been a tough time for the tablelands. The tobacco industry, a former stalwart of the Mareeba-Dimbulah irrigation area, has had the final curtain dropped on it. There are no more buyers for Queensland-grown tobacco. Not only has the last phase of that industry collapsed and more than 100 farming families been devastated; it has occurred for no good purpose. Cigarettes, a legal product, will still be sold in this state, but they will not contain any Queensland tobacco. All that has been achieved is the collapse of a Queensland industry and the devastation of Queensland families, and this government does not care.

The dairy industry, as I said earlier this week, is now bracing for the impact of yet another blow—more slashings of income, of up to 10 per cent from the farm gate price for milk. Following the enforced deregulation of the industry in 2000, the tablelands currently has around 130 dairy

farmers. I am advised that this latest blow could see up to 50 of those forced to the wall. All of this is the result of the economic rationalist, level playing field, free trade theories to which both the National-Liberal coalition and the ALP are committed supporters. It is the same philosophy underpinning the joint MOU, signed between the ALP and the Nationals and Liberals, on the future of the sugar industry. Given the devastation this process has brought to other industries in my electorate, the sugar industry's rejection of it is, in my view, soundly based.

I do, however, recognise that the Tablelands electorate has benefited from state government support for a range of developments in the past 12 months. They have included approximately \$6.1 million in joint state and federal funding for Queensland Heritage Trails Network projects. One of those, the Malanda Dairy Centre, which received injections in excess of \$1 million, shut down less than four months after opening and today has still not reopened. Another, the Hou Wang Temple in Atherton, is a welcome boost to the tablelands tourist infrastructure, as is The Hub facility at Chillagoe. Other QHTN projects included expenditure at Irvinebank and in Mareeba.

There was also some \$8 million in Main Roads funding. Other significant gains for the tablelands of the last 12 months have included some \$820,000 from the Education Department, \$850,000 from the Sport Department, \$300,000 plus from the Department of Families to Mareeba district flexi support and more than \$160,000 from the Department of Public Works for tableland housing and Home Assist/Secure in Atherton, among other projects in my area.

In this budget the Department of Local Government and Planning has offered \$650,000 to Mareeba for library developments, while the Education budget includes some \$630,000 for the relocation of the Ravenshoe manual arts facility to the town's secondary campus. Mareeba has also shared in \$2.5 million in recurrent funding and \$2.5 million in capital that has been spent on new and enhanced family support and respite services.

My constituents and I thank the government for this support. However, during this same period the ALP government has closed down the first-class agricultural support facility that was the analytical chemical laboratory based at Mareeba. I note the Primary Industries Minister's portfolio statement that red imported fire ant control measures, contained entirely in the Brisbane area, are considered to be a rural community development output. I do not quibble over the eradication of the threat, but I do wonder how many rural control measures for, say, giant rat-tail grass have ever been listed as a Brisbane urban project.

Just before Christmas last year the Department of Natural Resources completed a water resource plan for the Barron River in my electorate. This plan will govern investment in water infrastructure in the area for the next 10 years. I note here that already, at the start of this year's dry season, farmers above and below Tinaroo Falls Dam are already facing severe irrigation restrictions due to an already inadequate system of water supply. In the wettest part of the driest populated continent on Earth, I believe we have to do better at harnessing our rivers and other water sources.

I come finally to the budget claim of no new or increased taxes. I have spoken in this place before about the massive fees and charges which farmers are facing for various inspections, approvals, examinations and permits required for plant and animal health matters, for quality assurance issues, for pest control and so on. For example, in his portfolio statement the Natural Resources Minister listed a new interim water charge of \$50 annually for water licence holders.

I have also raised in this place the large fees placed on pontoon owners on Tinaroo Falls Dam by SunWater, which is entirely owned by the state government as shareholders. Other new fees and taxes introduced in the past 12 months include, of course, the community ambulance levy that begins from 1 July, which will slug part of the community multiple times and other parts not at all. In relation to the Transport Department alone there is a fee of \$15 for taking the written test for a learner's permit, a fee of \$10 to replace a registration label, a fee of \$16.95 to transfer a recreational ship registration, a fee of \$20 to book a commercial vehicle inspection, a charge of \$40 for overdue registration payments and a fee of \$10 for overdue boat registration. There has also been a 100 per cent increase in the cost of pensioner licences. I note that the Treasurer pointed out a raising of the bar for land tax, which means that some people will no longer have to pay while others will be paying even more. Clearly this government is well practised in giving with one hand and taking back with the other.

While the consumer price index increased 14 per cent between 1997 and 2000, government revenue from taxes, levies, fees and fines between 1996-97 and budget estimates for 2002-03 had soared by some 25 per cent. No taxation rises, as the Treasurer has claimed, would, if true, clearly be a significant change in the way this government operates. While I do thank this

government for its funding of tablelands projects, I believe it still needs to raise its performance to get serious about addressing the needs of rural Queensland.

**Ms STRUTHERS** (Algerger—ALP) (5.49 p.m.): I am proud to report to local residents in the suburbs of Algerger, Forestdale, Calamvale and all other parts of my electorate that this budget is a very good one for them and brings a lot of benefits to our area. The hallmark of a good government is the extent to which it can score highly on both economic growth and its efforts to meet social needs, and this budget scores highly on both. It continues to advance the Smart State economic strategy whilst at the same time actively promoting Queensland as a state with heart—I know that is a bit cliched, but I think that is a good way to sum it up—which has a government that does care about disability and families who are struggling to meet the needs of people in their families with disabilities; a government that cares about our health and education systems.

That is the clear difference between a Labor government and the conservative parties. When the conservative parties were in government in this state for a couple of decades, our spending and our level of service in the social services area was the lowest in the nation. We have significantly improved that in the 14 years or so that we have had Labor in government in Queensland. I am very proud to be part of a government that has that kind of record.

It is interesting to note on hearing a bit of talk around the place that this Treasurer is not only a tough guy but a tough guy with a big heart. That is what the public wants. The public wants a government that can handle economic management and handle that well, which is what our government is doing, but also cares about the day-to-day needs of people. I would suggest that while Joh was concentrating on how many cranes he had on the skyline a lot of people did not have a decent roof over their head, did not have decent access to education. This government has certainly turned that around.

In relation to the balloons that were given out this morning, I would suggest that the coalition budget balloons do not have any air in them at all. That is symbolic of them as coalition parties. They are going nowhere. It is a gimmick. At no point this morning in his budget reply did the Opposition Leader offer any strong, positive proposals, and that is the difference. There is a clear difference. People often question what is the difference between Labor and the conservative parties these days. I can rattle off 10 issues quickly, and I will go through some of them.

**Mr Wilson:** Here is the difference.

**Ms STRUTHERS:** As the member for Ferny Grove has said, the balloon with no air is symbolic of that difference; it is going nowhere. The strategies in this budget will surely make Queensland soar to even greater heights, don't members think? Look at the agreement I am getting here. There is one hand up even from the only opposition member in the parliament. He is supporting that point as well.

There are some great achievements locally in the electorate of Algerger, and I know that education is one of those big achievements. In my electorate there are some wonderful school staff and parents who are actively contributing to the growth and development of those schools. They will be very pleased to hear that we have received another \$12.5 million to continue stage 2 at Calamvale Community College. What a wonderful state-of-the-art school that is under the leadership of Sue Bremner and others there. We have received some \$10.9 million for stage 4 and a further \$323,000 for stage 2 at Forest Lakes State High School—another magnificent school in my area. More money will be given to Algerger for further painting. It is looking like a colourful and very productive school. Great things are being done in my electorate throughout all of the schools.

Serviceton South will be getting more money for special education, as with Algerger. They are some very important areas for which our government provides. We care about special education, we care about the needs of students with learning difficulties and we are putting a heavy emphasis on that. In fact, the big increase in disability funding is being widely acclaimed in the community this week. I was pleased to see the non-government agencies giving due credit to Minister Spence, the Treasurer and the Cabinet Budget Review Committee members for the work they have done to make sure that disability, health, education and all those key areas get such a priority.

The Public Advocate, Ian Boardman, made a comment that he saw this budget as a breakthrough budget for disability. He said that the Beattie government has increased disability funding in every one of its budgets but this is the breakthrough with guaranteed increases over the next four years. He particularly applauded extra dollars for family support, innovative service

models, quality assurance and other areas. It is not just me saying what a good budget this is; it is people in the non-government sector who are saying this. It is the Property Council, it is all those other interest groups that are acclaiming this budget in a very positive way.

Locally we are also seeing significant improvements to our roads. That is one issue on which I want to assure my local residents I will continue to go in to bat for them. We have significant problems with heavy vehicles and congestion, particularly along Beaudesert Road and the Ipswich Motorway. Some tremendous work has been done through the Brisbane urban corridor study, and I will continue to push for both state and federal governments to work cooperatively to make sure we implement very positive changes. Sadly, we are seeing a lot of politics being played out by the Liberal member for Moreton, Gary Hardgrave, who is all talk and no action when it comes to fixing our road problems.

I am also very pleased to see that there is \$165,000 for the indigenous community programs at the Murrie school in my local suburb of Acacia Ridge. Some very innovative things are being done at that school. It is very good to see that it continues to go from strength to strength. It suffered a fire a couple of years ago and it bounced back from that. It has a tremendous training centre, Kulkathil, doing great vocational education work with young indigenous people and the school itself is providing very good culturally appropriate education and support not only for the students but also for their families.

I am very proud to be part of the action that is happening in my local area. We have tremendous local people—people like Dave Harrison at Forest Lakes State School, an electrician by day who still finds the time to do an enormous amount of work for the school and the wider community. He recently received a Centenary of Federation medal, which was well deserved. There are many other people like that in my area. I know I am not the only member who has those sorts of people in their electorate; they are around the state. But they make this a great state. I am certainly very pleased to be part of this government that is making this state even greater. I commend the Treasurer and members of the Cabinet Budget Review Committee. It is a very balanced budget. It is a budget that keeps us on track for even greater things.

**Mr STRONG** (Burnett—ALP) (5.56 p.m.): I rise to strongly support the appropriation bills, as all speakers on this side of the House and some speakers on the other side of the House have already done here today. Apart from being a budget concerned primarily in the case of the Burnett electorate with bricks and mortar, there is an underlying factor in investment in infrastructure that will create quite a number of long-term jobs within the area.

I will touch on some funding that has come Burnett's way, and I will start with the northern end of the electorate. Some \$230,000 will be provided to establish a softwood plantation in the Miriam Vale area. I am not saying that softwood plantations are not new in my electorate, but in the north they are. It is something new. The establishment of this plantation will create a few jobs, and the maintenance of this forest will also create additional jobs.

There is \$800,000 for an administration block at Agnes Water State School. I know the principal of that school, Patrick, has been knocking on my door saying that because the Agnes Water area has experienced such strong growth over the last five to 10 years—something in the order of 15 per cent—it has been in the top five growth areas of the state for the last 10 years, and it is bursting at the seams. The school's numbers are growing at a great rate, and \$800,000 for an administration block will free up two or three classrooms. That will stand them in good stead for another three or four years before we may have to go back and invest in more infrastructure in that school.

Some \$700,000 will go towards Fingerboard Road, which is in the northern end of my electorate. It is one of the busiest gravel roads in the state. More than 400 cars a day use the road and during peak times, say the Easter holiday, up to 650 cars a day. This funding will be the final chapter of Fingerboard Road. It should be sealed this financial year. It was started some time ago, and it is something that the local residents there have been awaiting for quite some time.

Another allocation that may not mean a lot in dollar value is \$10,000 to help deliver special education at Rosedale school, which is a P-12 school. About 300 kids go to that school and they could travel up to 40 minutes or 50 minutes to get there. It is well known that the Rosedale area is a pretty low socioeconomic area. I read one report that stated that the average income of people in the Rosedale area was about \$24,000. The people of that area have their problems and certain circumstances. So this \$10,000 will go a long way towards assisting the Rosedale community.

There are other allocations in the budget for the northern side of my area—little things such as \$29,000 for a toilet facility at Middle Creek. Of course, there is also a commitment to the dam of \$60 million. That allocation allays all of those fears that some of the farmers had that this dam was not going to happen. They were a little concerned that lack of the funding may limit the push for the dam. But \$60 million, considering that in last year's budget there was an allocation of \$30 million, is quite substantial. It gives security to the farmers in that area that this dam is going to happen, it is on schedule and it will immediately start to affect the lives of those people by providing jobs in the construction stage. Construction of the access road has already started. Contracts have been let for that. Councils are gearing up to provide accommodation for the workers. A lot of work is going to filter down the line very shortly. Of course, the end result will be fabulous for the area.

Another good allocation is \$1.15 million for a turtle trail at Bargara. That funding is spread over four years. So that is going to create four years of employment for a few fellows out there. That trail will stretch from Bargara all the way to Burnett Heads. I would say that about seven kilometres of walkway will be put in place over those four years. The council is excited about that trail. It will include a walk through the forest and the trail will go past the Mon Repos turtle rookery. Of course, that area is famous in its own right. The trail will link the two communities and the allocation of that money will create a few long-term jobs. It will make an impact not only on the community at Bargara but also at Burnett Heads.

There are other allocations in the budget such as \$600,000 to go towards an overtaking lane on the Isis Highway between Childers and Bundaberg. We see overtaking lanes all over the place, but there is not one between that stretch of road. There is one coming down the hill at Apple Tree Creek, but on the long stretches of road, there is not one between the towns. I suppose that \$600,000 to be spent on roadworks may not seem much, but for that little community that is located between Childers and Apple Tree Creek, it will make a positive difference.

There is also funding for Moore Park School, which is a new school in my electorate that is located just up the road from my place. Some \$150,000 has been allocated to a sewage treatment plant and \$355,000 to the Childers Police Station, which was announced some time ago by the minister. But that is just confirmation that things are happening. There is also \$50,000 allocated to improve telecommunications at Childers Hospital.

Childers has not done too badly out of this budget. As I said, it has received funding for the police station and the upgrade of the telecommunications at the hospital. As we know, Childers is a small, sleepy town in the Isis shire. The hospital and the police station play an important role in that shire.

As I said earlier, the budget has been very kind to the electorate of Burnett. I thank the Treasurer and his staff for that. As I say, the large allocations are fine, but the little allocations here and there make the difference. I commend the budget to the House.

**Mr RODGERS** (Burdekin—ALP) (6.03 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the budget which the Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth, brought down on Tuesday this week. In doing so, I commend the Treasurer and his staff for putting forward a budget that is strong and balanced, that provides funds for real assistance to families and individuals, and is targeted at people in our community who need a helping hand. We need to ensure that the elderly, the sick, the unemployed and those people with a disability have access to the best level of care, service and technology available.

I am happy to see that a number of projects in the Burdekin electorate have received funding in the budget. As the state member, I work hard to lobby government ministers on behalf of residents and it is rewarding to see that persistence pays off. Projects in my area to receive funding include \$9.92 million for the redevelopment of the Ayr Hospital. It is also welcome news that funding has been provided for the relocation of the Ayr Ambulance Station to the hospital precinct and \$150,000 has been allocated for the purchase of land to allow construction of the replacement Ayr Ambulance Station in 2003-04 at a cost of \$800,000. I have been lobbying for the relocation of the Ayr Ambulance Station since the announcement of the new hospital development at Ayr. With the new hospital, the ambulance station, the new centre for rural health being built in the area, plus the recent opening of a new private medical centre, the home for the aged and the new aged units being built, this area will represent the best medical and community heart precinct anywhere in Queensland. This is great news. Other initiatives for the Burdekin electorate are—

\$830,000 for local road and drainage works;  
\$27,000 for the development of Townsville's mobile library service, and \$151,000 for book stocks in public libraries in Burdekin and Bowen;  
\$2.5 million for general work at Abbot Point;  
\$1.27 million to complete pavement rehabilitation works on the Bowen Development Road between Bogie River and Strathmore Road at a total estimated cost of \$1.3 million;  
\$6 million for the Rockhampton to Townsville Rail Track Renewal Project. The scope of the work includes re-sleepering, flood proofing, curve easing, earthworks and drainage;  
\$500,000 for the construction of a re-fuelling point as part of Queensland Rail's Stuart redevelopment;  
\$1 million to complete shoulder widening and sealing of Giru-Woodstock, between the Windmill and Majors Creek;  
\$300,000 to extend and refurbish the existing fire station at Wulguru Fire Station, including an additional engine bay;  
housing in the Burdekin is also a winner with \$1.25 million to construct seven new housing units and \$50,000 to upgrade one public housing unit;  
\$300,000 to install a mobile duress alarm system for staff at Townsville Correctional Centre;  
\$5.235 million for Townsville-Bowen health district;  
\$724,000 towards the National Action Plan on Salinity and Water Quality in the Burdekin;  
\$9,000 to Burdekin Race Club to help maintain training facilities, plus funding for Cluden and Bowen Race Clubs; and  
an additional \$30 million to the sugar industry over four years on top of the \$55 million already committed subject to the Commonwealth government's continued commitment to the memorandum of understanding on the sugar industry.

The Burdekin electorate has obtained a good result from the budget with budget spending right across the electorate. These are some of the initiatives highlighted in this budget. I will mention a few of the areas where there has been increased funding to important departments—

an extra \$290.5 million in state funding for Disability Services over the next four years;  
an extra \$255 million over three years from 2004-05 for Breaking the Unemployment Cycle to help Queenslanders looking for work;  
an extra \$53 million to increase the funding by 11 per cent for housing assistance programs to \$528 million in 2003-04;  
an extra \$53.8 million for the Department of Emergency Services, including the employment of 110 additional ambulance officers;  
\$42 million as a second instalment of the \$188 million funding package for the Department of Families announced last year; and  
record Police funding in excess of \$1 billion.

The budget also contains a record \$738 million in concessions such as rebates, discounts and subsidies for disadvantaged families or individuals—an increase of \$37 million from this financial year. There are also tax exemptions and concessions, which mainly benefit businesses, of more than \$2.1 billion—up six per cent from last year.

Health was a big winner, too, in the budget—a record \$4.6 billion, up \$300 million or nearly seven per cent on last year. Disability Services Queensland's operational budget will increase to \$384.9 million in 2003-04. This includes an increase of \$46.8 million in state funding—an increase of 20 per cent over the 2002-03 budget. There is also a record allocation of \$877.3 million for jobs and youth in the budget.

Education recurrent expenditure will increase by 5.8 per cent, taking the total recurrent 2003-04 budget for Education in Queensland to \$4.488 billion. The Education capital works program is \$257.2 million—an increase of 4.8 per cent on last year.

This budget is a budget that continues to provide Queensland with a guaranteed improvement to make the state and its residents progressive and secure in its services to the community. Once again, I congratulate the Treasurer and I commend the bills to the House.

**Hon. V. P. LESTER** (Keppel—NPA) (6.10 p.m.): I have received some goodies in the budget. I am very pleased to be able to say that hard work and constant representation, plus some cooperation, has brought these good things about. Some people say that you actually have to be in the Labor Party representing a Labor electorate to get your goodies. I base my claim on the very fact that in the Maryborough by-election that is exactly what the government campaigned on. So we are square. In reality, if you keep at it and do your job you will get through, but you do have to work hard.

I am delighted to be able to say that, from my constituents' point of view, I have been able to, through the government, raise some \$1.55 million to assist in bettering the centres of Yeppoon and Emu Park. A lot of work has already been done there. We have built an area on the beach and improved the beachfront at Yeppoon. There is a stage and people can certainly hold functions there, as we did on Australia Day. There is an ongoing program to improve the beachfront there. I would also imagine that some of this money would go towards purchasing areas for parking and other associated issues.

Emu Park, similarly, needs some work done in its centre. However, we recently opened a community-type health services disability centre there. That was a very great occasion. The Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing came down and actually opened it. I was able to say a few words of wisdom or otherwise—I think they were of wisdom—on that day. We commented about the centre's benefits to the area. It was a pet project of mine. However, I do not give myself the entire credit for all of that; others were involved, such as Des Quinn and his wonderful team of people, and I would commend them for that. Just about every facility will be available there. I might add that I had one hell of a brawl over it with some sections of the community because a little bit of the area of Bell Park had to be taken. Honourable members can imagine the ruckus that occurred as a result of that. However, we stuck together and we have brought that to reality and it is going to help the community very, very much.

I am quite pleased also to find that some \$67,000 has been made available for an observation section at the sailing club. This means safer sailing. A lot of sailing goes on there and a lot of championships are held there, particularly with juniors. The Keppel Bay Sailing Club does some great work in training young people to sail their boats. The observation section is very good.

I could not even start to enunciate the amounts of money that people have received through Jupiters Casino and other avenues through which they have applied for benefits. They have been extremely numerous and I think I have supported every one of them. It has been a benefit to the community. Sometimes I have to say to my community that they do not always get there first go; they must keep going, and generally they do. If one gives up and does not try the next day, one will go down the pole.

I am also very pleased to be able to say that some money has been put forward to enhance the special education centre at the state high school at Yeppoon. It is not a special education centre as such; it is located in the library there. I imagine this would be of some assistance there.

We need a disability centre in that area. In the meantime I would like to see a bus provided with a carer to take those 10 or 11 students to Yeppoon so they can visit the very well run North Rockhampton Special Education Centre. Currently taxi drivers come as far as The Oaks Service Station and, in effect, the people with these children with disabilities have to meet the taxis. It is a little bit of a worry when taxi drivers have to take these children. Great children that they are, their disabilities can create problems. I did mention that, but I might add that I did not exactly please the taxi drivers. So we cannot always win in this game, no matter how hard we try to do the right thing. However, we have to do what we believe is right and keep pursuing those issues. This is an issue that we need to pursue because the Capricorn Coast is the third fastest growing area in Queensland and the eighth fastest in Australia. That area is just booming currently.

I am also very happy because in recent times—and this was a pet project of mine—I asked the government to purchase the old Telstra building and convert it into a joint ambulance and fire station with an added State Emergency Services centre. This has been successful even though it was a major project. Honourable members would not believe what a facility it is now. It meant that we did not have to go and build a wallowing great new building and spend millions of dollars when we could get something just as good, if not better, for a lot less. The ambulance and fire section each have three bays.

There are also the added facilities. I am very pleased to see that there is a barbecue area there and so on. I have been in contact with my Rotary and Lions Clubs in terms of them providing gym equipment in what will be a training room. It is very important that these people

have the opportunity to do a bit of physical training if they can. It should be stated what an outstanding job our SES people, our ambulance officers and our fire people do. They are just terrific—and it is not just in my electorate of Keppel, it is in all the electorates.

In recent times there has also been the issue of a shed. That might not sound like a big deal, but it is a shed for housing sea rescue boats at Yeppoon. Again, that was not the most major project ever undertaken, but it was a very important project. Those people who go on sea rescues are wonderful people. Not only are they capable of manoeuvring boats; I think we sometimes forget the conditions in which they have to rescue people. Very often they have to rescue people who are so damn stupid that they have not done the right thing in the first place. If the weather forecasters predict that people should not go out in their boats, they should not go out in their boats. If they do, by the time they are in trouble the storm has got up and there is all sorts of trouble. Then these poor people have to go out and rescue them. Really, that is not very fair to one's fellow man. The Coast Guard does a very good job in training people to be more careful about the sea. As the member for Fitzroy and I know, we can hold safe driver training courses, but usually the people who turn up are indeed those who are pretty good drivers in the first place.

**Mr English:** The people who turn up are the ones who least need it.

**Mr LESTER:** Yes, absolutely. Nevertheless, we must keep trying. The Yeppoon Hospital and nursing home will be an 80-bed senior nursing home for advanced care, which we hope will be completed by 2005. That pretty well started from scratch about two years ago when Robert Schwarten and I had a great old ding-dong. It was okay; we know each other pretty well. We really got into it in the media. Anyway, we shook hands and he gave me the building when he was Acting Health Minister, so I thought that was pretty good. Nevertheless, the present hospital is excellently run. It is brilliantly run. It has great staff and great people, but it has outlived its useful days and we need a hospital of a more modern era. Hopefully that will be provided on time. I certainly would like to see strong evidence in these budget papers that that is actually going to happen.

My electorate will also be the beneficiary of two trainee police officers, who will commence duties in about six weeks time. These people have been trained, but they will be out on the beat for the first time. Yeppoon has recently got to the stage where it has 16 plain-clothes officers, three detectives, three officers in the water boat section and two administration officers. We are a 24-hour police station—something I fought very hard for over a long time. However, running a 24-hour police station with that staff really does trim those police officers to the bone. It is very hard work to keep up, because within that there is an attrition rate from the point of view of holidays and somebody perhaps being transferred somewhere else. So instead of having 16 officers, as we should at the current time, it might get down to as low as 11. That puts one heck of a strain on those officers who are there.

I am going to have to plead on bended knee for additional police officers. I am hopeful that this will happen in the not-too-distant future. If that number could be increased to about 20 uniformed police officers, including the trainees, we would be in a fair hunt to keep our 24-hour police station going and not wreck the lives of those police officers who are doing the job. It is terribly important with the type of life that they lead—that is, on call any time, anyhow and anywhere—that they be able to take recreation leave and be home for certain periods of time. They have to try to live a normal life. Police officers are also expected to take part in community activities. It is expected of them. Of course, if they do not do that one wonders what they are doing.

Generally speaking, schools in the electorate are running well. We certainly hope that that will continue. I will be very carefully watching all aspects of the Education budget to ensure that with the new education program our students are the beneficiaries. All in all, I believe it behoves each and every one of us to do what we can to pursue a better deal for our community, and that is what the parliament is about. It is not necessarily always the case that members have to get up and belt the hell out of the government. Sometimes that has to be done, but all in all, if members can achieve for their electorates, they need to be able to say, 'Okay, that's fair. We've got that.' And hopefully one might get just a little bit more.

I have to mention Kerry Ann Borg, a 37-year-old lady of Cooee Bay who was a longstanding teacher at the Cawarral State School who—

**Mr Shine:** Is she a Rotarian?

**Mr LESTER:** The member had better be careful with his remarks, because what I am about to say is not a happy situation. Kerry Ann was 37 and unfortunately died in a road accident the day before yesterday. I record that here in the parliament. She was a teacher of long standing at Cawarral school and she did an extremely good job. I will leave my comments at that. I will continue to pursue with all I have issues for the electorate right until the day of the next election, when obviously I will not be re-elected for the simple reason that I will not be standing again.

**Mrs LAVARCH** (Kurwongbah—ALP) (6.27 p.m.): Nothing defines a government like its budget. It is the budget which draws together the twin imperatives of public policy and public finance. It is the budget which gives practical expression to the philosophical underpinnings of a premier, parliamentarians and a party.

In the last month both the federal Treasurer, Peter Costello, and the Queensland Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth, have delivered their governments' respective budgets. Both were delivered by governments enjoying strong public support. Both were against a backdrop of a well performing domestic economy but an uneven and generally quite difficult global economy. But it is there that the similarities end. The federal government delivered a budget which was mean, tricky and ultimately destructive of the social fabric of our nation. It was a budget which dismantled universal health care. It was a budget which drove a stake through the ideal of a higher education system based on the merit of students and not on their money. It was a budget which strangled the ability of the ABC to provide an independent and an Australian viewpoint to the Australian people. The federal government's budget was delivered by a man preoccupied with job creation—that is, just one job: the job of Prime Minister, which he thinks should be his. There was little in the federal budget to help anyone in this country get a job.

The Premier has dubbed the Queensland Treasurer 'Mackenroth the Magnificent' after the state budget. After Tuesday's media performance by the federal Treasurer when confronted by John Howard's decision to stay limpet-like to the PM's job, Peter Costello might be dubbed 'Costello the Crier'. What a pathetic performance of this private schoolboy, sulking after not getting his prize. It is no wonder many in the conservative party view Costello's potential leadership with great trepidation. He would go to water the moment something of importance did not go his way.

In contrast to the nasty agenda embroiled in the federal budget, this Queensland Beattie Labor budget revealed a government whose policies and priorities are centred squarely on the interests of the disadvantaged, families, children and the unemployed. It concentrates on health, education and employment. There is nothing more fundamental to a Labor government than measures to maximise employment opportunities and job security. This budget delivers on both.

In my electorate of Kurwongbah at the time of my election during the mercifully brief but wasted years of the Borbidge-Sheldon government, unemployment within the electorate was near 6.5 per cent overall and over eight per cent in some suburbs. This was at a time when the state unemployment rate was around 10 per cent. We must bear in mind that in the Pine Rivers area unemployment is always a little below the state and national averages.

The Beattie government since taking office in 1998 has tackled unemployment, particularly long-term unemployment. In Kurwongbah \$6.7 million and 788 jobs have come directly through this policy. Unemployment has dropped to under 5.5 per cent in the electorate as a whole, and to under six per cent in the worst spots. The government initiative which is most directly targeting unemployment is the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative. This is a policy of direct intervention into the employment market, and is in stark contrast to the hands-off philosophy of the conservative federal government. The state budget provides a further \$26.4 million to the greater Brisbane region, including Pine Rivers, for this initiative in 2003-04. Over 4,000 jobs will be created for those who need a hand finding work. Many of these—well over half—will be long-time unemployed or those at risk of becoming long-term jobless.

Employers in Pine Rivers have responded well to the program. For instance, 118 additional trainees and 508 additional apprentices have been engaged by local employers since the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative began. Hand in hand with targeting individuals who need to get a job or a start in a trade is the need to foster innovation in industry and new investment in the skills and capabilities of Queenslanders that is critical to the future growth of the Queensland economy.

As Deputy Chair of the Queensland Small Business Advisory Council, I can say that the Queensland government's priorities for the Smart State, namely, more jobs for Queensland, community engagement, a better quality of life and building Queensland regions, are epitomised

in the private sector's response to our programs within the electorate of Kurwongbah. For example, during 2001-02 and 2002-03, 11 significant manufacturers within the Kurwongbah electorate have been assisted with the Queensland Industry Development Scheme, QIDS, funding of \$218,417 through the Department of State Development to enhance their competitiveness and expand markets. Outcomes from this funding include 118 new jobs, increases in export sales of \$14.3 million and domestic sales of \$12.9 million and new investments of \$6.9 million. Projects include export and strategic planning, business development and process improvement.

This budget also confirms the Beattie government's strong commitment to education. In Kurwongbah over 10,000 children and adults are in some form of education and training. Figures released from the 2001 Census show that in the Kurwongbah electorate there are 5,597 primary school children, 80 per cent of whom attend government schools. It also shows that there are 3,453 secondary school students, 65 per cent of whom attend government schools. I take a very keen interest in all our local schools and have advocated strongly for increased resources and an improved learning environment. My husband, Michael, who is present in the gallery tonight, as well as our wonderful two children—Simon and Elizabeth—

**Mr Mickel:** Working as hard as ever.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** He is one of Queensland's hardest workers.

**Mr Mackenroth:** That's not what you tell us when he is not in the gallery.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** No; then I tell you that he is one of Australia's hardest workers. As I said, my husband, Michael, and I are very keen supporters of our local schools. One of our children still attends a local school. Our son Simon, who attended the local primary and high school, is now at university. This budget delivers more teachers to reduce class sizes, extra resources for students with disabilities, additional computers and better facilities for schools.

I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The current expenditure is increased by 5.8 per cent, taking the total recurrent 2003/2004 Budget for education in Queensland to \$4.488 billion.

The capital works program for education has also increased by 4.8 per cent on last year and is up to \$257.2 million. A highlight of the Budget is the employment of 636 extra State school teachers in 2004, at a cost of about \$42 million per year.

The boost includes 327 teachers allocated over and above the usual growth, and another 60 teachers to support students with special needs. This is a massive investment in the Queensland state education system which is continuing to grow at a time when enrolments in public education systems in other States are declining.

Earlier this year I was delighted to announce that State schools in the Kurwongbah electorate will have more technology at their fingertips under the extra information and communication technology grants announced with our Education and Training Reform initiatives.

I am delighted that the Treasurer reports that we are on track to meet the target of one computer per five students for years 3 to 12 by the year 2005. Education and training are at the heart of the Beattie Labor Government's vision for Queensland being the "Smart State".

To compete in today's world and be job-ready for the future, young Queenslanders need flexible and exciting learning opportunities. This is why it has been a huge fillip to be making Queensland education history by taking part in trials of the next phase of the government's "Smart State" senior schooling reforms from July this year.

Having 10,000 15 to 17 year-old Queenslanders out of school, out of work, and out of training, is a sad indictment on all of us, but under the training reform initiatives grants totalling \$11.7 million over the next 3 years will be provided to trial the development and implementation of innovative programs and services that re-engage young people who are at risk of leaving learning.

This includes the engagement of community mentors who will work with at-risk young people to assist them to re-enter the learning environment. It also includes funding for youth support workers to assist and advocate for young people at risk.

I am also pleased to announce that \$280,000 has been allocated for two new classrooms at Eatons Hill State School and \$46,000 has been allocated under the Triple R Maintenance Program for repainting at Bray Park State High School, Petrie State School and Strathpine West School.

In Pine Rivers we enjoy a very high quality of life; one that is envied probably by many throughout the world. Fundamental to enjoying such a high quality of life is access to high quality health care. This is a clear priority for us in the Beattie Government. In contrast to the Howard Federal Government, we are strongly committed to the principles of Medicare and providing Queenslanders with access to affordable quality health care.

It is plain to see how mean and tricky the Howard Government is when you look at the new health care agreement funding offer to the States. By the Commonwealth's own admission, they have offered \$1 billion less than they factored into their forward estimates to continue the current five year agreement.

It is now more expensive for the average Australian to see a doctor and in our area in the last year, we have been identified as one area in Australia with a massive decline in bulk-billing rates.

Under the Howard Government's recently announced Medicare package, if your family earns more than \$32,000, you won't qualify for bulk-billing. For the State Government, this means that as more families are denied access to free GP services, they will increasingly turn to emergency departments at public hospitals for treatment, increasing pressure on our public hospital system.

Our commitment to providing a better quality of life is also evident in the priority given to funding for Queenslanders with a disability. Last year, our Government initiated the Funding Reform Project, one of the most progressive and significant pieces of work in the history of disability services in Queensland.

This Budget delivers \$200 million in new funding over four years, including \$35 million in 2003/2004 for a range of initiatives that will provide better outcomes for people with a disability, their families, carers and disability service providers.

The increased funding for Disability Services Queensland will see its budget grow to \$385 million in the 2003/2004 year, an increase of 16.3% on last year's Budget. Over the next four years, State funding will grow by 43 per cent, compared to Commonwealth funding growth of only 16 per cent. This again shows the stark contrast between the priorities of the Howard Liberal Government and those of the Beattie Labor Government.

In Pine Rivers last month, Disability Services Queensland opened a new office at the corner of Samsonvale and Gympie Roads to service the families in our area. Having access to Program Support and Assistance at the local level is most welcome.

This Budget also recognises our local sporting and community groups with grants to improve their facilities. \$38,000 has been allocated to install lighting at the Les Hughes Sport Complex and \$33,000 to install lighting for the South Pine Sports Association at Brendale.

The Strathpine CBD revitalisation project, or as it is known the Streetscape Project, has been allocated \$975,000 in subsidies over four years which will assist the Pine Rivers Shire Council to give Strathpine the equivalent of a backyard blitz. Stage 1 of this project was completed last year and it has made a remarkable difference to the Strathpine CBD.

\$1 million has been allocated to upgrade 36 existing public housing dwellings, as well as \$310,000 to construct two new dwellings in this financial year. Making sure that our area receives a fair share of Budget allocations, the Budget also contains a \$950,000 allocation for a three year upgrade of the Petrie Fire station. This upgrade will enable the Petrie fire-fighters to do their job just that little bit easier.

I am also proud to be part of a government that has as its core the assistance and support of families, youth and children. Over the past years, 11 essential family support services in Pine Rivers, including child care, child protection, family support, community support and senior services, received funding of nearly \$600,000.

This Budget sees an additional funding of \$188 million over four years to strengthen program initiatives, and to support families, youth and children throughout Queensland. The Pine Rivers community, of course, will share in this increased funding.

All in all the 2003/2004 State Budget delivers for growth, invests in Queenslanders, looks after the most disadvantaged in our community, and supports our most valued institution—families—which, combined, will ensure that we each continue to enjoy a high quality of life, living here in Pine Rivers, the "Smart State".

**Mr PITT (Mulgrave—ALP) (6.35 p.m.):** I rise today to speak in support of the appropriation bills and, in doing so, I wish to congratulate Treasurer Mackenroth on the magnificent job he has done on the 2003-04 budget. Against a backdrop of negative comment from the opposition in respect of the utilisation of revenue from government owned corporations, the Treasurer has delivered a budget disclosing an improved financial position for the state. Because the opposition is so desperate to undermine the fiscal rectitude displayed by this government it has been willing to resort to smear and innuendo.

A number of government owned corporations was established by the Goss Government to provide a range of services to the community and, after meeting community service obligations and setting aside reserves for development of the enterprise, return any profit to the shareholders—the people of Queensland. To not utilise these moneys at a time when the investment picture is less than bright would have been irresponsible.

With expenditure of over \$19 billion, this budget has delivered to areas of high priority, such as health, housing and disability services, yet at the same time providing growth in capital works and enhancement of service delivery. The state's economy is projected to grow by four per cent, which is much higher than the national average. However, with natural population growth and continuing interstate migration, unemployment is expected to remain at the current level of seven per cent.

Far-north Queensland is particularly well funded, with \$453 million going into services and projects, providing a significant boost to the regional economy. Interestingly, 62 per cent of capital works expenditure will occur in the regions outside the metropolitan area. This flies in the face of oft-repeated spurious claims by the opposition that the metropolitan area, with about half the state's population, receives the lion's share of the budget.

The electorate of Mulgrave has once again been a big winner, having secured \$67 million in yet another budget that delivers to regional Queensland. This includes \$9 million for the South Johnstone Bridge and \$2.7 million for stage 1 of the Innisfail Hospital redevelopment which was committed at the last budget. The South Johnstone Bridge is good news for the local community as well as the primary industry sector and the tourist industry. Main roads funding also targets the Henderson Drive upgrade, with an allocation of \$3.9 million to see its completion by just after the 2004 wet season. Small bridges over Gracey Creek and Scheu Creek will be constructed at a cost of \$3.3 million in mid-2004.

The Innisfail district hospital redevelopment is on track, with \$16 million committed over five years. In addition, the Innisfail health district will receive much-needed replacement health technology equipment. Replacement equipment will include a \$380,000 X-ray system, a \$50,000 operating table, a \$50,000 anaesthetic unit, and 12 emergency trolleys at a total of \$60,000. An extra clinical staff position for mental health services has also been funded.

I have lobbied heavily for nearly two years now in support of the Daradgee Environmental Education Centre for an upgrade of its amenities, and I am pleased to see that \$450,000 has been set aside for this purpose. The Flying Fish Point School receives matching funding to complete its airconditioning project under the Cooler Schools program. This is well deserved, as the parents and staff at the school have been very proactive in raising funds for this purpose.

A total of \$400,000 will see this school and Hambledon State School at Edmonton almost fully airconditioned. \$5 million has also been set aside to complete construction of Bentley Park College to accommodate years 11 and 12. In the Smart State education has fared well in this budget. Since the coalition was last in office in 1997-98, spending on education has increased by 55 per cent, or more than \$1.6 billion. Over the next 12 months, 636 additional classroom teachers are to be employed. This means that since 1998 3,000 extra teachers have been appointed by the Beattie government. As the GST dividend kicks in over the coming years, the Premier has indicated much of this money will be directed towards education, further enhancing our position in this area.

The Ambulance Service has been funded with a further \$521,000 to relocate the Innisfail centre to a site adjacent to the QFRA to establish a genuine emergency services precinct. A sum of \$75,000 is included to meet the needs of the picturesque Innisfail Bowls Club. The installation of a synthetic playing surface will give members and visitors access to their sport on occasions when inclement weather would previously have seen play abandoned.

A further \$75,000 will be spent on adding to the Yarrabah PCYC complex to construct an indoor multi-sports court benefiting the youth of the community. The Edmonton and District Pony and Horse Club will now be able to construct roofing and install more fencing to improve their facilities.

To combat erosion on the Johnstone River, \$364,000 will be put into remediation works at East Innisfail. This will protect vital infrastructure and stave off further degradation at the site.

Our hard-pressed local thoroughbred racing industry has not been forgotten. The industry is no longer directly answerable to the minister and now charts its own course. However, the state government is still able to provide some assistance. A total of \$16,000 to the Innisfail and Gordonvale turf clubs will help maintain training facilities necessary to maintain viability. Despite the recent industry difficulties, both of these clubs have continued to provide enjoyment and opportunities to the racing fraternity and appear well-placed to weather current difficulties.

The Beattie government has provided past support to the Johnstone Shire Council as part of its Regional Centres Program to improve the amenity and enhance the business environment of the CBD area. The first two stages of the main street revitalisation project have already received support through grants totalling \$1.5 million. The provision of a further \$530,000 in this budget will enable the Johnstone Shire Council to upgrade footpaths, drainage, gardens, road surfaces and street lighting.

Over recent years the Beattie government has invested heavily in new walking tracks in our national parks. Rebuilding work at the Mount Bartle Frere camping area and the Wooroonooran walking track will be redeveloped to the tune of \$116,000 to provide amenity to this growing form of tourism.

State schools at McDonnell Creek and Yarrabah are to get a facelift with \$127,000 allocated to undertake painting of buildings. I am pleased to announce that the boat ramp at Deeral will undergo a major upgrade, reflecting its importance to the recreational fishing fraternity in far-north Queensland. Some \$278,000 in expenditure will bring benefit to people from a wider catchment

area who use the existing poor facilities to gain access to the reef and estuarine fisheries. I am confident that the Cairns City Council is in a position to provide a range of onshore facilities to complement the works being funded by the state. When completed, this project leaves only one major boat ramp issue to be resolved. The community of Bramston Beach have indicated a willingness to enter into a partnership with the Department of Transport (Marine) and the Cairns City Council to achieve a suitable outcome, and I am working with the various parties to advance their proposal.

The Queensland Government Agent Program office at Babinda has been a huge success. The only service not currently available at the office relates to certain transport issues and I intend to make further representations on this matter to the minister in due course. The allocation of \$36,000 in ongoing funding ensures the continuation of this service. In addition, the pilot QGAP office at Yarrabah, under the 'indigenous model' for these offices, is proving of great value to the community, and the \$32,000 in the budget will be welcomed.

Public housing in Mulgrave has fared well in this budget and this is due in no small part to the passionate commitment of Housing Minister Robert Swarten, who has gone to great lengths to unmask the callous disregard the Howard government has for those who cannot afford rentals in the private market. Some \$4.9 million is provided to construct 39 new dwellings, and an additional \$318,000 is earmarked for improvement to existing dwellings. This injection of funds also fuels the local building industry and creates much needed jobs. As well, \$57,000 flows to the Crisis Accommodation Program and the Community Rent Scheme receives \$159,000. The housing budget across the state is now \$528 million, representing an increase of 11 per cent on last year's allocation.

Health has also been one of the major areas receiving attention in this budget and regional services have received a timely boost. As my constituents access the Cairns Base Hospital for higher level services, I acknowledge the additional financial support given. It was particularly pleasing to see \$500,000 being directed towards the establishment of an integrated stroke and rehabilitation unit. I personally thank Minister Edmond for her prompt response to representations I made to her on behalf of my constituents and indeed the people of far-north Queensland.

To have a unit providing rehabilitation services to all intents and purposes only for seniors in our community was inequitable and could not be allowed to continue. The new service will fulfil a commitment made in 1994 which was somehow shelved by the Cairns Base Hospital administration for the intervening period. Additional funding of \$3.335 million to the Cairns and Innisfail Health Service Districts enhances oncology, cardiac intensive care and home based care in the region.

The East Trinity property formerly owned by NatWest and purchased by this government in 2000 has had further funds applied to its rehabilitation. A total of \$846,000 is to be used towards continuing site remediation works including the prevention of the spread of acid sulfate, thus continuing the protection of this green backdrop to Cairns.

The traffic congestion on the Bruce Highway to the south of Cairns has been considerably relieved as a result of widening to six lanes the section from the Portsmouth turnoff to Sheehy Road. It is indeed gratifying to see the federal member and our own state Transport Minister work together to extend this work further south to Foster Road. I can assure the House that these roadworks will be well received by those constituents residing in the southern suburbs of Cairns. The cost of this six-laning of the Bruce Highway is in the order of \$6.5 million and will also include an intersection upgrade at the busy Robert Road intersection.

The southern suburbs of Cairns also benefit from a \$2.1 million expansion of the southern water allocation control plant and an upgrading of the Gordonvale depot sludge and sewerage capacity. This work is to be carried out by the Cairns City Council, as will be a range of local road and drainage works funded by an amount in this budget of \$534,000.

The tilt train has engendered great interest among the people of far-north Queensland. This budget provides for an additional \$26.75 million to be spent on the track renewal work that will include re-sleepering, flood proofing, curve easing earthworks and drainage improvement. A good proportion of these funds will be expended in the electorate of Mulgrave.

The area of disability services comes in for attention in this budget. Since assuming the portfolio responsibility, Minister Spence has put unmet need firmly on the agenda with the Commonwealth. While the Howard government shirks its responsibility in this area, the Beattie government has continued to increase its financial contribution. Increased funding will see the budget for Disability Services Queensland grow to \$385 million in 2003-04, an increase of

16.3 per cent on last year's budget. Over the next four years state funding will grow by 43 per cent, compared to Commonwealth funding growth of only 16 per cent.

This is a solid Labor budget brought down by a Treasurer who is committed to delivering infrastructure across the state and to ensuring that Queenslanders whose need is greatest are given the services that they deserve. It has received the support of the Queensland taxpayer. No amount of sniping and whingeing by the opposition can detract from the fact that Queenslanders are positive about this budget. I support the bills before the House.

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (6.46 p.m.): I have the privilege of representing an area of Queensland which is dynamic and which has been recognised by both state and federal governments as a priority industrial development area. That recognition must bring with it financial and infrastructure support commensurate with that growth. Sadly for many in my electorate, that support has not been forthcoming, or at least not at the rate that is necessary to avoid them suffering pressure.

Queensland's 2003 budget has brought some welcome investment. This includes \$1.4 million to the Gladstone City Council to revitalise the Gladstone CBD waterfront. A wonderful group of shop owners and workers in the CBD have been working to re-enliven the CBD area, which has suffered in a similar way to the CBDs in a lot of towns where a satellite shopping centre develops and the CBD loses some popularity. I have to commend Bruce Hunt and the committee for the hard work that they do. This investment will help to rejuvenate the area down near the yacht club. That club also does a wonderful job. It provides great meals, and it is a very popular spot to meet and get together with friends. Nevertheless, this public precinct revitalisation will be welcomed.

There is some \$65,000 to continue the upgrading of the Gladstone City Council Museum and Art Gallery. I believe that that museum and art gallery is as popular as it is and as highly respected within the arts community as it is due in great measure to the hard work of the gallery curator, Pamela Whitlock, and her very capable band of paid and voluntary workers. She does an excellent job.

There is some \$48,000 for the Gladstone Amateur Basketball Associate Inc. to install ancillary shade for basketball and indoor bowls. Their facility is heavily used and, like most electorates, Gladstone has a large number of sporting clubs. Gladstone, Calliope, Boyne/Tannum and Mount Larcom are all very popular sporting areas. Investment in sporting facilities is certainly not a poor investment; it is an excellent investment. The redevelopment of the PCYC is also nearing completion, and I know that that will be heavily utilised.

Some \$2.3 million has been invested in Gladstone to deliver additional housing and upgrades to existing public housing. We have had an ongoing dialogue, for want of a better word, with the Minister for Housing because I am concerned, as are many residents in my electorate, at the lack of availability of affordable housing. The minister rightly says that 20 houses have been brought in from Amberley and none of those have been available yet to the community. They are still in stages of refurbishment. My concern and the concern of many is that we have had a huge pressure on affordable housing during the Comalco construction, we are on the cusp of the Aldoga project commencing its construction, and anyone needing housing during that development will be working on an inflated base.

Rentals have increased from \$80 to \$120 per accommodation unit, and for people on fixed incomes that has been difficult, if it has been affordable at all. Many families have shifted away. It is tragic that families that have invested so much in the area move not because they choose to but because they are forced by economic pressure. Unless there is additional affordable housing—more than the \$2.3 million which has been allocated—when the Aldoga project commences and as their employment numbers increase the ordinary workers, the backbone of our community, will be very poorly affected.

So I again ask the Minister for Housing for an increased injection of funds, as I do the federal government. I ask both of them to remember that these impacts are very real. Some \$350,000 has been allocated for the refurbishment of the Gladstone Fire Station. The fireies who work there do an excellent job. They have become the first response in Queensland. They turn out to all sorts of situations and, I believe, respond efficiently, politely and very compassionately, as do ambulance staff and SES staff. Our emergency services people are to be commended. If there is any complaint to me about any of the services that they provide, it can be firmly placed at a lack of resources, not a lack of will or a lack of spirit. The officers of Fire, Ambulance, SES and Air Sea

Rescue all have a heart for the community; they just need the resources to be able to provide that service.

Some \$70,000 is being invested to continue the Gladstone Airshed Modelling Program. That certainly is welcome as industry continues. Some \$14.899 million has been allocated for land purchases in the Targinnie Valley. This funding will provide much-needed financial relief for residents who have been affected environmentally in that area. The provision of that money in the budget is welcome. However, there are still issues that need to be confronted by government in terms of the Targinnie community. Landowners have their own property valued by the government valuer and then have to get their own valuation. The cost of that private valuation is around \$1,500. If it is a more complicated valuation it is higher. My request to the Minister for State Development was that those accounts be sent directly to the government.

Whilst it is not technically a compulsory acquisition, the impact on the community is no different. People have five years to voluntarily relinquish or negotiate their properties. After that it will be a compulsory acquisition, but the impact on them is no less. One constituent who came to me had to get—many of them do—a private valuation because the state government's valuation was a single quantum amount. To know what their capital gains tax exposure is, they have to have a valuation on the land and the house as separate items. That is not provided in the government's valuation and therefore landowners require this private valuation.

I again ask the Minister for State Development, the Premier and the Treasurer to reconsider the possibility of these landowners—they have to pay for this valuation, pay for solicitors' fees and pay for accountancy advice that is directly attached to this purchase by state government for the expansion of the state development area—sending those accounts straight to government to be paid for. Many of them do not have the cash to be able to settle those accounts and be reimbursed at a later date. I am sure they would sign any necessary agreements to ensure it was legally shown that the accounts had been paid and were part of the settlement, but they need relief in that area. While the process drags on, the health of many families is suffering and they need some movement on that issue.

A number of families have written to me. I have faxed the details of one young family, the Schuberts, to the minister but I have not yet received a reply. The Schuberts have a fruit farming property. They have stopped any work on the farm. They do not see that there is any point and yet the settlement on their property is being delayed. They are a family which is desperately seeking some government relief. Another family seeking relief is the Redliches. They feel that they are being left to languish with their futures unknown while the process of the valuation, the offers and so on drags on. I ask the minister to look at improving the speed of those settlements, but certainly the money allocated for the purchase of the houses is welcome.

One million dollars has been allocated to Calliope Shire Council for the Canoe Point Botanic Reserve redevelopment. That, too, is welcome. Calliope Shire Council has shown itself to be visionary in the way that it designs and creates these open spaces. The Millennium Park at Tannum Sands received a number of awards. I believe that it will do an equally good job with the Canoe Point Botanic Reserve redevelopment.

Some \$580,000 has been allocated towards the replacement of the ambulance station at Boyne Island and the renovation of the home. This has been on the agenda for four or five years, so it is good to see that line item in the budget. Boyne/Tannum is listed in the top 10 growth areas in Queensland and needs very good emergency services. At the moment the ambulance turns out from an old style station; it is underneath the residence and it certainly is too small for the service that is demanded by that growing community.

There have been a number of developments in the Aldoga services corridor. For Stuart stage 2 we see a finalisation for the coal and freight service development. Some money has been allocated for roadworks from Gin Gin to Benaraby, but I believe most of the work that has to be done falls in the electorate of Burnett. That work is welcome as it is a very busy highway. Some \$2.033 million in roadworks has been provided for a section of the Dawson Highway from the Boyne Valley turn-off to Scrubby Creek. The road between Calliope and Biloela has been in a very poor condition—not only under a Labor government but also under a coalition government—and has needed upgrading quite desperately over a lot of years. Gradually that is occurring now and it certainly is welcome.

There were other additional capital works announced or re-announced on projects directly financed by government owned corporations such as the Gladstone Port Authority or by departments which generate much of their own income, particularly in our region, for instance

Queensland Rail, which gained a significant increase from royalties on bulk coal. Some \$9.9 million has been allocated to continue construction of the Gladstone port access road to a new sealed two-lane standard one. This has been funded by state and Commonwealth governments and Calliope Shire Council.

There is still a lot of angst about route D. People have raised concerns over the time it has taken to develop the road, the amount of noise and the disruption to businesses along that road. Whilst members here can rightly say that whenever there is development there is interruption to retailing interests, this road is an unpopular one. It did not have wholesale support in the Gladstone City Council itself and a huge number of people in the community have expressed concern about that road.

Another community concern is the need to upgrade to a dual carriageway a section of the Dawson Highway from the airport access road to J. Hickey Avenue. It is scheduled for upgrading in several years, but it poses a real concern now. It is the only road out of Trees Estate, Clinton Park School and the housing developments to emergency services in the city. It is very often congested during peak hours and, of greater concern, if there is a traffic accident or traffic hold-up emergency vehicles cannot gain access to the large housing estates to render service. People in those housing estates cannot access other emergency facilities such as the hospital. There have been incidents where people have suffered heart attacks in their homes and they have not been able to get out to the hospital because the road is so congested. That four-lane dual carriageway needs to be brought forward on the roadworks program.

Money from Powerlink has been allocated to reinforce the Calvale-Gladstone transmission line—that is for the development. SunWater has allocated \$16.9 million for the Callide pipeline extension. That extension is welcomed by the community. Many remain of the view that the pipeline should extend right to the site of the Callide dam. However, it is acknowledged that this extension improves the percentage that actually reaches the dam.

Sitting suspended from 7.00 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM:** The Gladstone Area Water Board has been allocated \$16.46 million for the Mount Miller pipeline that will service the industrial area and also \$1 million to develop the Aldoga reservoir and pipeline. The government has indicated also that \$150 million would be spent creating state owned infrastructure, principally port and rail infrastructure, for use by the Comalco project and other industries in Gladstone.

I note in the budget that it is stated that capital works at the Tannum Sands State High School is recognised as complete. I would like to raise some concerns expressed to me by the P&C. I believe that those concerns have also been raised through the normal channels. A number of areas in the new building have not been completed. The eaves of the buildings do not have soffits and there is a great deal of concern that, with birds nesting and even internal access to the building by other rodents, there will be a problem with health and also with the deterioration of the building itself. The amphitheatre drainage is not in place yet. Of course, that can lead to problems with water entering the actual built structure—the carpeted areas and the covered areas. The vinyl protective matting for the floor has not been made available although it was agreed, at the review of the costings for that building, to be retained. Wall sheeting also was to be put in place—not acoustic wall sheeting—for the look of the building, because it is a multipurpose building; not just a sports building. That has been omitted. Landscaping around the building, which was allowed for in the PC, was not completed because the project ran out of funds. The amphitheatre, which was retained during the cost-cutting negotiations, has not been constructed and an external building sign has to be put in place. So a significant number of essential works are still to be done on that building.

There was a great deal of publicity about teacher allocations in this budget. I know that the Premier—not the Minister for Education, but the Premier—talked about the 636 extra teachers for 2004. He also talked about the fulfilment of election promises. However, concern has been expressed to me that, whilst new teachers may be employed and there is an emphasis on IT education, there is not sufficient computer technical support for schools. In the bigger schools, such as Tannum Sands State High School, Gladstone State High School and Toolooa State High School, there should be permanent non-teaching staff to provide IT support and professional development for teachers using IT. I have to put on the record, too, the concern expressed by the Teachers Union that those promises made by the Premier were ones arising out of the 2000 EB agreement. They are not new teacher numbers; they are just the reintroduction of teacher numbers already agreed to some years ago.

I commend the minister, too, for the Cooler Schools program, which affects schools in my electorate. I know that many of those schools that have received airconditioning are very appreciative of that better working environment. The TAFE in my area continues to have some concerns about the EB process. There needs to be a better agreement—or at least an agreement—reached with regard to teacher contact hours. There does not appear to be any recognition given to the amount of work required in terms of non-contact time to prepare new courses or modify courses to reflect workplace needs. There also needs to be a subordinate agreement to highlight rural and regional challenges—things such as travelling distances and other issues that are peculiar to areas outside the south-east corner.

I commend all of the staff who work at the Gladstone Hospital. They work above and beyond the call of duty. I welcome the dollars for equipment and trust that the money will actually get to purchase equipment that is needed rather than on the middle management level where things such as wonderful desks are bought but the patients receive no benefit. I know that is what the hospital staff are looking forward to. I continue to put on the record concerns about radiology and oncology services. The hospital has an oncology specialist—and I thank the Health Minister for that—but I think there will have to be vigilant oversight to ensure that he does not burn out with the number of oncology patients to be seen, which was part of the problem with Dr Marie Colisimo. I confirm also that there needs to be an upgrade of the dental clinic. It was mooted some time ago. I also look forward to Gladstone and the Gladstone region getting a part of the \$13.2 million that has been allocated for renal services.

In the Police and Corrective Services area, I place on the record the concern of people in the Boyne-Tannum area that their station be upgraded to a 24-hour station. The premises are large enough to contain the number of staff required. As I said, that area is one of the top 10 areas of population growth in the state. That area needs 24-hour police coverage. It takes 20 minutes for a police officer to drive from the city of Gladstone to Boyne-Tannum. In an emergency situation, that is certainly too long.

We continue to need more public housing. I talked about that earlier. Again, my area needs more funding for services such as Families and Disability Services to cope with the population growth. When my area was experiencing the problem of a lack of housing, a lot of the families affected experienced internal stress. There was tremendous pressure put on the Department of Families, Anglicare, and the community advisory service to be able to provide support and early intervention when they could to families in that situation. I certainly would be calling for additional funding for that social infrastructure to ensure that my community can survive.

Time expired.

**Ms PHILLIPS** (Thuringowa—ALP) (8.37 p.m.): In my first speech in this House just over two years ago, I outlined three objectives that I considered reflected the hopes and needs of the people who lived in the electorate of Thuringowa. Since that time, I have worked very hard to see those objectives achieved. I am proud to say that after this budget, only the third since I have been in parliament, I have been able to deliver on every one of those objectives—thanks to being part of this Beattie Labor government, which has a clear vision for Queensland and a clear set of priorities.

In his budget speech, the Treasurer said that, as a government, we are giving Queensland a strong identity as Australia's Smart State by improving the lives of all Queenslanders and creating sustainable opportunities for everyone. This vision has been translated into tangible services in the areas of health, disability, education, economic sustainability, leisure and recreation for the people of Thuringowa. This is a strong, balanced Labor budget with its centrepiece to boost public health care funding and welfare services to provide real assistance to those individuals and families through resources and support that will enhance their quality of life.

The first objective that I identified at the beginning of my term in this parliament was to assist marginalised families, particularly those struggling families and individuals in our community who lack the resources to participate fully in the good things of life that living in Thuringowa provides.

One of the groups for whom this particularly applies is those who have a family member with a disability. Families of the estimated nearly 3,000 people suffering from a disability in Thuringowa will be elated with the budget decision to increase disability services funding by almost 43 per cent over four years from \$231 million to \$330 million. This means that the total operational budget will increase to \$384.9 million in 2003-04. I am sure that Thuringowa families will receive their fair share of this. This initiative endorses the fact that the state government recognises the desperate need for support for those in the very front line of caring in the community.

A Thuringowa resident who is also a member of the Townsville and Thuringowa Disability Forum and the North Queensland Autism Group, Gwenyth Cutler, was overjoyed on hearing of the increased funding. Gwen is first and foremost a parent. She knows how having a child with a disability affects the whole family—parents and siblings. She says that she is very concerned about the number of marriages that have crumbled under this added pressure. Additional funding to improve the viability of the non-government sector as well as respite care will greatly assist these families to cope. Adequate health services are essential not only for struggling families or for families living with disabilities but also for all of our community. This budget delivers at record levels for Thuringowa residents because, while the services may be located in the neighbouring city of Townsville, they are provided for the larger region.

Major new funding for our area includes \$1.3 million for additional oncology services and cancer care, \$2 million for renal dialysis services for both hospital inpatient and in-home services, recurrent funding of \$150,000 to employ a director of renal medicine and a full-time medical officer in endocrinology, \$900,000 for intensive care services and \$385,000 to staff a 10-bed psychogeriatric unit. Funding for services located in Thuringowa includes \$7.6 million as the first instalment for the construction of a new \$13 million 70-bed residential aged care facility at Kirwan and \$900,000 to renovate the old Kirwan Women's Hospital for a community health centre.

A further budget highlight is the provision of even better school facilities and more teachers. A vibrant and state-of-the-art education is needed if families are to assist their children to achieve their potential. I also believe that in all schools, but particularly in north Queensland, the overall environment within the classroom is essential in creating a positive approach and attitude to learning. So I am absolutely delighted that nearly \$3.3 million has been allocated to complete airconditioning at Kirwan State High School and Kelso, Kirwan and Rasmussen state schools under the Cooler Schools program. I have fought very hard for airconditioning in the schools in Thuringowa, and I am delighted that the Minister for Education, who is present in the House, has once again provided for our families.

This budget's allocation of additional classrooms, facilities and upgrading will enhance the pride and attitude of our students. Classrooms at The Willows State School will be funded with \$335,000, and Kirwan State High School will receive \$260,000 for capital works improvements. Eighty-nine thousand dollars has been allocated for repainting at The Willows State School and Northern Beaches State High School. I am very happy that the final instalment on the car park project at Northern Beaches State High School is in the budget. This project has been unfinished since before the school was opened, and the principal of the school, Gayle Kirkwood, said she was relieved to hear that \$160,000 has been allocated in this budget. Work has already begun on the drainage work outside the school, and I am hopeful that this funding will see the total project completed in the next few months.

The provision of low-cost secure and appropriate housing is another critical need for people living all over the Thuringowa electorate. I am delighted that this budget continues the Beattie government's commitment to revitalise Rasmussen in the Upper Ross through renewal activities. Four million dollars is allocated to continue community renewal projects and to upgrade more than 80 Department of Housing dwellings, and a further \$213,000 will construct three new dwellings in Thuringowa.

The second objective which I identified in my first speech in this House was to encourage ecologically sustainable economic development. We have achieved this by providing \$4.5 million over four years from the Regional Centres Program to kick-start the Riverway project. Ross River is a beautiful natural asset within Thuringowa, and the multifaceted development of Riverway will enhance and capitalise on this river precinct for the benefit of all Thuringowa and Townsville residents. The project has the potential to create an innovative, contemporary riverside for residents to enjoy while taking environmental sustainability into serious consideration. It will provide a strong stimulus for the local economy by giving tourists another reason to visit the city and, in fact, to spend more time while visiting.

The first stage of the Riverway project will create two distinct waterfront precincts: Pioneer Park, which will essentially be recreation, sporting and entertainment linked to the city's commercial centre; and Loam Island, which will be redeveloped into a significant environmental park providing recreational and educational facilities that focus on ecological sustainability. The mayor of Thuringowa, Les Tyrell, had come to me seeking support for the project and asked me to lobby for funding, which I have been delighted to do as I have always regarded Ross River as a hidden jewel. The resultant funding demonstrates in a positive and practical sense what we can achieve when council, state government and the community come together in partnership and

consultation. I will continue to work to ensure that the partnership will be solidly based on extensive community consultation so that I am confident that the best possible outcomes are achieved for everyone involved.

The final objective in my first speech was to support the expansion and development of leisure pursuits in creative, cultural and sporting areas for all age groups. So I am over the moon at nearly \$500,000 being allocated in the budget for the construction of a Pulse facility at the PCYC in the Upper Ross, bringing the state government's contribution for this facility to a total of almost \$1 million. This centre will go a long way to curb antisocial behaviour and provide facilities that will offer a safe, supervised environment for young people to meet and enjoy both indoor and outdoor activities. It is an investment in our youth in Thuringowa. It will give the kids in the area somewhere to go where they can play pool, explore the Internet, enjoy a snack or be outside playing tennis, volleyball or basketball on the multipurpose courts that have been funded by the Community Renewal Program—another state government initiative. They will be supervised and it will be a safe and friendly atmosphere.

Sergeant Tyler Crosby from the PCYC said that at first she was speechless when I told her that this funding had been approved in the budget. But then she said that she was ecstatic at the opportunity to be able to implement a worthwhile centre for the youth and community members of the Upper Ross. This contemporary facility will provide many new and exciting activities and programs as well as a state-of-the-art entertainment venue for people of all ages and backgrounds. The first half of the funding was provided recently when the Upper Ross community agreed to provide \$500,000 as part of the Rasmussen renewal program.

Other sporting and recreational facilities being funded in this budget include over \$200,000 to construct a combined clubhouse at the sportsground in the front of the Greenwood estate in Kirwan, \$31,000 for stage 2 to install an irrigation system at Townsville and District Junior Rugby League Club and \$28,000 for a similar system at Brothers Leagues Club's grounds. So altogether this excellent budget delivers for all of Queensland but very especially for the residents of Thuringowa. I congratulate the Treasurer on keeping one eye on our fiscal responsibilities and the other assuredly on the vision for our combined futures. It is with great delight that I commend the bills to the House.

**Ms LIDDY CLARK** (Clayfield—ALP) (8.50 p.m.): Residents in the electorate of Clayfield will benefit enormously from the Beattie Labor government's sixth state budget. This budget resonates a strong investment in the wellbeing, skills, knowledge, experience and lifestyle of all Queenslanders—a true Labor budget.

#### Health

One of the most exciting forms of support provided in this budget is the four-year \$1.6 billion boost for public health care. That results in an increase of 6.9 per cent on last year's Health budget. The Treasurer is to be commended for this commitment. It will ensure that people who are ill, elderly, unemployed and people with a disability will have access to the best level of care, service and technology available. There is \$8.4 million extra for mental health services in funding 40 new community mental health professionals and adult acute care services in hospitals throughout the state and \$2.7 million to continue the drug court pilot program in south-east Queensland and north Queensland. Too often mental health issues and drug abuse are considered taboo subjects to openly and confidently discuss in public. I wish to commend the Health Minister, the Hon. Wendy Edmond, for her strong commitment to the health of all Queenslanders in areas that impact not just on the individual but on their friends, family and the greater community and to the Attorney-General for understanding the importance of the drug courts.

#### Disabilities

Through the great work of the Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Families, the Hon. Judy Spence, the Beattie Labor government is providing a strong financial commitment to disability services. Queenslanders with disabilities, their families and carers will receive a state funding increase of \$290.5 million over four years. This package features a new \$200 million to improve services and support for children, young people and adults. I cannot emphasise enough what an incredible commitment the state government has provided across various portfolios to assist people with disabilities, their families and carers. In my electorate office I regularly receive calls from constituents who either have a disability or are calling as a family member, carer or even a friend to seek advice and assistance for disability services.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of David Langdon and his team at the Nundah Coop for their commitment in ensuring that people with a disability are treated with dignity by providing useful employment opportunities. I also wish to commend Morrie O'Connor, his team and the constituents of the Community Living Program for their ongoing, unrelenting and positive support. I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

#### FAMILIES

In last weekend's Sunday Mail, there was an article outlining approximately how many child care positions were required to support families in Queensland. It was frightening how rapidly these figures are rising, thus potentially forcing working mothers with fantastic skills and experience to relinquish their employment to care for their children. It is wonderful that the State Government has allocated an additional \$1 million to continue the Child Care Infrastructure Support Program to upgrade equipment and facilities in child care services, the need for which in Clayfield is enormous.

I also wish to commend the local child care facilities in the Clayfield electorate who provide fantastic services for our families: Ascot Centenary Kindergarten, Ascot-Hendra Child Care Centre & Nursery Centre, Ascot Outside School Hours Care, Clayfield Early Learning Childhood Centre, Clayfield Kindergarten & Preschool Assoc, EJ Kid's Care, Hamilton House Early Childhood Centre, Kitchener Road TAFE Children's Centre, Limited Hours Child Care, Loosends Outside School Hours Care, Nundah Kindergarten Association, St Agatha's After School Care, St Margaret's After School Care, St Pauls Lutheran Childcare, Tufnell Child Care Centre, Wagner Road Kindergarten, Wavell Heights Family Day Care, Wavell Heights Kindergarten Association, Wavell Wallabies Play Group and Wooloowin Community Kindergarten Assoc Inc.

It is commendable that the government will continue to dedicate nearly half of the Families Department's budget to non-government partners in service delivery. More than \$140 million will be provided to more than 1,800 church, charitable and community groups and local authorities to deliver a range of services. The Clayfield electorate has a number of fabulous community organisations who tirelessly support many needs of the community. In particular, I wish to acknowledge Suzy McKinnon at the Nundah Community Centre and Julian Maher at the Wooloowin Community Centre. These two coordinators lead an incredible team of workers and volunteers who provide a myriad of support, advice, workshops and services for many residents on Brisbane's northside.

#### HOUSING

Housing is another strong section of the 2003/04 Budget, with a total of \$528 million—an injection of \$53 million in additional funds on last year's budget. It is a pity that the federal government is blind to the housing needs of not only Queensland, but nationally.

The Clayfield electorate has the third highest need for public housing in Queensland. Quite a perception change for those who usually consider the electorate as one of the State's most affluent areas.

From the regular constituent calls received in our electorate office, we all understand that public housing waiting lists are long and often stressful for those who require this form of support.

I am therefore delighted that through the Minister for Public Works and Housing, the Honourable Robert Swarten, the Budget has provided a fantastic commitment of \$1.2 million to various department programs in the electorate of Clayfield. This includes \$838,000 to construct six new public housing dwellings and \$400,000 to purchase two new public housing dwellings.

I would like to thank Ann Goulding from the Fortitude Valley Department of Housing and the Chermside office for their support and understanding, and that sometimes we need to work outside 'the box'.

Another key initiative is the Government's commitment to develop homelessness solutions in partnership with other key government agencies. This includes an allocation of \$12.5 million for the Brisbane Housing Company as part of the State Government's \$50 million commitment over four years. This not-for-profit company was established last year by the State Government in conjunction with the Brisbane City Council and will provide additional affordable accommodation across the city. I wish to acknowledge Norm Nancarrow and the Brisbane Housing Company team for their commitment to the housing needs in the Clayfield electorate.

#### EDUCATION

Since its release in November 2002, the State Government's progressive Education and Training Reforms—A White Paper, has become recognised as a fantastic framework that has already instigated the implementation of many exciting trials across the State, with full implementation, informed by the trials, to be completed by 2006.

It is fantastic that the Budget continues to deliver on this framework, along with an increase in recurrent expenditure by 5.8%, taking the total recurrent 2003/04 Budget for education in Queensland to \$4.488 billion.

The electorate has received \$248,000 funding allocation for repainting school buildings at Hendra Secondary College, Wooloowin State School and repairing and roofing works at Nundah State School.

I want to commend the Minister for Education, the Honourable Anna Bligh, on her commitment to deliver more teachers and better school facilities for the State.

Alongside health, education is pivotal to the growth of all Queenslanders. I want to commend the Premier, the Treasurer and the Minister for their commitment to Queensland's education system. Also the commitment by the school principals and teachers in the Clayfield electorate.

#### EMPLOYMENT

In the area of jobs, training and youth services, the Government will invest an incredible \$877.3 million to ensure that Queensland's current and future workforce is well equipped to meet the needs of the Government, business and community goals.

The Budget addresses the diverse needs of people looking for work—whether they are young, mature-age, unemployed, or are from an indigenous or multicultural background.

The commitment of \$36.8 million to fund 2400 traineeships for young and disadvantaged job seekers under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative, and \$26 million for TAFE Queensland facilities is fantastic. The Gateway TAFE Campus at Eagle Farm, under the leadership of Phil Clarke, is to be congratulated for their ongoing commitment.

A winner in this year's Budget is the Aviation Australia aeroskills training centre at Brisbane Airport, with an investment of \$4.68 million. Established in late 2001, due to the tenacity of the CEO, Paul Brederek, this centre of excellence is pivotal to the creation of a skilled workforce to meet the continuing growth of the aviation industry in Queensland.

This builds on the funding already allocated to the Clayfield electorate under Breaking the Unemployment Cycle, where approximately \$3.1 million has been allocated between October 1998 and March 2003. This has resulted in 451 jobs being created for Clayfield.

#### TRANSPORT & MAIN ROADS

Transport and Main Roads are significant issues in the Clayfield electorate, so I commend the Treasurer's budget allocation of \$2 million to construct additional slip lanes at Airport Drive roundabout on the Gateway Motorway, jointly funded by the federal and state governments and the Brisbane Airport Corporation Limited, at a total project cost of \$4.2 million.

There is also \$346,000 to complete various works on the Sandgate sub-arterial between East-West Arterial and Gateway Motorway at a total cost of \$446,000, which involves the electorates of Clayfield, Nudgee and Sandgate, \$8.4 million for the Port of Brisbane to develop the Hamilton and Colmslie riverfront facilities, and \$1 million for the relocation of Hamilton facilities.

#### SPORT & RECREATION

Two of our fabulous local sporting clubs have received funds under the Sport and Recreation Queensland's Minor Facilities Program. Hamilton Bowls Club will receive \$43,130 to upgrade one of its bowling greens and ditches, and the Brisbane Toro Soccer Club will receive \$25,065 to construct an outdoor training sand box and install ancillary shade structures and spectator seating at their Pinkenba fields. These two clubs are a wonderful asset to the Clayfield electorate and provide many opportunities for local residents to actively participate in recreational activities.

Along with the spectacular opening of the Cauldron over the weekend, and my passion for the Gabba, Queensland Cricket facilities will also be upgraded. The Government has provided in-principle support for a \$1.241 million grant for a new Australian Centre of Excellence for Cricket at Allan Border Field in Albion. This will involve the construction of a cricket centre and grandstand incorporating a gymnasium, memorabilia room, viewing area and spectator facilities at Albion. Funding for the new facilities is provided under the Sport and Recreation Queensland's National Standard Facilities Program 2003/2004.

#### GAMBLING COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

Three local organisations have received a total of more than \$60,000 under the latest round of the State Government's Gambling Community Benefit Fund (GCBF). The recipients for the June round are: \$30,000 for Youth Emergency Services Inc, \$21,634 for Our Lady Help of Christians School Parents and Friends Association based in Hendra, and \$8,398 for Nundah Kindergarten Association Inc.

Last month we organised an extremely successful information evening for community organisations, where GCBF staff did a fantastic job to provide information and answer questions. I strongly encourage all Members of Parliament to take up this wonderful opportunity to support their local non-profit organisations who work tirelessly for the community.

#### POLICE

Crime detection and prevention is another strong priority in the Government's 2003/04 Budget, increasing police funding by \$84 million to \$1.001 billion.

One key highlight of the Budget is \$390,000 for a fourteen officer Tactical Crime Squad at North Brisbane Tactical Crime Squads. The Tactical Crime Squad targets known crime hotspots with a strong emphasis on investigating property crime and drug offences. This will be a great service addition to Brisbane's northside, along with the existing Hendra Police Station service for the Clayfield electorate.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge Senior Sergeant Chris Rutherford and Inspector John Flanagan at Hendra Police Station for their commitment to the electorate and my office, along with Senior Constable Fordyce for the work with the Neighbourhood Watch program.

#### EMERGENCY SERVICES

Along with the vital replacement of the QAS Subscription Scheme from 1 July 2003 to ensure that all Queensland residents will have ambulance cover anywhere in Australia.

A record \$607.6 million has been allocated for Emergency Services. This budget allocation would have delighted the late Norah Bennet who was the President of the Nundah/Northgate Local Ambulance Committee. I would like to thank John Down and all the officers for their great work in the community.

#### YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people once again benefit from the sixth Labor 2003/04 State Budget. This includes the ongoing commitment to the highly successful Youth Participation Strategy, which enhances opportunities for young people to engage with the Queensland Government and their communities. This strategy is a fantastic initiative as it provides meaningful ways for young people to get involved with government decision-making. The Strategy includes continuing the Queensland State Youth Advisory Council, increasing the involvement of young people on

Government boards and committees, further development of the interactive GENERATE website, and providing funding directly to young Queenslanders aged 15 to 25 through the Yes!You grants program.

Mr Speaker, I would like to pay tribute to the young people in my senior schools, which include: Clayfield College, Corpus Christi College, Hendra Secondary College, Kedron State High, St Margaret's Anglican School and St Rita's College. They are articulate, positive and confident, which bodes well for our current and future generation of leaders.

#### ARTS

My record in the parliament clearly shows that I am a passionate advocate for the arts, and that I am committed to supporting all types of artists, organisations and collectives as they develop and create some of Australia's most exciting works. I regularly meet Queensland artists and companies who proceed to inform me of their wonderful adventures and high regard in overseas festivals, concerts, exhibitions and events. Many people in the Queensland arts and cultural industry are developing innovative export strategies to enter, expand and retain overseas markets. They are also creating new import and manufacturing channels in order to sustain economic viability.

Creativity and innovation is a critical element in the Smart State agenda, and one with which the arts and cultural industry sits comfortably.

#### SUMMARY

Mr Speaker, during a time of unstable global economies due to major national and world events, it is commendable that the State Government has not needed to implement any new taxes or charges in this balanced Budget.

With an economic growth forecast of 4%, on the back of a steady business investment growth of 9.5%, the 2003/04 State Budget affects and supports the day-to-day lives of Queensland people and families. I congratulate the Treasurer and his department. On behalf of myself and the people in the Clayfield electorate, I am delighted to commend the bills to the House.

**Mr JOHNSON** (Gregory—NPA) (8.51 p.m.): Before I make my contribution to the budget address-in-reply, I seek leave to table two non-conforming petitions.

Leave granted.

**Mr JOHNSON:** In rising to speak to the address-in-reply, I wish to express concern on behalf of my constituents at the financial peril that our state is facing. Once more the Treasurer has delivered a deficit after predicting a surplus and it is inevitable, in my view, that the surplus predicted by the Treasurer will not materialise. The budget is predicated on a 10 per cent turnaround on investments in the next year. On behalf of all Queenslanders, I hope that the Treasurer is right, and I certainly wish him well. I trust that we can get a return to normal seasonal conditions, which will certainly enhance the chance for that surplus to materialise. But I fear that we will see this government fail yet again to meet the unemployment target of five per cent that was promised as part of the 1998 election campaign.

Before I comment specifically on matters which relate to my shadow portfolios, I want to acknowledge the issues and the benefits in this budget for my electorate of Gregory and the disadvantages. In terms of the upgrading of the community corrections area offices at Emerald, this is a very beneficial community initiative that is putting benefits back into the community by those people who work in those WORC camp release schemes. I know that that is something that has been blessed by both sides of this House.

In terms of the \$331,000 to the Outback Queensland Tourism Authority for continuation of promoting western Queensland, this is a fantastic initiative. In light of the fact that we are currently seeing a lot of unrest on the international stage, we can take advantage of domestic tourism here in Queensland.

In terms of the \$681,000 for the regional art development partnership program with local government from western Queensland, again this is a very good initiative and one where we are seeing more promotion of the arts than ever before in recent years. There are many people out there who have the qualities to know what art is about. It is through these types of schemes that we are seeing arts come to the fore. I certainly applaud that.

The \$1,000 for the upgrade of the special education class at the Charleville State High School is another important initiative. There is also \$513,000 to help maintain school buildings across western Queensland from the Department of Public Works and Housing. This evening I put on the record my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing, the Hon. Rob Swarten, for the attention he pays to those western regional schools and other public property in the west. He worked as a teacher in those western areas and he knows full well the needs of those people. I do thank the minister for his continued support.

In terms of the \$260,000 to continue research into the control of silverleaf whitefly with the Cotton Research and Development Corporation, again that is a very important initiative because

that is jeopardising this very important industry not just in my electorate of Gregory but in other electorates to the south.

In terms of the \$200,000 to commence construction of the new Longreach police district headquarters and watch-house, that is a very important initiative because the tired and archaic existing headquarters are outdated and obsolete and not satisfactory as the headquarters for the police in that western district. This morning I heard the Minister for Police and Corrective Services make mention that he and I and other members of the House attended a graduation ceremony yesterday at Chandler for another 105 new officers. The police in this state are doing a brilliant job, and the western area of this state is blessed with great police officers.

The \$298,000 to upgrade the telecommunications system at the Longreach Hospital is a great initiative. The \$141,000 to construct the multipurpose sports field at Bedourie is truly welcome. The \$19.79 million allocated by Ergon Energy to supply electricity to the MIM coalmine at Rolleston is very worth while. There is \$3.5 million to continue the replacement facilities at the Springsure multipurpose health service facility, and these new health services and the new hospital at Springsure are well and truly overdue. I thank the government for having the vision to go ahead with that program.

There is \$1.59 million for widening works on the Dawson Highway between Rolleston and Springsure and \$1.3 million to help maintain school buildings in the Fitzroy region, which encompasses the eastern part of my electorate. Thanks again to the Public Works and Housing Department. There is \$814,000 to purchase books for public libraries in the same region and \$119,000 for cultural site planning and presentation at the Mount Moffatt section of the Carnarvon Gorge National Park.

I welcome these initiatives and thank the responsible ministers for their recognition of the people of this great electorate. Unfortunately, I also want to express my concern at the level of funding in a number of areas. Despite the government crowing about the increases in the Health budget, spending on hospitals in the central west has been cut. Last year the central west region received a meagre \$3 million in health facilities. This year that has been slashed to \$853,000. Funding for family services infrastructure decreased from \$71,000 to \$31,000. Emergency service facility spending has also been cut from \$805,000 to \$172,000, which I bet will involve a reduction in spending on ambulance stations and equipment at a time when the people of the central west are about to start paying the inequitable ambulance tax. Overall, there has been a further decrease in government investment in the central west, with capital spending on buildings and equipment down from \$31.2 million last year to \$28.9 million this budget. This continues the decline from \$54.9 million allocated in 2001.

The people of the Gregory electorate are being asked to pay the same increased taxes and charges as the rest of the state, and they deserve the same consideration as the rest of the state. Unfortunately, the decision of this government to cut capital spending to the west is occurring at the very time that we are again being subjected to the third year of the worst drought in living memory. We are under attack from this government on every front—higher taxes and charges, deregulation, land clearing, water charges, land rights—the list goes on. I have to inform the people of the Gregory electorate that this budget confirms that the government is certainly broke and that increased taxes are inevitable. The Premier and the Treasurer know that and will not rule increases out.

During last year's budget discussion the Labor government deliberately hid the raft of new charges it introduced as soon as the estimates debate process was concluded. It also deliberately avoided its statutory obligation to consult the community on these new charges because it knew what the consultation would reveal.

Let me also remind members and the public of the excellent motion moved by the member for Nicklin that any proposed increases in state government fees and charges be identified in each year's budget and listed in the relevant Ministerial Portfolio Statements; that the particulars shall show current fees, proposed increases, and shall separately identify any increases that are above the increase in the CPI. These particulars shall be part of the budget related papers. Government members voted against this proposal to be open with the public of Queensland. Shame! The Premier has always professed how open and accountable his government is.

While I am discussing the Ministerial Portfolio Statements I would like to make the observation that these documents have deteriorated to the stage where they are just a waste. They are more about hiding information than they are about accountability. The output measures are now meaningless. For example, in the output measures for integrated regional transport

planning we have the percentage of plans endorsed by the government. The target is 100 per cent, the actual achieved is 100 per cent and the target for next year is 100 per cent. So what?

**Mr Mackenroth:** That is pretty good, I reckon.

**Mr JOHNSON:** It is good if it comes off. I suggest if the plan was not supported by government it would not get far enough to be endorsed by government. There are no measures that tell us how much of the integrated plan has been implemented; that would tell us something informative. It would indicate how the government is really performing. Clearly, something must be hidden from scrutiny. Despite the sanctimonious arguments that surrounded the iniquitous ambulance tax, it is a clear example of a broken election promise and a promise given by the Premier. This tax will haunt many backbenchers in this House.

The media and the opposition have already exposed a litany of similar taxes that have been used to prop up the bottom line. This Alan Bond approach to economics has seen a continued revaluation of the state's assets on the one hand and showing depreciation of some key assets on the other—for example, rail, roads and power. The Treasurer, in answer to a question yesterday, made the comparison between the increases of these values and the increased value of private houses. House prices are determined by the marketplace as a result of sales, not by a consultant in a suit with a sharp pencil.

**Mr Mackenroth:** Do you realise that the first year that you were in government in coalition you did a revaluation and increased the value by over \$5 million? And you criticised me.

**Mr JOHNSON:** The Treasurer should look at our programs. I will take the Treasurer up on that interjection. He knows full well that we delivered balanced budgets and we spent our capital works programs and could account for every dollar. However, the funny money business has continued with the capitalisation of Q-Fleet and Main Roads. I notice the capital statement has been boosted by capitalising the \$13 million plant and equipment operated by RoadTek. I would like to provide another example of what I will call a hand-under-the-cushion practice of looking for loose change and refer members to the cash flow statement on Main Roads which shows that the department budgeted for \$4.8 million from property sales, but the actual receipt was \$16.2 million. This is explained by a note to the accounts that the sales have been higher than anticipated and that the reduced estimates reflect a more normal level of revenue. One can only wonder what the abnormal circumstances were last year. I suggest it was the bailout Beattie campaign, and over time I am sure we will be able to identify a litany of such transactions.

While speaking about Main Roads, I note that there has been an increase in road funding from \$726.3 million last year to \$777.8 million this year. I note that of this \$50 million increase at least \$30 million is explained in carryover. There is the money for the Dohles Rocks Road, which many people on the north side are wondering will be built. The reason it is not being built is that this government will not sign off on the deal, which was deferred because of a dispute between this state government and the federal government.

I note also that in last year's budget the value of the Tugun bypass was recorded at \$120 million, because the Transport Minister was having a feud with the federal minister. This year a further \$120 million has been added to the cost of the project, bringing it up to \$240 million. Even though the cost of the project has doubled, Queenslanders get exactly the same road they were getting last year. It is a road to nowhere; New South Wales still does not know what it is doing about this. I thank John Anderson for providing the \$120 million that will allow this project to proceed. Despite the crowing by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, I would like the Gold Coast to know that it was the representation of the coalition government—

**Mrs Reilly:** We made the commitment first.

**Mr JOHNSON:** They made the commitment about five years ago. When I was minister we made the commitment, too. We lost government and we are still waiting for the government to deliver. The member for Currumbin said she would build it in the first year. We are still waiting. The real reason it has not been built is this government's slanderous campaign against the federal government. If it keeps knocking people, it will not get anything out of them. It is thanks to the National-Liberal coalition that we are getting that money—and through our representation. However, I remain concerned that we do not know where the road is going. Queensland has been unable to resolve this issue with the New South Wales government, which has not approved a route for the road. The \$25 million allocated in this year's budget is just a political stunt—another one of those allocations that will keep turning over into the next year's budget. At least we will be able to save money on the signage for the project; the minister has been putting up the same ones for quite a few years. I would also like to point out that, although there has

been a nominal increase in funding by \$50 million, if we include the double counting, the proportion of road funding as a component of the overall capital statement has again declined from 15.02 per cent to 14.75 per cent. The House would know that this is half of what the coalition spent when I was minister, when the roads budget was \$1.19 billion and represented 28 per cent of capital statement spending.

The Beattie government is the government that we have when we do not have a government. We will call it a Clayton's government. We have a racing minister that does not look after racing. We have a Health Minister that just blames Canberra. It is the same with many other areas of this budget. Where are the government members who care about people and their social needs when it comes to country racing and the social impacts on country people? We talk about promoting tourism in this state. One avenue for promoting tourism is country racing.

The federal contribution to National Highways has increased from \$149 million to \$184 million, and funding for roads of national importance has increased from \$28 million to \$40 million. Do members know what that means? Of the so-called \$50 million increase, \$47 million is from the Commonwealth.

Let me move on to the Transport budget. Capital spending is up from \$839 million to \$972 million, which I welcome. Although I note that at least \$20 million is carried over from last year, progress on the inner northern busway is about \$13 million behind schedule, and only \$3 million of the \$12 million allocated to Transport for the upgrade of the cultural centre busway station was spent. I realise that there has been a redesign of this project, but I also note that Queensland Transport overspent \$27 million last year, which I believe may help explain the real reason for the delay in relation to the projects in question.

I note that significant funding has been allocated for the introduction of integrated ticketing, which I hope will serve to address the state of public transport in south-east Queensland. I applaud this. The opposition has always applauded it. I hope we will see it sooner rather than later. I also hope the newly created Translink lives up to the minister's expectations. This budget also sees \$3.3 million allocated to the new Queensland drivers licence system, which I note has already blown out as I predicted. Last year the system was estimated at \$6.4 million. Now after spending almost \$42.5 million, the project cost has been revised upwards by \$1.8 million. I bet that will not be the end of it. I hope the minister is satisfied that he has undertaken a satisfactory cost-benefit analysis of this project.

I would now like to move on to another area of my responsibility of Police and Corrective Services. As I said, I would like to commence by stating my appreciation, as I said a while ago, of the excellent work that the people in these two great departments of police and corrective services are doing in this state. Again, the Beattie Labor government has not funded the gap between the original enterprise bargaining wage offer of three per cent and 3.5 per cent offered to all public servants. The amount which has been funded totals \$6 million for the 2003 budget year. This will mean a further blow through cuts to police operational budgets. The 2003 budget for the department's agencies of crime detection, investigation and prosecution represents 21.47 per cent of the overall budget allocation to the Police Service.

This represents a decrease in the percentage of resources that were budgeted for this agency in the 2002-03 year, despite the fact that in the last financial year the total number of personal safety offences reported—homicide, assault, sexual assault and robbery—increased by 3.5 per cent or 1,165 reported offences.

I note that the minister in the House this morning was talking about the latest national crime report statistics and I welcome the improvements that he mentioned. The reality, though, is that we turn on the TV and see small bowls clubs being broken into almost every week for 12 months. Sure, bank robberies may be down but if people live where I live bank robberies will probably be a thing of the past before too long with banks continually closing in the western areas of this state.

The 2003 budget for police capital programs was not increased in real per capita expenditure terms, taking into account inflation and population growth with a further 0.73 per cent required per person to even keep pace with inflation and population growth in Queensland. Let me repeat, however, my appreciation for the \$200,000 for the Longreach Police District Headquarters—I give credit where credit is due. I would also like to note that I observed the capital statement for the Police Service increased by about \$5 million from \$94 million to \$99 million, but what do members think this increase is for? Not for new police stations but, like the public works budget which suddenly increased, members will find that it is for plant and equipment including motor vehicle

increases from \$56.5 million to \$65.5 million. So the increase is totally taken up by the increase in the plant—

**Mr Nuttall:** Talk from the heart, mate!

**Mr JOHNSON:** This is a budget Labor style, Gordy. The fact is that the budget for bricks and mortars has been decreased accordingly. It will be of little surprise that I have taken an interest in the output statements from traffic policing, including camera operations.

**Mr Nuttall** interjected.

**Mr JOHNSON:** I want to quote these figures, Gordy, and I say that when the member becomes the racing minister there is going to be one hell of a difference in this state because I know he will do an exemplary job.

The other thing I want to touch on very quickly is the Corrective Services budget. Certainly the people in Corrective Services need every dollar they can get, but I do want to pay tribute to the government for the great work they are doing in those WORC schemes in the west. It is important that we continue the retention of those schemes and the great work that is being done for the communities of western Queensland.

**Mr McNAMARA** (Hervey Bay—ALP) (9.12 p.m.): I am delighted to rise to support the appropriation bills. As a number of speakers, particularly my friend the member for Thuringowa have said recently, this is a very good Labor budget. Spending has been increased, particularly in the area of disabilities, which is up by 16 per cent this year. Housing is up by 11 per cent, health is up by seven per cent and education is up by 5.1 per cent. These increases go to the absolute core of Labor philosophy.

If people do not have a roof over their heads, if people do not have access to good schools, if people do not have first-class health care available, if people do not have the necessary assistance particularly for the elderly and the disabled, then people really do not have anything. The right to live in safe, accessible communities is among the core values of Labor. There is no such thing as human rights if people are not safe, healthy and housed and given access to educational and employment options. If people cannot access the community shops and streets, if people cannot live with dignity, then people do not live at all.

This budget is the work of economic and political philosophy. It is a budget based on the beliefs of this Labor government. It is a budget for all Queensland with over 60 per cent of the capital works spending being spent out of Brisbane. Most of all, it is a document which exhibits political and economic consistency—a consistent philosophy, a Labor philosophy.

Criticism of this budget has been woefully confused, which is what happens if people do not actually believe in anything. The opposition stand up day after day in this place and try to be all things to all people. They do not deserve the title of conservative because the only thing they are conservative with is the truth. They certainly are not conservative in their beliefs because they have shown over and over that they are prepared to believe in everything and all at the same time.

We are variously criticised for running a deficit, for taking tax, for not expanding services, so the opposition calls for more spending but no more taxes and rejects running a deficit. It holds as a matter of logic that which cannot be held. As a matter of economics these things cannot be believed at the same time, but the opposition does. We know this. We see it every day, but because we are a party focused on people this is a budget about people. It provides for 636 additional classroom teachers. It provides an extra \$300 million for health care. It puts \$528 million into housing assistance.

We in the Beattie government believe that government is an opportunity to improve the lives of all Queenslanders but particularly those who are less well off. This budget is very sound and responsible. Queensland is a growth state and the Treasurer is proposing a modest deficit to ensure that services are not cut back and that people are not abandoned for no good reason. The opposition adopt the economics of Chicken Little. They shout that the sky is falling because there is a deficit; they then squawk for more spending on police, teachers and health.

To borrow from John Howard, the opposition is alarmed but not alert. It has been a very long time since Keynesian economics became accepted world wide in demonstrating that there is nothing wrong with running a deficit in circumstances where the underlying economy is sound—and the Queensland economy is very sound. We have falling unemployment. We have five per cent growth and our borrowings are for infrastructure spending not recurrent expenditure.

This budget is fantastic news for my electorate of Hervey Bay. My local newspaper listed some of the new spending initiatives yesterday and I congratulate the Hervey Bay editor, Kevin Corcoran, for being fearlessly prepared to tell the truth and to publish all the new spending announcements. There is a stack of new money for projects not announced previously and I would like to touch on a few of them tonight, as well as some of the milestones in the commitments already made. I will address initiatives in the areas of law and order, emergency services, housing, disability services and access, health, education, tourism and sporting facilities.

I am very pleased that Hervey Bay will be getting a \$1.7 million district and supreme court extension with \$650,000 budgeted this financial year to commence construction. The new court facilities will be operational in 2004-05. This is fantastic news for police, lawyers, litigants and witnesses who will save thousands of hours in travel and waiting time in no longer having to drive to Maryborough for matters where in so many cases all of the people appearing come from Hervey Bay.

Senior Sergeant Bernie Martin and his team of officers at Hervey Bay do a fantastic job, and they need and deserve the new facilities which will be provided with the \$1.2 million in this budget for the extension of the \$1.6 million upgrade at the Hervey Bay Police Station. By the end of this year we will have room for the CIB, the Juvenile Aid Bureau, the dog squad and an expanded prosecution section. The \$390,000 allocated to the Tactical Crime Squad for the Wide Bay will see that election commitment up and running this year.

Two other pieces of emergency services infrastructure will also be commenced and they are particularly welcome. They are the new ambulance stations for Hervey Bay and Howard. In relation to the Hervey Bay station, at a cost of \$850,000, I am particularly delighted with that. Although the commitment to purchase the land for a new station was a 2001 budget commitment, there was at that time only plans to build the station within a five-year time frame. I am very pleased that the construction decision has been brought forward, and I thank Minister Mike Reynolds for listening to my representation on this matter and acting to bring the ambulance facilities up to scratch. For too long our ambulance officers, who do a fantastic job, have been the poor relations. Other emergency services in Hervey Bay have been up to scratch. The ambulance officers will soon join them.

Housing has certainly been an area of concern in Hervey Bay, which I have raised on numerous occasions publicly. With our big growth putting enormous pressure on the housing market, particularly the rental housing market, it will remain that way. However, this budget provides a considerable amount of money to support housing. There is a commitment to build 12 new dwellings at a cost of just under \$1 million in the Hervey Bay area, as well as a commitment to upgrade 10 public dwellings. There is \$237,000 for the Fraser Coast Community Rental Group as part of the community rent scheme. There is some \$158,000 for the Hervey Bay Home Assist/Secure Program, which is very popular, and \$29,000 for the Hervey Bay crisis accommodation program.

In the area of disability housing, I am ecstatic that the budget provides \$945,000 for housing to support people with a disability. I know that we have disability support workers like David Hoodless and Gwyn Wells who work tirelessly to support their clients. They will be relieved to see the 16 per cent jump in disability support funding—the biggest jump of any single department.

The other major new initiative in the area of disability support is a \$1.5 million grant to the Hervey Bay City Council for access works, including streetscaping, disability access to shops and the continuation of the Links Mobility Corridor Project at Pialba. I have made a commitment to the Hervey Bay City Council to support its access strategy over a 10-year period, and this new \$1.5 million follows from a previous grant of \$2.2 million made a couple of years ago.

In the area of health, I am very pleased that the budget contains additional funding of \$780,000 to enhance health services such as oncology, patient travel and renal services. I know that Pam Risk and her volunteers who run the Hervey Bay renal support service will be delighted about this. There is also \$30,000 for the purchase of seven new dialysis treatment chairs. I will continue to advocate for improved health services in my electorate, as it is absolutely crucial to my political philosophy. There will also be a series of specific health funding initiatives for Hervey Bay Hospital, including \$370,000 for an ultrasound unit, \$18,000 for two foetal monitors and \$11,200 for a new patient lifter.

Hervey Bay schools are also under constant pressure due to our relentless population growth. I thank the Education Minister, Anna Bligh, for being so responsive to these concerns. I am thrilled that the budget contains \$730,000 for a new building for the Yarrilee State School and

\$280,000 for a new classroom at Urangan High School. These two schools in particular are growing very quickly and these initiatives are very welcome. I see that there is also \$15,000 of new funding provided for non-maintenance budget painting work at the Torquay State School.

Tourism is absolutely vital to my electorate, and this budget contains funding for a number of new facilities which will assist the tourism industry. Some \$355,000 has been provided for the Woongoolbver Creek boardwalk upgrade at Central Station on Fraser Island, \$90,000 has been provided to extend offices and to install other facilities at the Waddy Point Ranger Base and \$419,000 out of a total project cost of \$940,000 is allocated for the Fraser Island Great Walk at Central Station. These are fantastic initiatives which will allow our tourism industry to develop and grow.

I would also like to mention quickly a special grant of \$125,000 for the Hervey Bay Bowls Club for a retractable cover for its three greens. Cities such as Hervey Bay rely on their ease of lifestyle, their accessibility and the comfort levels they can provide to people, particularly the elderly who look to retire there. These sorts of facilities, through major sport and recreation grants, are absolutely vital in providing my residents with the facilities they need. They also allow people to come and visit, and they draw people who play bowls to the town. I am particularly pleased with that grant.

In summary, when I was elected to represent the seat of Hervey Bay in 2001, I was somewhat daunted by the challenge of coming up with a track record in three years that said 'Yes, I can point to things that have been delivered while I have been here'. My Labor predecessor, Bill Nunn, had a pretty impressive record on bricks and mortar and new services while he was the local member, and there is always a challenge to meet those previous standards. I am absolutely thrilled that over three budgets, in my first term in parliament and in the second term of the Beattie government, Hervey Bay has gone from strength to strength.

In that three-year period we will see two new ambulance stations for the city, a new police station on Fraser Island, which is now open, and a major extension of the existing police station—more than doubling its existing space and capacity. We will see a new courthouse providing District Court and Supreme Court facilities for my city, two new passing lanes on the Maryborough-Hervey Bay Road at a cost of \$2.5 million and two new high schools, including the Xavier Catholic College, which I was very pleased to be invited to open recently jointly with federal minister Warren Truss and which the state government committed \$1.8 million towards.

We will also see a fantastic new tourism attraction in the great walk on Fraser Island and with the building of the \$3.9 million bund wall at the boat harbour now complete once and for all we have put to bed the problems which Hervey Bay suffered endlessly in relation to dredging the boat harbour—a harbour which is so essential to the economic life of the city. Most importantly, we will see an improvement in the liveability of Hervey Bay—an improvement in access for people with disabilities, for the elderly and for young families and people pushing strollers. Hervey Bay is becoming a delightful place to live, pure and simple, and that is allowing us to attract and retain staff and business owners. I am absolutely thrilled with this budget. It is a great Labor budget. I support it wholeheartedly. I commend the Treasurer for an excellent budget.

**Mr BRISKEY** (Cleveland—ALP) (9.24 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak in this budget debate. I would like to congratulate the Treasurer on bringing down an equitable and carefully considered budget for the people of Queensland. It is indeed a true Labor budget. Put simply, the Beattie government has come up with the goods. It has demonstrated its commitment to delivering essential services that will ensure the future of our communities. It has handed down a budget of substance and a budget for all Queenslanders.

The highlights and headlines are right here: \$100 million over four years for public and private research and development; \$255 million over three years to extend the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative beyond 2004-05; an additional 636 teachers for 2004, around 300 more police and 110 new ambulance officers; a \$300 million increase to the Health budget to provide services across the state; \$200 million in additional funding over four years to enhance disability services; \$75 million over five years for a \$150 million Commonwealth-state tree clearing reduction package; and \$50 million over four years to extend the Regional Centres Program.

My electorate of Cleveland has done well in this state budget, with funds allocated for a range of new projects and initiatives which I was very pleased to inform local schools, emergency services and community organisations about on Tuesday. It was much like being Santa Claus delivering long-awaited gifts. Locally we have received \$1.726 million for eight new classrooms, toilets and conversions at Wellington Point State High School. When I spoke to the Deputy

Principal, Nahn Shimmons, she was delighted—and so might she be. There is a further \$98,000 for much-needed roofing works at Wellington Point State School, which I know the Principal, Peter Hadfield, is very excited about.

On the issue of law and order, there is \$100,000 to progress the planning of the Point Lookout police station at a total cost of \$350,000. The Attorney-General would be as excited as I am about this.

**Mr Welford** interjected.

**Mr BRISKEY:** I have been thinking long and hard about this. This funding will allow for the planning of the Point Lookout police station to commence, with construction of the station to be prioritised according to the needs and requirements of the Queensland Police Service. Currently policing services on North Stradbroke Island are based at the Dunwich Police Station, and a dedicated station at Point Lookout will complement this existing service and ensure the safety of local residents and visitors to this popular tourism destination.

This government recognises that policing is not a static thing and that the needs of communities change as they grow. I have lobbied for a number of years about the need for a permanent police presence at Point Lookout. As many residents would be aware, this need escalates during the holiday season, when the population can increase by as many as 30,000 people.

Cleveland will also benefit from the Beattie government's program to increase police, with about 300 additional officers to be employed across the state this financial year. The construction of a police station at Point Lookout has been a passion—and some would say an obsession—of mine since being elected, and I am pleased to say the announcement follows news that the government has delivered its sixth successive record Police budget, which has tipped the \$1 billion mark for the first time in 2003-04 through an \$84 million increase.

**Ms Male:** This government is committed to fighting crime and the causes of crime.

**Mr BRISKEY:** This government certainly is committed to fighting crime and the causes of crime, as the honourable member for Glass House has just said.

A 14-officer Tactical Crime Squad was established in South Brisbane in April this year, and I am pleased to report that it will continue to be funded during 2003-04 and target known hot spots with a strong emphasis on investigating property crime and drug offences. This squad will continue to operate within the electorate of Cleveland.

I would just like to highlight a number of other initiatives that have been funded in my area in and around Cleveland: a \$2.75 million subsidy offered over four years to the Redland Shire Council for the establishment of the Redland Performing Arts Centre; \$1.72 million to upgrade facilities at the Centre for Amenity Horticulture at Cleveland; \$283,000 to construct training facilities with grandstand, upgraded lighting and an international standard softball diamond at Ormiston; \$6,600 to upgrade and install lighting at the Redlands United Soccer and Sporting Club; \$31,000 for Anglicare in Cleveland as part of the Crisis Accommodation Program—

**Mr Pearce:** You're a legend.

**Mr BRISKEY:** I will take that interjection from the honourable member for Fitzroy. He, too, is a legend in my book.

In addition, there are the following allocations: \$93,000 for the heritage listed Lazaret Representative Building on Peel Island; \$63,000 for the ongoing redevelopment of amenities at Blue Lake National Park on North Stradbroke Island; \$218,000 for Redland Home Assist/Home Secure services at Cleveland; \$439,000 for road and drainage works; and \$40,000 under the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme for the provision of bikeways at various locations in the Redland shire at a total project cost of \$296,000. This funding is provided on a 50-50 basis with the council. Of course, that project involves the electorates of Capalaba, Cleveland, Mansfield and Redlands. I am sure that my parliamentary colleagues are equally pleased about that initiative. Further, there is an allocation of \$142,000 for the South Brisbane Tactical Crime Squad to target known crime hot spots with an emphasis on property crime and drug offences.

I intend to incorporate the rest of my speech in *Hansard*. However, before I do so, I would like to talk about how kind this budget has been to public health. With a \$300 million increase to the Health budget to provide health services right across Queensland, my electorate has benefited with injections of \$3.393 million to the Redland Residential Aged Care Facility for the construction of a new 128-bed facility; \$877,000 to the Bayside Mental Health Centre for the construction of a new building; \$300,000 to oncology, which is additional funding to manage

demand for cancer treatment services; \$298,000 for communications and networks for the replacement and upgrade of telecommunications services at Redlands Hospital and the Residential Aged Care Facility; \$200,000 for renal dialysis, which is additional funding to realign and expand renal dialysis services for the Bayside Health Service District; and \$142,000 in additional funding to manage demand in emergency departments in the Bayside Health Service District. I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Disability services are a priority for any government and it is pleasing to see the Beattie Labor Government come to the party announcing \$200 million additional funding over four years to enhance disability services.

I thank the Minister for her initiative in recognising the importance of these services to the bayside.

Mr Speaker, this increase demonstrates this government's concentration on essential services and is precisely the kind of Government and the kind of budget I am pleased to be associated with!

Working with community and sporting organisation is one of the joys of my job as the Member for Cleveland. There are many sporting clubs working tirelessly to provide facilities for the young people (and not so young people) in my electorate to enjoy.

To this end, a grant of \$6,600 to enhance a local sporting facility—the Redlands United Soccer and Sporting Club, to upgrade the ancillary lighting at its Cleveland fields is great news.

The money will go straight into a project that a lot of people can use and enjoy. And of course, one of the Beattie Government's priorities is to make the Smart State a more active state and this funding is one practical way we can help fulfil this objective.

The grant had been provided under Sport and Recreation Queensland's Minor Facilities Program with \$6.2 million allocated in the budget under the Minor Facilities Program.

The Minor Facilities Program helps organisations undertake minor works to sport and recreation facilities to increase participation and focuses on small-scale venues

Why Mr Speaker?

Because the Beattie Government is committed to providing funds right across the State so that all Queenslanders have access to more or better venues to play sport or undertake recreation in their local area.

Since the Beattie Government came to office in 1998, we have put more than \$56 million into facilities under the Major Facilities Program and more than \$26 million into facilities under the Minor Facilities Program. This is on top of more than \$42 million we have provided for State-level facilities under the National Standard Facilities Program.

On top of this I am pleased to announce that Brisbane could soon be hosting international softball events with the Beattie Labor Government awarding a \$282,000 grant for the redevelopment of the Ormiston grounds in my electorate.

This major redevelopment could form a component of a State Softball Centre in the future and would help attract major events to the area and provide a suitable venue for elite training and development.

Under the State Budget we have allocated the grant to Redland Shire Council which, in conjunction with the Redland Softball Association, has proposed to redevelop the association's grounds in Ormiston.

In doing so, we are requiring that they work closely with the Queensland Softball Association and other stakeholders to determine whether other facilities could be developed elsewhere to possibly form a State Softball Centre around Brisbane.

The proposed works will include extensions to the existing clubhouse to incorporate a grandstand, upgrades to the diamond, new dugouts and lighting.

In recent years Queensland players have been at the forefront of Australia's success in international softball and establishing a venue of this quality would give our top and emerging players the chance to further develop their skills and raise the profile of the sport by attracting national and international events to Queensland.

Again Mr Speaker, funding for the redevelopment was provided under Sport and Recreation Queensland's National Standard Facilities Program 2003-2004. This \$10 million program is focused on the development of large-scale sporting venues with the potential to attract major sporting competitions and training camps to Queensland.

Such events boost regional economies, create jobs and boost Queensland's reputation as a sporting state.

This Government is serious about jobs creation and this is demonstrated by the allocation to the Greater Brisbane region of around \$26.4 million to create an estimated 4,230 jobs through the Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative during 2003/04.

This builds on the funding already allocated to the Cleveland electorate under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle, where approximately \$3.3 million has been allocated between October 1998 and March 2003. This has resulted in 494 jobs being created for Cleveland.

This Budget provides funds for real assistance to individuals and families and for resources that will enhance quality of life in our communities.

That's real assistance for real jobs for Queensland.

Queensland already has a strong employment growth rate. In the 12 months to April 2003 Queensland led the charge against the other states. Employment in Queensland increased by 3.5 per cent compared to 2.8 per cent nationally. Over the 12 months to April, Queensland created 60,900 jobs.

Queensland's economic strengths are already the envy of many other states and this Budget will build on those strengths and offer improved opportunities for business—big and small—and jobs, jobs and more jobs.

I note the latest ABS statistics which show that Queensland's population increased by almost 83,000 over the year to the September quarter. Proudly, Queensland now has the highest overseas migration in the history of the state—the highest annual increase in Queensland's population for almost 13 years.

Mr Speaker, I join with the Member for Redlands and the Member for Capalaba in announcing a very exciting and innovative project to construct a Performing Arts Centre at Cleveland.

This project will create significant benefits for Redland and its residents with the Government contributing \$2.75 million towards the project, with the funding provided as part of the Beattie Government's \$50 million Regional Centres Program.

This Performing Arts Centre will provide a top quality venue to participate in the performing arts and to view local touring shows within comfortable travelling distances of their homes.

In working closely with the community and Redland Shire Council and its mayor Don Seccombe, local residents will be able to claim something special with plans comprising a professionally fitted out 400-500 seat theatre. It will also feature an auditorium with back stage, delivery facilities and a foyer, situated in a four hectare site adjacent to the Redland Community Cultural Centre.

I see this planned facility as a major asset to the district and just another example of how the State Government is serious about working with local councils to improve facilities in Queensland communities—wherever they are in our State.

And I must give a plug to the Regional Centres Program—a Beattie Government initiative which aims to improve the social, cultural, environmental and economic fabric of Queensland communities with populations of more than 15,000 people. Funding assists to provide facilities such as improved parklands and sporting grounds, revitalisation and streetscaping projects, arts and cultural centres, and community and youth centres.

Mr Speaker, since 1998, the Beattie Labor Government has paid the Redland Shire Council more than \$11.7 million in Department of Local Government and Planning grants and subsidies.

For this I must thank the Minister for Local Government and Planning for her commitment to my electorate.

As part of the Beattie Labor Government's allocation of an additional \$6.3 million in 2003-04 for staff and equipment for the Queensland Ambulance Service the Member for Capalaba and I announced \$300,000 in the State Budget to help build a new ambulance station at Birkdale.

I am very pleased to report that planning for the new station is well underway with the Queensland Ambulance Service sourcing suitable land for the project after recognising the community's need for a supplementary response facility.

The new station is part of a record \$276.2 million Budget for the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) which features a major expansion in ambulance staff, new vehicles and the building of new stations has been made possible by the introduction of the Community Ambulance Cover which has given the QAS a long term secure funding base.

It is pleasing to see the Budget provide additional funding to the QAS to enhance service delivery and to alleviate pressures on paramedic staff caused by the increased service demands of a growing and ageing population—and I can tell you the people of my electorate will be very thankful for this injection!

The 2003 State Budget includes \$37 million to boost services to address homelessness with \$9.8 million to be spent under the Department of Housing's Crisis Accommodation Program to further improve and extend services for homeless people.

In Cleveland, \$31,000 has been allocated for a local community organisation to lease properties to provide crisis accommodation for homeless people or people at risk of homelessness proving yet again that the state government is committed to helping low-income people by providing better public housing and services despite further Federal government funding cuts.

The Beattie Labor Budget is a credit to this Government. It has maintained a balance between essential service areas such as Families, Education, and Health while maintaining a commitment to Smart State innovation.

**Mrs DESLEY SCOTT** (Woodridge—ALP) (9.32 p.m.): How proud I am tonight to stand here as a member of the Australian Labor Party and, in particular, a member of this government that truly values each individual and places a high priority on essential services, such as health, education, families, care of the disabled, housing and the safety of its citizens. In recent months I, like others, have been dismayed at the policies emanating from Canberra which, if implemented, would take us closer and closer to the American model in areas such as health policy. I never want to live in a society that is prepared to accept that health services and a good education are the sole prerogative of the wealthy.

This budget delivers on health for the people of Queensland. I applaud the measures in this budget, which will see an increase of 6.9 per cent—a record amount of \$4.6 billion. Some of the initiatives that will have a positive effect on the people of Logan include—

opening of a new 30-bed ward at Logan Hospital;

13 new staff positions;

\$1.5 million new CT Scanner; and

\$165,000 for medical imaging, colonoscopes, gastroscopes and two anaesthetic trolleys;

In the Logan-Beaudesert region—

\$2 million will go to medical in-patient services;

\$500,000 to intensive care;

\$500,000 to renal services;

\$100,000 to cancer treatment services; and

\$105,000 to emergency services

In Logan Central, \$4.1 million has been allocated for a community health centre, which is part of a \$7.5 million project. That will build a modern, three-storey building.

This Health budget sees a \$300 million increase, which will be used throughout the state for wage increases, operating cost increases, increased and enhanced services and, importantly, \$10 million of that funding will go to cut hospital waiting lists. Rehabilitation services throughout the state will also receive an additional \$4.2 million and an additional 32 staff and mental health services in Logan will have an additional seven clinical staff.

I would like to commend Ms Sabrina Walsh and her staff at Logan Hospital for the outstanding service that they perform. Yes, our medical professionals are very hard working and we thank them sincerely for their caring and commitment to delivering first-class health services.

Closely associated with our health services is the Home and Community Care Services—or HACC—funding which makes it possible for our seniors to stay in their own homes. The support offered by the highly professional and caring nurses from organisations such as St Luke's Nursing and Blue Care is simply wonderful. They truly do become like family members who take such a personal interest in their clients.

Other services that are provided are respite at Logan central, where Fay Jones and her staff ensure that our seniors spend some happy social times together, and Meals on Wheels where Jim McDonald and his vast band of loyal volunteers ensure that their clients enjoy tasty, healthy meals. Our state HACC funding will be boosted by at least \$7.5 million.

Within the Emergency Services portfolio, we will also see an additional 110 ambulance officers. I commend the government for making the difficult decision to bring in the ambulance levy so that every Queenslanders will be covered for ambulance services wherever they happen to be anywhere in Australia. Our ambos deserve our support.

In last year's budget, I welcomed the large increase of 17.5 per cent to Families. These are the areas that truly define what a Labor government is all about. This year it is so heartening to see the increase in Disability Services funding. This is one area which, unless we have experienced what it is like to care for a child or perhaps a parent with a severe disability, we simply could never understand. To have total care for someone 24 hours a day, 365 days a year is nothing but an act of supreme love.

Budgets are never easy, but at some stage decisions need to be made as to where priorities lie. I commend the Treasurer, the Premier and those ministers who set the direction for this budget. We will see a state funding increase of \$290.5 million over four years or, in percentage terms, 43 per cent. The future directions for Disability Services will set out a blueprint for the way we will deliver services into the future. We all want to see a better quality of services for the disabled as well as increased respite services and better support for carers.

The Woodridge electorate is looking fantastic. People are proud of where they live, our volunteer organisations are active and second to none and, thanks to community renewal, many of the issues and challenges of the past are being addressed. While the Woodridge area is now in the transition period of its renewal funding, Kingston still has 12 months to go, with some \$1.3 million. A major project in the next 12 months will be the construction of an aquatic and leisure centre in conjunction with the Loganlea renewal area in the electorate of my neighbour, Tom Barton. With a \$1 million boost from the Department of Sport and Recreation, this will be a stunning reminder to my community of just what community renewal has meant to Logan city.

**Dr Lesley Clark:** And what a good member can achieve.

**Mrs DESLEY SCOTT:** I thank the member for Barron River very much.

Another major project now in its second stage is the Station Road upgrade, which will complete the revitalisation of the railway and shopping precinct. Part of this project has been undertaken by the year 9 students of Woodridge State High School, who have designed and produced stunning street banners and mosaic tiles which will beautify the area. Other diverse

projects have been the youth radio mentoring project, the Endeavour community garden, the Fax-Back domestic violence initiative, the Logan legal advice service, the Ryan's Place project, our Blue Dash and East-West bus services, and many beautification projects such as our parks and streetscapes. Long after our community renewal funding ceases, the benefits will continue on into the future. This program has resulted in the transformation of my community, and we say a heartfelt thankyou particularly to the Housing Minister, the Hon. Robert Schwarten, who has been such a strong supporter and advocate for the program. Madam Deputy Speaker, I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

When I consider what is happening in my schools it fills me with a great deal of promise for the future. Our students are being nurtured and challenged by very dedicated teachers and my principals are men and women of vision. Our schools are already taking part in education trials as we prepare for our new direction in education. I welcome the increase in education funding of 5.8% bringing the education budget to \$4.488 billion. Capital works funding has also received a boost by 4.8%. This budget allows for an increase of 636 extra teachers in 2004 which will improve our class-size ratios. I welcome the \$402,000 allocated to my schools for repainting and roofing and a special grant of \$268,000 for repair of C and D Blocks at Harris Field. Woodridge High will continue on to phase 3 of their renewal program with a grant of \$739,000. It is an absolute joy to visit my schools and I commend our hard-working teachers. In Logan City we are privileged to have the full range of education services from pre-school, primary, high, both public and private schools, through to TAFE and our Griffith University. But Mr Speaker: An education is of no use, unless we are able to improve the job opportunities for our young people, as well as mature-age workers. Woodridge has long had a record of high unemployment. Due to our low-cost housing, people are attracted to the area when they first arrive in this state—many interstate arrivals, plus a great number of new migrants and refugee families. However, initiatives such as Breaking the Unemployment Cycle and many Community Jobs Plan Projects are offering training and excellent opportunities for participants. Our government has made a huge commitment to jobs, training and youth services with a record \$877.3m. Building a smart State, requires skilled workers and it is expected that in 2003/2004, 44,000 apprentices and trainees will begin their training. This government is serious about skilling our young people for a bright future.

When I look at our housing budget, which is so important, particularly with a Federal Government that has gutted our Commonwealth/State Housing Agreement, I see the absolute commitment of this government to ensuring adequate housing for low income families with an increase of 11% in the budget to a high of \$528m. However, we fight a difficult battle with such a large increase in population. In my electorate, I am pleased to see funds for Urban Renewal allocated of \$2.9m with additional \$510,000 to upgrade existing homes and \$528,000 for new construction.

Mr Speaker: There are many other initiatives in this budget which will have a positive effect on my constituents, such as an additional tactical crime squad and the increase in the Police Budget to \$1 billion which will deliver an additional 300 Police across the state. The Drug Court Trial at Beenleigh will be extended, Noise Barriers, Traffic Safety Improvements, and many more. My constituents have welcomed this budget which delivers true Labor heartland policies to care for the most vulnerable in our society, yet encourages the big picture items such as investment and construction which drive the business sector of our great state. I commend the Treasurer for delivering a responsible budget with a good underlying financial position and look forward to a bright and prosperous future for our state.

**Mr HOBBS** (Warrego—NPA) (9.40 p.m.): This is an opportunity for all members of parliament to express an opinion on the budget and its impact on their electorate. It is very important that we are able to do that because the budget is a document that should reflect the needs of a very wide variety of people across the whole of the state. It is interesting to compare notes and listen to some of the comments that have been made today in relation to the budget's impacts on electorates across Queensland.

I have noticed that a lot of the government members have been talking about what a great Labor budget it is. I was asking myself what that meant. What does a good Labor budget mean? I am quite sincere about it. Does it mean that the government is putting a budget together for Labor people? Is it putting a budget together for all of Queensland or is it putting a budget together just for a select few people?

**Mr Lawlor:** The focus is on health and education.

**Mr HOBBS:** The member is saying that the emphasis is on health and education. Why would that not be a budget for any government? Surely health and education are important; no matter what government is in power they would be very, very important.

The Premier had said that we were going to have a five per cent unemployment rate, but now it is predicted for 2003-04 to be seven per cent when six per cent is the Australian average—and Victoria has 5.75 percent. We know that Queensland always has a higher unemployment rate, and we accept that. We have growth and the like so I do not think there is anything particularly spectacular about that. It is a Labor budget. We have also had three deficits in a row. Is it a great Labor budget because we have had three deficits in a row? We have not experienced that for probably 25 or 30 years. I am not sure whether we have ever had three deficits in a row. \$2.1 billion—is that what the government members mean when they say it is a

Labor budget? I am honestly trying to come to grips with what they really mean by 'a great Labor budget'. Are they spending everything and receiving anything? They have also talked about having a 7.5 per cent return on investments. Today the return is minus three per cent, yet they are budgeting for a 7.5 per cent return next year. Is that a Labor budget?

I fail to understand the criteria by which the government is working to come to a good, strong financial position. It is great to have a welfare society, but a capitalist society has to pay for it in a lot of ways. The two have to be matched to make sure both can be done. We have to be able to provide the hospitals, the education and the resources for people—we have to be able to help people to manage when things are tough—but we also have to have a society, a government, a country and a state that can afford to pay it.

Much was made of the Police budget, for instance, which has reached \$1 billion. That is great—that is fantastic—but it has to be that much because of the growth. It has to reach that level. It is expected. If it did not reach a billion dollars we would ask what the hell was going on. There is nothing flash about that. We are happy about the fact that the government has reached that level, but it is not anything to write home about. I cannot find anything in this budget that is exceptional. There are the normal good things that we have to have, but I do not see anything that is really outstanding or earth shattering. It is a normal working type budget to keep the show going, which is good and which we have to have. But there is nothing spectacular that is going to push Queensland into the next century.

As I mentioned previously, the important thing is what the budget provides in relation to our own electorates. This is supposed to be a true Labor government providing for all of Queensland, yet there are still people out in western Queensland who cannot get airconditioning in their schools. Subsidisation of airconditioning of schools on the coastal strip is provided, but people living in western Queensland—and there are Labor voters out there as well—cannot get it. There is something not quite square with this whole system. That is disappointing.

There is no Cooler Schools program for Maranoa on the Western Downs, for instance. I have even put in place an e-petition to bring to the attention of the government that airconditioning in those schools is important. We are happy to take our place and stand in line, but if we are not going to even be considered then it starts to wear a bit thin. I think it is a bit unreasonable if the government is not prepared to share that around. It appears that a good Labor budget might in fact be one that selectively puts the money where it wishes to.

Another area in which the budget is sadly lacking is that of special learning areas. One school in my electorate has very high special needs. It certainly needs some additional assistance, which so far has not really come forward. We like to see some assistance there. I have already made representations in relation to this particular issue, but it needs a bit of attention by the government.

I welcomed the increased funding for plant and animal disease programs to protect Queensland's primary industries against exotic pest and disease. However, the government should not forget that other destructive pests have come in. Recently I tabled in the parliament a paper on army worms. It is one example of what happens. Something like that comes along all the time. The Department of Primary Industries in particular has not been funded adequately to manage these types of outbreaks. We need to have additional ongoing funding to be able to manage the problem. The department should be able to say within a few days, 'This is the problem. This is the chemical you can use. This is the withholding period and this is the way to go.' It is not there. There is loss of production and in some instances people will go broke because these pests have come in and have cleaned the country out and they will have no grass for the winter. On top of the drought they have already endured, those people will face a very severe time indeed.

I have called for a contingency fund or something similar to assist in the purchase of chemicals to eradicate and control army worms and for their management on state owned lands. These pests can virtually go wild on stock routes and in national parks, conservation lands and a lot of other state owned lands. They can eat land-holders out of house and home.

There is no commitment from the DPI to the ADP program—the Australian Development Program—for the Western Downs Solution Group. This group was able to apply for funding from the Commonwealth government and received about \$3 million to actually try to improve its performance in its own areas—to value add, to improve the community in the Western Downs. It has not been able to get the state government to put in its contribution for 50 per cent to make it fly. That is very disappointing, because there is so much that can be done. People do not want

handouts. They want to be self-reliant. They can be, and this is one way of doing it. For a very small sum of money, they can basically start this program. So far the state government has put in about \$25,000 out of \$175,000 for a social economic study. That of course is welcome, but more money is needed at the end of the day to do the job properly and to put some runs on the board. It will save the government money in the end, because these people will be viable and there will be programs put in place for those that are not viable to either move out or whatever the case may be. Sometimes people cannot see the wood for the trees. Anyway, that is the way it is.

I also want to thank the Minister for Primary Industries for ensuring that the funding shortfall for the community rural finance counselling service was restored. Somewhere down the track the department had failed to pay those five groups about \$3,000 a year. I asked a question in the House and the minister was able to fix it up, and I express my appreciation on behalf of those people because they provide a very important service. There is not enough recognition that the drought is not over. There seems to be a misconception that the situation is not too bad, but producers are facing serious problems, even financially.

While Australia has been very much isolated from the economic woes of the Western World in this last year or so, we will have to face some tough times in the future. There need to be mechanisms in place to ensure that we are able to survive that. I do not think that there has been a fair share put in by the state government. The Commonwealth government, quite frankly, in this case has put in an extraordinary amount of money and the state government is nowhere near matching it, even in the very low percentage it has at the present moment. So this government is dragging the chain there, and that is disappointing. I am sure that most people in rural industry are aware of that.

Exceptional circumstances applications are still slow in coming through. The Department of Primary Industries is relying on Agforce to put those applications together. Those applications are expensive to do. I would suspect that it has cost Agforce more than it is getting paid. It is getting paid about \$2,000 per application, and I would not think that that would even pay its travelling expenses, quite frankly. In every other state in Australia the DPI equivalent do the applications with input from primary industry groups. In Queensland it is a bit different. It is a case of do it yourself or not get it. That is important.

Transport is another area that is very important in the Warrego electorate, which is about the same size as the state of Victoria and consists of the whole south-west of Queensland to the South Australian border. We want the roads upgraded to 110 kilometres an hour. There are many roads that can be increased to that speed. We know there is a national standard that has to be met in relation to making the speed limit on roads 110 kilometres an hour. I do not really believe that we are doing that in Queensland. There are roads, certainly in my area, that would meet that standard but they are not being upgraded to 110 kilometres an hour. There needs to be a review of that process to ensure that we can get that upgrade as soon as possible.

In terms of country racing, it has been an absolute disaster. The worst possible outcome one could possibly dream of has occurred to country racing. The minister has said previously that she is going to phase out of it and everything else. Why have a minister when there is no representation? There is nothing at all happening. The government has cut itself loose. It is getting \$1 billion over 15 years coming in from the TAB or UniTAB.

**Mr Lawlor:** That's what the industry wanted.

**Mr HOBBS:** Irrespective of that, you have had five years to fix that.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Poole):** Order! The member will direct his comments through the chair.

**Mr HOBBS:** Some \$60 million a year is coming in to this government from UniTAB and not one bent razoo is going back to racing.

**Mr Lawlor:** What about the grain subsidy?

**Mr HOBBS:** That is coming from the normal budget. This is money coming straight in from UniTAB and it is not going back to the industry. The government could take \$10 million off that and put it back and the racing industry would basically have a lot fewer problems than it has at the present time. It can be fixed. It has had five years to fix the funding. It cannot keep blaming the coalition or blaming old Joh or blaming the Boer War. It has to get on and do it itself. It cannot keep blaming somebody else. It has to do it itself. It is the government. The minister is totally useless and there is so much disappointment out there. It is so easy to fix. All she has to do is

listen to people. The minister does not even go to the races anymore. If she went to the races they would boo her. That is the way it is.

There are many other issues to cover. In terms of health, I have over 428 signatures from residents of the Tara Shire Council calling for the Beattie government to improve the health services in the shire. There is a great government service in relation to the hospital and the doctor and so forth. It has had private practice there, but the private doctors have gone and it is in real trouble. The private doctors have gone—and I know it is not entirely the responsibility of the government to find private doctors—and what we need is some help. Because we cannot find private doctors, the state government is going to have to eventually put in place a second medical officer. If we get some help in the meantime, we may be able to find somebody else who will in fact save the government money in the long term. We need a lot more help to make that work, otherwise we are going to end up in real trouble. Hospital dentists is another issue that is particularly important in the western Darling Downs, Tara, Chinchilla and Miles. We just cannot find dentists. Dentists are really hard to find.

**Mrs Carryn Sullivan** interjected.

**Mr HOBBS:** I would like to take the member's interjection, but I have to get through a fair few more things. If I had more time—perhaps the member might allow me an extension of time—I would be happy to take the member's interjection.

There is also a severe lack of suitable housing for allied health professionals in communities such as St George, and many other members would have the same problem. The Patient Transit Scheme is stretched to the limit every year. For people living way out near Thargomindah who have to travel a long way—it is a long way out there—it is very difficult for them to get to those professional services that they need and that system is running out of money. It is just not satisfactory.

There is much concern from women in the south-west about the breast care nurse position, which provides support for women with breast cancer and psychological services. Those women and their families will not be refunded by Queensland Health when Commonwealth funding ceases in November 2003. That is very important.

In terms of natural resources, there is no compensation for the loss of property and management rights for landowners affected by the proposed high nature conservation area of 12,500 hectares at Gurulmundi in the southern Brigalow regional vegetation management plan near Miles. That is a system whereby it is decided that there is an area of high nature conservation value. The interesting thing was that in 1991 when the Gurulmundi waste dump was put in place, they found that there were no conservation issues in that particular area. Now they have found some and want to lock it up, but they are not prepared to pay people for the inconvenience. That is freehold land that landowners cannot fence and where they cannot put in dams or roads. It is terrible.

What would happen in the city if someone came along and said, 'You can't have a garden in your yard. You can't put a border there. You can't put a fence up at the back'? There would be riots, but it is truly happening. It is just so terrible. Those people are devastated—absolutely devastated—that they have to go through this whole process when they bought their land freehold and went to all that cost. But they just cannot do it.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! What is the relevance to this debate?

**Mr HOBBS:** What is the relevance to this debate? Mr Deputy Speaker, I am talking about compensation for people who have been told that their land is going to be taken away from them. They have been told that they cannot do anything with it. It is freehold land. Does compensation apply? It should apply. That is the reason I am talking about it. Compensation should be paid. These people should not have to go through what this government is putting them through. It is an absolute disgrace.

**Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I cannot see any relevance. The member will stick to the debate.

**Mr HOBBS:** This is the debate. This is what the debate is about. It is terribly important. This House should know how important this is. These people are being denied the use of the land that they bought. What if this were our house and somebody said we could not build a fence or plant a tree or a garden in the backyard? This is absolutely disgraceful.

Family services is another important area. The emergency relief funding for community support services has also not received a boost. It is particularly important that it is able to put

some funds into that. The current funds allocated deal only with the tip of the iceberg in comparison with what is required by the support services for emergency relief funding. The need grows every year, but the funding does not. Emergency relief funds have been stretched well beyond their capacity because of the drought and bushfires—for example, in Chinchilla and Taree. There is not one new staff member allocated in this year's budget for the Department of Families. This does nothing to assist with case loads and child protection work.

Time expired.

**Mr NEIL ROBERTS** (Nudgee—ALP) (10.00 p.m.): It is a pleasure to speak in support of the 2003 state budget—a budget delivered by a Labor government that has demonstrated its credentials to soundly manage the financial affairs of the state, and a Treasurer who recently delivered the magnificent Lang Park Suncorp Stadium on time and on budget. With similar oversight and control, Terry Mackenroth has crafted another solid budget which delivers a record \$22.1 billion expenditure on government services and capital works. The key priorities in this year's budget are Health, Disability Services, Education and Training.

**Nudgee Electorate Fares Well—Achievements to Date**

The Nudgee electorate, once again, has fared well in this year's budget. Like all members of parliament, I actively support the various budget bids and needs of my government service providers and community and business groups. We are not always successful in getting everything we want. However, I do my job as diligently as I can, and with the assistance of the community and the support of government ministers and departments, my constituents have been the beneficiaries of significant advancements in services and facilities in recent years.

Some of the more notable improvements during my term as the member for Nudgee include the construction of the new Police Citizens Youth Club at Zillmere; the establishment of the Banyo Police Beat and the opening of Australian Catholic University; a new Ambulance Station at Northgate; the completion of the Nundah bypass tunnel; a commitment to establish a new Community Health Centre in the Nundah area; an international standard athletics track at St Joseph's Nudgee College at Boondall; a multimillion-dollar program to upgrade public housing; major upgrades to our local railway stations, including lifts, car parking and security; and the creation of Earnshaw State College, a new preschool to year 12 college on the grounds of the old Banyo High School.

This budget continues to deliver good news for my constituents, particularly in the areas of Education, Health, Public Housing, Sport and Recreation. I will provide more detail on these new initiatives a little later in my speech, the remainder of which I seek leave to incorporate in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

#### BUDGET OVERVIEW

First, I want to make some general comment on the fundamentals of the budget and later, on the portfolios of Employment, Training, Youth and the Arts to which I am Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister Matt Foley.

Some of the key points of this budget are as follows.

It delivers a record \$22.1 billion in expenditure on services such as education, health and law and order as well as capital works such as housing, roads, education and health facilities.

The massive capital works budget allocation of almost \$5.3 billion, on a per capita basis, outstrips capital works spending by governments in all other states in Australia.

The Budget delivers a cash surplus, while still increasing funding to services and capital works.

It maintains Queensland's AAA credit rating and budget forecasts reveal the unemployment rate is set to remain at a year average of seven percent next financial year—the lowest figure in Queensland in thirteen years and well below the record high levels under the Borbidge government of 9.5%.

#### RECORD SPENDING IN DISABILITY SERVICES, HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Funding for disability services has increased dramatically under this budget. In the next four years, the government will increase funding for this area by almost 43% from \$231.1 million in 2002/03 to \$330.3 million in 2006/07.

By 2006/07 state funding for disabilities will be almost 164% greater than when we came to office. This is encouraging news for the thousands of Queenslanders who use our disability services.

This is an historic package of reform for the disability sector. The government is determined to work harder and smarter to improve the quality of life for people with a disability, their families and carers. This package firmly signals the priority the government has given to this task.

Another record Health budget, up \$300 million or 6.9% on last year will continue to keep Queensland's public health system amongst the best in the world.

A special \$10 million allocation will assist in reducing waiting times for elective surgery in our public hospitals.

The Productivity Commission has said that Queensland has the best elective surgery figures of any state in Australia and the most efficient health service in Australia.

That means we spend less on management and administration and more on patients than any other state.

#### NUNDAH COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

The budget re-affirms the commitment to establish a new Community Health Centre in the Nundah area. \$500,000 is allocated to be spent this year with a total budget allocation of \$5.86 million over the life of the construction project.

A new community health centre will involve the co-location of a range of community health services including Child Community Health Services, Adult, Child and Youth Mental Health Services, Youth Drug and Alcohol Services and Women's Health Visiting Service. The Centre will greatly improve the range and availability of basic health services for constituents in my electorate.

I am also pleased to see that \$100,000 has been provided to upgrade the telecommunication systems at the existing Nundah and Zillmere Health Services.

Nundah House is an important mental health facility in my electorate. Recently the Minister for Health ensured that additional funding was provided to maintain a special project officer at the centre until the end of the year. The project officer's role is to identify the best way in which the services and support offered to mental health patients at Nundah House can be continued.

One of the more pleasing health department initiatives throughout the year was the announcement of \$500,000 funding to air-condition Ashworth House, a State run aged care facility at Zillmere. Ashworth House provides first class care and this was very welcome news for its dedicated staff and residents. It also has a fantastic group of volunteers who support its operations.

#### EDUCATION—EXTRA TEACHERS

The Education department's operating budget is up 5.8% and the school capital works program will increase by 4.8%.

A highlight of the budget is the employment of 636 extra state school teachers in 2004 at a cost of about \$42 million per year.

The injection of new teachers delivers on our election commitment to provide 800 extra teachers over four years to help reduce class sizes, support students with disabilities and underpin behaviour management strategies.

#### EARNSHAW STATE COLLEGE—JUNIOR SCHOOL

Around \$3 million is provided under the Secondary School renewal program to construct a new Junior School at Earnshaw State College, a P-12 college being constructed on the grounds of the old Banyo High School.

The new Junior School, to be built this year, will be state of the art and cater for students from preschool to year 5. Stage one of Earnshaw State College involved the construction and refurbishment of the Middle School for years 6 to 9, which is now complete.

Stage 3 will involve the refurbishment of the Senior School (years 10 to 12) and will include a new Performing Arts Complex. This work is programmed for completion next year.

#### VIRGINIA STATE SCHOOL

Virginia State School has received an allocation of \$300,000 to upgrade its administration building. The current arrangements are inadequate for the Principal, administration staff and teachers. Students also are disadvantaged.

Planning is well under way to upgrade existing buildings to provide a more modern and functional administration area for the school. It is a welcome boost to the school which also recently received the benefit of joint State Government and Brisbane City Council funds to install a new pick-up and set-down zone in Jefferis Street.

#### BOONDALL STATE SCHOOL

Boondall State School is to receive a face lift with \$30,000 being allocated under the RRR program for repainting its buildings. (RRR = Re-roofing, Re-painting and Reticulation). Last year Boondall also saw the completion of its new pick-up and set-down zone which was jointly funded by the State Government and the BCC. This facility has improved traffic movement and safety for students at the school.

#### EXTRA SUPPORT FOR OTHER STATE SCHOOLS

Other state schools in my electorate will benefit from the significant increases in expenditure in the education budget and in particular from the massive increase in spending on computer technologies in schools.

Additionally, all of my local schools have benefited from extra spending from both the Education Department and the Department of Public Works and Q-Build.

Following are some recent examples. I have chosen to mention only one significant project at each school, however over the past year I have managed to secure financial support for a range of other projects at local schools, all of which have been in addition to the normal capital works and maintenance budgets provided by the government.

Zillmere State School has received \$70,000 in joint funding from the Department of Public Works and the Department of Families to construct a new Before and After School Care facility.

Geebung State School has been chosen to participate in the historic trial of a full-time Preparatory Year of schooling before Year 1. Facilities have been upgraded to cater for this and the decision is an acknowledgment of the quality care and expertise the school has in early childhood education.

Northgate State School recently opened its new Activities Room which was funded by the Department of Public Works with additional support from the school and Parents and Citizens Association.

In last year's budget, Geebung Special School received funding for a new Bendigo teaching block. I recently visited the new buildings which are providing a wonderful learning environment for students at the school.

#### CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The state government provides significant levels of support for capital works and maintenance projects in catholic schools. I have four quality catholic primary and one secondary school in the Nudgee Electorate. The primary schools are St Flannan's at Zillmere, St Kevin's at Geebung, St Dympna's in Aspley/Zillmere, and St Pius in Banyo. My only catholic secondary college is St Joseph's Nudgee College at Boondall.

The State Government provides direct grants to Queensland Catholic Education which distributes funds to local schools on its behalf. In this year's budget, the State allocation to all non-government schools, including catholic schools, for operational expenses, capital works and maintenance is a significant \$303 million up from \$284.4 million last year.

The capital works allocation within this is \$27.67 million which for the first time is now indexed to the CPI. Using last year's allocations as a guide, it would mean that the catholic sector would receive around \$17 million for capital works in its schools this year.

All of the catholic schools in my electorate have been improving their facilities either through the provision of direct grants from Queensland Catholic Education, with the support of the State Government, or through their own fund-raising efforts.

St Flannan's and St Kevin's primary schools have received state funding over the past year or so to construct new pre-school facilities. This financial year, St Kevin's has also received \$231,857 to assist with the construction of new classrooms, pupil's amenities and for upgrades to administration areas. St Pius Primary School received a total of \$131,605 for construction of a new preschool and pupil's amenities and is now offering both full-time and part-time preschool to local families. Last year St Dympna's opened extensions to its preschool facilities which it funded through its own fund-raising efforts.

St Dympna's is currently constructing a new \$1.7 million Resource Centre which has been fully funded by the school community; a fantastic effort by all involved.

#### AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

Australian Catholic University (ACU) opened its doors at the beginning of this year at its new campus, McAuley at Banyo. The Premier officially opened the University along with Vice Chancellor Peter Sheehan AO, Pro Vice Chancellor Professor Muredach Dynan, staff, students and a host of distinguished guests including many local residents of Banyo.

The State Government contributed \$6 million towards the relocation of the university from its old home at Mitchelton. ACU is a welcome addition to our neighbourhood. Together with the new Earnshaw State College and St Pius Primary School, it forms part of an exciting centre of educational excellence on Brisbane's north side.

ACU has formed a strong relationship with the Brisbane & Northpoint Institutes of TAFE and the nearby Earnshaw State College which will enhance the learning opportunities for local students.

#### UPGRADES TO SPORT AND RECREATION FACILITIES

The Queensland Government allocates more funding to sport and recreation than any other government in Australia. Getting more people physically active is one of the government's key objectives.

The budget gives this objective a massive boost by committing \$260,000 towards the construction of eight multi-sports fields at Zillmere in O'Callaghan Park. \$119,000 is allocated in this year's budget to start the redevelopment.

Aspley Little Athletics Centre at Geebung will receive \$21,000 towards the construction of two permanent discus/hammer throwing cages and the Toombul Cricket Club has received \$8,000 towards the installation of lighting to support night cricket at Oxenham Park, Nundah.

#### POLICING

Local policing has received a significant boost by the establishment of a new fourteen officer Tactical Crime Squad for north Brisbane. The Tactical Crime Squad will focus on crime problems specific to our local area and target crimes such as drug offences, break and enters and other property offences.

These new squads aim to enhance existing proactive policing activities in local areas in an endeavour to reduce crime. These additional policing resources complement the high standard of service already provided out of the Boondall and Hendra Police Divisions which service my electorate, including the recently established Community Police Beat at Banyo.

#### EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND YOUTH

As Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Employment, Training, Youth and the Arts, I am pleased that the budget invests a record \$877.3 million in jobs, training and youth services for 2003/04.

The budget reaffirms our commitment to the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle Initiatives which aims to create 56,000 jobs over six years, targeting the most disadvantaged job seekers in the community.

\$2 million has been allocated to support employment initiatives under the government's education and training reforms. There will be 200 targeted school-based apprenticeships and traineeships and a special employment program that will help 300 young people who are at risk of leaving school early.

Youth initiatives continue to receive solid financial support with \$2.5 million allocated to the Youth Access Program and \$425,000 to continue implementation of the government's Youth Participation Strategy.

Young indigenous people in Cape York will benefit from the implementation of the Cape York Youth Development Strategy and young people in general will benefit from the government's continued commitment to fund the Duke of Edinburgh Award program which is expected to involve up to 22,000 young people throughout 2003/04.

Young people's active involvement in their local communities and state affairs will be enhanced by the continuation of the State Youth Advisory Council and an allocation of \$200,000 to fund organisations to run projects that involve young Queenslanders in their communities.

#### LABOUR MARKET PROGRAMS

The Nudgee Electorate has benefited from a host of employment programs in the past year.

The Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle Initiative is specifically targeted at the most disadvantaged job seekers. Its programs give hope and support to thousands of Queenslanders and I am pleased that many residents in the Nudgee electorate have been the beneficiaries of this program.

In the past twelve months a number of programs have operated in my electorate. Mercy Family Services at Zillmere received \$140,000 to run the Jobtrack program to assist up to 160 disadvantaged youth in north Brisbane receive career guidance, literacy and numeracy assessments and job search training.

Mercy Family Services also received \$135,190 to employ 12 long-term unemployed people to produce a CD-ROM which would provide guidance on training, employment and career pathways for 500 different occupations. The CD-ROM would be used to assist other jobless people find work.

Brisbane City Council was granted \$90,000 to place 12 long-term unemployed women into local jobs. The Zillmere/Stafford Triple AAA project provided paid work in a number of local community organisations and provided valuable administration experience to a group of women who had been out of the workforce for a long period of time. BCC also received another \$149,800 to run a similar program, the 9 to 5 project, which ran for 22 weeks and targeted young, mature aged, indigenous and unemployed women living in Zillmere, Stafford, Nundah and Bracken Ridge.

One of the more substantial training and employment initiatives funded by the State Government has been the Zillmere District Training and Employment Pathway Project run by the Brisbane City Council

The State Government provided \$250,000 to BCC to help jobseekers in north Brisbane learn new skills relevant to the local job market. BCC contributed \$75,250 to the 12 month training project.

Kurbingui Youth Development Association at Zillmere received \$70,000 to run a program to assist north Brisbane Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reduce the barriers to employment. It also received a grant of \$95,700 to help eight unemployed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people establish a newsletter for indigenous communities across north Brisbane. The resultant Kurbingui Star newspaper has been a great success and a credit to all the workers who produce it each month.

And finally, the North East Community Support Group at Zillmere received \$102,800 to employ eight people to refurbish Zillmere Community Centre's courtyard which is to be used by various community groups for meetings, training, recreation and performances.

#### PUBLIC HOUSING

Nudgee Electorate is home to an extensive array of public housing. I am proud of our government's efforts over the past few years to improve the quality and appearance of local public housing.

A major program of housing upgrades has been occurring in Zillmere along with new construction across the electorate.

This budget continues the good work with another \$2.1 million to upgrade 56 existing public housing dwellings. Seven new public housing dwellings will also be constructed at a cost of \$698,000 and \$192,000 has been allocated to the Crisis Accommodation Program including funding to construct a women's refuge.

#### GAMBLING COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

Coinciding with the release of the Budget has been the announcement of the latest round of grants from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund. These grants have been established by the State Government to provide an easy source of finance to local community groups for worthwhile projects. It has been a spectacular success with many groups receiving much needed funds to improve their facilities or to provide resources and equipment for their membership.

Community groups that have benefited in the latest round include: St Oswald's Church at Banyo—\$10,098 to install a new driveway and car park. This will greatly assist the Nudgee Meals on Wheels association that has its kitchen in the church hall; The Asperser's Syndrome Support Network at Zillmere which has received \$29,687 to purchase office equipment and library resources; Endeavour Foundation at Geebung—\$15,900 to paint its building; Geebung Kindergarten and Preschool—\$21,539 to replace its outdoor play equipment; the Music Hall Melodies Association of Boondall—\$21,311 to purchase a trailer and sound and lighting equipment; North East Community Support Group—\$7449 to upgrade its telephones and purchase office equipment; North Star Orchid Circle—\$2,418 to purchase a refrigerator and tables; and the Weight Reduction Clubs of Queensland—\$4284 to purchase a computer package and fax for their office.

The 2003 State Budget has delivered substantial benefits to my electorate and to the people of Queensland.

One of the great pleasures of my job as the State Member for Nudgee is working with the community to improve local services and facilities.

Thank you to the many community groups, businesses and individuals who contribute so much to improve the quality of life in our local area.

I congratulate the Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth for another solid budget which puts families and community at the forefront of our government's priorities.

I commend the budget to the parliament.

**Mrs MILLER** (Bundamba—ALP) (10.02 p.m.): I am privileged to be able to represent the people of the Bundamba electorate in this chamber. The people I represent are true blue

Queenslanders—people who live on pensions, people who are paying off mortgages, the workers with families, students, children at our schools, the elderly, the sick and the disabled. This budget is a great Labor budget and it is a budget that delivers for the true believers of the Bundamba electorate.

I do not want to focus on the broad economic objectives of this budget that has delivered funding for health, education, families and the disabled. I intend to focus on what I have been able to achieve for the people in Bundamba, suburb by suburb.

#### Swanbank

Swanbank is on the brink of a new era in industrial development with the CS Energy Industrial Park and the proposed anchor industry, Swanbank Paper Mill Pty Ltd. This proposed paper industry is currently under assessment and, if approved following the most stringent assessment processes, it will bring to the Bundamba electorate over \$1 billion in investments, over 600 construction jobs, over 200 permanent jobs and enormous economic spin-offs for the Ipswich community. I would like to thank John Roach of the Swanbank Paper Mill for his openness with the community on the proposed development and look forward to working with him in the future.

In this budget, \$1.5 million has been allocated to strengthen Swanbank Road to cater for increased heavy traffic in the future. The three kilometre section of Swanbank Road includes widening and granular overlay on the Swanbank Road from Sussex Street to the power station entrance, including concrete bridge widening at Swanbank Services Bridge.

#### Blackstone

The Blackstone State School will receive an allocation from Education Queensland to repaint the school. It should also be noted that Education Queensland intends to move the former headmaster's house to a block of land around the corner to be sold in order that students can have increased playground facilities. This has been achieved with Education Queensland working with the Ipswich City Council and the Ipswich Historical Society. Due to the lateness of the hour, I seek to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

#### Bundamba

The Bundamba State Secondary College is a great State School. The \$3 million secondary renewal program is nearly completed. It includes: refurbishment programs throughout the school, new paint, better designed classrooms, computer labs, and new audio/visual multi-purpose facilities.

Bundamba State Secondary College has effectively been rebuilt and re-accentuated to education in the new millennium. It is about educating our students for the jobs of the future.

The school is led by Mr Barry Hopf, an inspirational school principal. He has a dedicated teaching staff and a supportive P and C, all doing their best for the education of our young people.

The school arts program at the school includes a drama sequence based on unheard voices in our community and I hope that our drama students will obtain jobs in the arts industry when they leave school.

Bundamba will also be the site of the Capral Plant, as part of the Bremer Industrial Park. It will bring 300 jobs into our community. I will continue to work with residents who have concerns about environmental and health matters and would like to thank the EPA officers who have spent much time explaining technical information to my people.

The Bremer Institute of TAFE headquarters is in Bundamba and they do a great job in training our community for jobs. In this Budget, \$25,000 has been allocated for the Arts Pathway Initiative and \$426,000 to continue the development of information and community technology infrastructure.

This is in addition to their operational budget of tens of millions of dollars. The Bremer TAFE, whilst headquartered in Bundamba, also has campuses in Goodna and Springfield in my electorate. The TAFE is playing a key role in the Education and Training Reforms initiatives and it is great that the electorate of Bundamba is included in the ETRF trials.

#### Ebbw Vale

Ebbw Vale is a community of hidden treasures, including its great community of interest, the caring of residents towards each other, and its secret garden. After lengthy consultation, Powerlink is constructing high tension towers, but I understand that Powerlink intends to construct some landscaping works and is in negotiations with community organisations to provide further assistance to the community.

The Ebbw Vale/Dinmore Neighbourhood Watch is an excellent example of the community working together for the benefit of its residents.

#### Dinmore

Dinmore has been part of the Dinmore/Riverview Community Renewal Program which is now in its end phase. The Dinmore State School has been a beneficiary of the community renewal program with the construction of outdoor courts.

The urban renewal program has begun in Dinmore with approximately \$40,000 being spent on each house with new carports, fences, kitchens, laundries etc. being constructed. The Department of Housing tenants are very happy with this program, as are other members of the Dinmore community.

Dinmore State School is also part of the School Arts Program. 33 members of the Year 6 class will explore themes of culture and community in a drama and video project.

Dinmore also is the site of the Australian Meat Holdings plant—the biggest meat processor in the southern hemisphere. The plant employs over 2000 people, including the university week-end shift. AMH assists local community organisations, including Scouts and Ambulance, for which I am grateful.

Riverview:

Riverview has undergone dynamic change over recent years as a result of the urban renewal program which is now finished, and the Dinmore/Riverview Community Renewal Program. Millions of dollars have been pumped into Riverview by the Beattie Labor Government and the results speak for themselves: Riverview is a much happier place to live in.

Recently I officially opened the \$600,000 oval at Riverview State School. This oval is also used by West Moreton Rugby Union Club. This is a great sporting facility for Riverview and it will be well used by local families in future years. The road connecting Riverview to Redbank is also on time and on budget. It is jointly funded by the Beattie Labor Government and ICC and is estimated to cost \$5 million.

Riverview State School is also part of the \$400,000 arts program. Storytelling, traditional Indigenous and Polynesian dance, singing and drama will be a part of the arts program, and will benefit from additional funding for repainting of school buildings.

Redbank

Redbank will have a new ambulance station this financial year. \$650,000 has been allocated for the station. A property has been purchased in Law Street, just up the road from the current cramped station and construction will begin as soon as approvals have been granted.

The residents of Redbank are delighted that the ambos are staying in their community.

A recent meeting of the community has decided to call an AGM in July to reform the Redbank Ambulance Committee and I understand that local businesses, AMH, QR Redbank Workshops and Redbank Plaza Shopping Centre are keen to assist the new committee.

\$13.2 million has been allocated to design, manufacture or upgrade Queensland Rail's City train and coal wagon fleet at the Redbank Workshops. Transport has also allocated a share of \$5.4 million for work on upgrading timber rail bridges with concrete structures.

The Redbank State School is also part of the School Arts program with their contribution being interpretations of the community: who you are—the community elders—the future of Redbank. Mr Alan Tulloch is the artist in residence at the school.

Collingwood Park

The suburb of Collingwood Park is about to boom! The East-West Development, off Goss Drive, has been opened up for sale to the general public, which I am pleased about, and the George Cheick development is about to happen with over 800 blocks of land to be sold. This is all good news for Collingwood Park residents.

The best news however has been the Collingwood Park Sports and Recreation Centre, currently under construction, located opposite Redbank Plaza. It is a monument of our government's commitment to sports and recreation.

Our Labor Government is fully funding this facility and over \$2 million has been committed to the project. I inspected the facility last week and it is a great facility. A further \$100,000 has been allocated and now two outdoor courts will be built. So there will be four courts—two indoor multi-purpose courts, and two external courts. It also includes meeting rooms, and other facilities for the benefit of the community.

Collingwood Park State School will also receive Education Queensland money to repaint the school.

Goodna

Goodna will have a new 25 metre eight-lane swimming pool, leisure pool and club house. The community of Goodna is ecstatic about this news as—one old-timer told me—a pool had been on the agenda since 1967.

Well, after a lot of hard work and lobbying by me, the Minister for Sport has allocated \$565,000 towards the cost of the pool.

Community Renewal funding from the Department of Housing and Ipswich City Council funding will also be used to construct the pool. It is intended that the pool be constructed opposite the Goodna Bowls Club—so it will be a riverside pool. This is subject to soil and other engineering tests which are important in the design work of pools.

The Goodna Cultural and Arts Centre, fully funded by the Beattie Labor Government, is also going strong. This centre is used day and night by seniors groups, dance groups, arts groups and has been a great addition in my electorate. Over \$1.2 million was allocated by our Labor Government to this Centre.

The Goodna State School is also part of the school arts program. About 20 students from years 5-7 are creating outdoor sculptures.

Today I was also privileged to launch the new Goodna website. The website was identified by the community at a Service Integration Project Meeting forum. The SIP project was funded by our Labor Government and the website was set up with \$6,000 contribution. There is an interactive community engagement section in the website called "What's Happening". I thank the Goodna Community Co-ordination Committee, and especially Father Brian Fitzpatrick, for his dedication to this community organisation and the people of Goodna.

The Goodna Neighbourhood House is also running an employment and training program, funded by the Department of Employment and Training, through its Breaking the Unemployment Cycle Initiatives.

The Goodna TAFE House, an ordinary Department of Housing dwelling, in Goodna, is the site of our employment and training initiatives. Many people who have undertaken literacy and numeracy courses, computer courses, forklift training courses, driving courses and other training programs, now are in full-time employment. I congratulate the Goodna Neighbourhood House and Bremer TAFE for their vision in getting our people back to training and back to work. Nearly \$500,000 has been allocated to this program and it is money well spent.

Between October 1998 and March 2003, approximately \$6.9 million has been allocated under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle Initiatives. This has resulted in 991 jobs being created in our electorate.

The multimillion dollar Goodna Urban Renewal Scheme of the Department of Housing continues for the benefit of the community.

\$44,000 has been allocated to the Goodna Youth Accommodation Service as part of the Crisis Accommodation Program.

\$50,000 has been allocated to Goodna Special School for a covered drop-off to the car park at the school. The car park has been upgraded only recently and parents and teachers of the school are very pleased with the construction in progress.

The Goodna Bowls Club will receive \$6,174 from the Department of Sport and Recreation towards the installation of an irrigation system. Our bowlers are very grateful for this contribution.

#### Gailes

The Gailes Community House has been a great addition to the community. The house is a focus point for the community and is yet another success story of the Goodna/Gailes Community Renewal Scheme. This house is going to be a venue for training programs to be delivered by the Bremer Institute of TAFE; training in life skills and training to get people back to work.

#### Redbank Plains

Redbank Plains will have a Neighbourhood Police Beat. Our Labor Government has allocated \$185,000 to establish this beat. The Redbank Plains Neighbourhood Watch are pleased with this initiative and the people of Redbank Plains will welcome a local beat policeman or policewoman in their midst.

I was privileged to attend the Redbank Plains State School fete last Saturday and am always impressed with the energy of this community. Over 150 students will be devising lyrics for six songs to be cut and used as a school CD as part of the School Arts Program.

Redbank Plains State High School, in my view, is an arts school of excellence. The school is a part of the \$400,000 school arts program and this will include traditional dance, funk dance, break dance, drama, storytelling, singing and song writing.

In August, the school will also host its Arts Expo which is a highlight of the school year. Led by Principal Ian Ferguson, this school has an enviable reputation in our community. Last year 188 students graduated from Year 12, and some of them are following in their teachers' footsteps by studying education at university. And when they graduate, I hope they will teach at my local high schools.

Our Labor Government has also made contributions to the upgrades of the Redbank Plains Recreation Reserve. Currently our government has made substantial funding available to the Ipswich City Council for the upgrade of the AFL fields and this work is now under way.

Kruger State School is in collaboration with Contact Inc and will create an original performance piece, devised by senior students of the school, as part of the School Arts Program.

#### Camira/Springfield

The Camira/Springfield area is growing fast.

Woodcrest College will receive \$672,000 for the new school stages 1 and 2. This will be spent in the middle school.

The Springfield and Springfield Lakes Community are also well served by the Springfield College—an Anglican College—and St Augustine's—a Catholic College. Both these schools are P-12 schools, similar to Woodcrest College, which is a Queensland Government State School.

Great news for Springfield is that \$185,000 has been allocated for a Police Beat Shop Front. Planning by the Queensland Police Service is well under way to make this police beat a reality as soon as possible.

I am well aware of the growth in the Camira/Springfield and Springfield Lakes area and I want to assure the local community that the Queensland government is tracking the growth rates with interest.

Mr Speaker, the Bundamba electorate is the hub of economic development in Ipswich.

In the Camira/Springfield, Springfield Lakes, Collingwood Park, and Redbank Plains areas, the level of housing development actually occurring, or in the planning stages, is outstanding. There is tens of millions of dollars in investment in this sector alone.

In the business sector there is the proposed Swanbank Paper Mill, and the CS Energy Swanbank Park; there is Capral and the developments at the Bremer Business Park; there is the industrial estate being developed at Springfield, and over my border, there is the Synergy Industrial Park. There is over \$1.4 billion in investment in these industrial developments alone.

I am determined, however, that in this progressive stage of our electorate that our people will be given the opportunity for local jobs, through local training programs, through the Bremer Institute of TAFE, through school-based apprenticeships and school-based traineeships, through giving our young students the desire and

willingness to stay at school or at TAFE until Year 12, and also by retraining our existing workforce to work in new industries.

On behalf of our people in the Bundamba electorate, I thank the Premier, Peter Beattie, and the Treasurer, and Ministers, for this great State Budget.

I would particularly like to thank my Minister, the Minister for Education, Anna Bligh, as over \$830,000 will be spent in education initiatives alone in Bundamba electorate. I would like to thank the Minister for Transport for the \$10 million towards a current \$66 million Federal funding commitment to complete planning of the Ipswich Motorway upgrade from 4 lanes to 6 lanes, between Granard Road to Riverview. However, the Federal Government needs to get the moths out of its Budget as the Ipswich Motorway needs Federal funding of hundreds of millions of dollars to make it run smoothly. I will keep the pressure on the Federal Government, as it is their responsibility to fund the Ipswich Motorway.

I would like to thank the Treasurer and Minister for Sports for the funding of the Goodna pool. This will be a real asset in my community and will improve their health and wellbeing.

The Minister for Employment and Training and Minister for the Arts, Matt Foley, has taken a keen interest in our community, particularly in the Arts. I thank him for his contribution to the School Arts Programs and his support for arts programs in our community generally.

The Minister for Housing should also be thanked for his continuing efforts in urban renewal and community renewal programs.

This is a Labor Government Budget, once again, delivering for its Labor heartland. The Beattie Labor Government, of which I am a proud member representing the people of Bundamba electorate, works with the community delivering powerful and effective programs that matter in the community because IT IS PART OF THE COMMUNITY. It is this partnership that makes the real difference. It is a Labor Government, delivering for Labor people.

I commend the Budget to the House.

**Mr CHRIS FOLEY (Maryborough—Ind) (10.05 p.m.):** As the old saying goes, we have some good news and we have some bad news. According to the Premier's message in the regional budget statement for the Wide Bay-Burnett region 2003-04, it is nothing but good news for the Maryborough electorate, with more than \$49 million for rail manufacturing in Maryborough, including CityTrain units, locomotives and the continuing Cairns tilt train program; \$5.66 million to complete the \$14.2 million Maryborough residential aged care facility at Maryborough Hospital; \$8.2 million to finalise construction of the commissioning of the new 500-bed correctional centre at Maryborough; \$1.25 million to the Maryborough Shire Council to continue the CBD beautification project; \$2.41 million to construct overtaking lanes on the Maryborough-Hervey Bay road between Philip Court and Salt Water Creek; \$565,000 in joint state-Commonwealth funding for the Wide Bay Institute of TAFE to continue the development of information and communication technology infrastructure; and \$4.33 million provided by the Commonwealth government to continue the consolidation of the Wide Bay Institute of TAFE Maryborough to a single site located on Nagel Street, including construction of a new engineering facility. Emergency services in the electorate will be supported by a \$486,000 ambulance station at Howard.

The Maryborough electorate is thankful and positive about any new funding that comes our way. But we are entirely cynical about the leftovers from last night's dinner being tossed into a casserole and being dished up again as a new meal, complete with glossy and expensive packaging. Announcing then reannouncing and then reannouncing again and, when it finally starts getting a bit obvious, celebrating the fact that there is \$8.2 million to finalise construction of an already budgeted project, such as the correctional centre, which has already been celebrated time and time again, leads to a delicate medical condition called EVC, or extreme voter cynicism. This type of practice is like telling one of our kids that we are going to buy them a DVD for their birthday and then giving them a brochure on it for their 10th birthday, the packaging on their 11th birthday, the case on their 12th birthday and the actual DVD on their 13th birthday, and then claiming to be a good father for giving them four birthday presents in a row.

However, as an Independent I believe in giving credit where credit is due. I have no need to politicise this budget reply. I simply remind the government that Maryborough electors are rugged individuals with very good memories, especially when it comes to promises made. Yesterday I sent out a media release congratulating Judy Spence on her grant of \$353,500 for a mobile child care centre. I note also that the Minister for Transport, Steve Bredhauer, has not fallen off his bike when it comes to delivering his promise of up to a million dollars for the bikeway for the Lamington Bridge. In addition, I congratulate the government on commencing renovation work on the St Mary's Primary School to the tune of \$120,000.

I notice that \$390,000 has been allocated for a Tactical Crime Squad. In my maiden speech I applauded the Premier for his wisdom at the last general election in deciding to locate the tactical response group in Maryborough. Maryborough is the logical choice because of its

geographical centrality in our region. In addition to this, because of the swift response times needed for a Tactical Crime Squad, Maryborough's location on the Bruce Highway gives it quick access to the feeder roads to the surrounding regions. Even though the location of this group has not been announced yet, the Premier has reminded us that he has not forgotten his initial promise to the people of Maryborough and district.

I also mentioned in my maiden speech that Walkers EDI has the skills, expertise and capacity to produce all of Queensland Rail's rolling stock requirements for the foreseeable future. I call upon the government in future budgets to enter into a formal, long-term agreement with Walkers EDI to provide all—

**A government member** interjected.

**Mr CHRIS FOLEY:** If honourable members on the other side actually listened they would realise that I am complimenting them. They are confused about that. I call upon the government to in future budgets enter into a formal, long-term agreement with Walkers EDI to provide all Queensland rolling stock needs for the next 10 to 20 years. That would remove the uncertainty which hangs over this facility and the future job prospects of the workers and families who depend on it at this time. Companies or families relying on them cannot make long-term commitments or even have long-term aspirations based on short-term ad hoc work prospects and contractual arrangements.

I also call upon the government to budget to assist our electorate to get the proposed marine park off the ground as it has the potential of employing 400 to 2,000 workers. We also look forward to the government's support in helping us implement the innovative Reddacliff plan, including the transformation of our inner-city riverscape into a Mapleton-style feel. The bridges of Tiaro shire are in a crisis situation which will put into jeopardy rural yields this calendar year. We need the government's help in this area.

If the Hon. Peter Beattie wishes to ingratiate himself forever with the Maryborough people, including those in the surrounding areas, he should pay close attention to working with his minister to find innovative solutions to staffing and services to help our very hardworking nurses and doctors and ancillary staff at Maryborough Base Hospital. Like all rural electorates, our financial needs are great, and we look forward to forging good working relationships with all ministers to deliver positive, long-term, lasting solutions for this wonderful electorate that we call home. Finally, I would like to thank all of my parliamentary colleagues for making me feel welcome to the 50th Parliament of Queensland.

**Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN** (Pumicestone—ALP) (10.11 p.m.): I am delighted to rise today and talk on my third budget since the election in February 2001. To say that time has flown is an understatement, and I am hoping that the residents will once again be satisfied in the main with this budget that focuses on families and those who most need a helping hand.

I congratulate the Treasurer, the Hon. Terry Mackenroth, and his diligent staff for bringing down yet another strong and balanced budget. This budget will be the last one before the next state election and, as I have stated in this parliament, all promises made to me as a Labor candidate in 2000 have been fulfilled.

The budget has boosted Queensland Police Service spending by 9.2 per cent, or \$84 million, resulting in an operational budget of just over \$1 billion. Residents in Pumicestone are enjoying a greater focus on safety thanks to the additional police resources in Morayfield in the form of a permanent police shopfront at the Morayfield Shopping Centre and in Beachmere in the form of the first ever permanent police beat. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Senior Constable Kevin Scrimshaw and to thank Beachmere for accepting him into—

**Ms Stone:** He's a good officer.

**Mrs CARRYN SULLIVAN:** He is a great officer, and I thank the Beachmere community for accepting him. The comments about the police beat have been incredibly optimistic, and from all accounts Kevin is doing a fine job in curbing the crime rate. He and the residents have both benefited from the beginnings of a positive partnership. This year's budget has allocated a further \$48,000 to keep the beat fully resourced. The budget also sees the inclusion of an extra \$390,000 for a 14-officer tactical crime squad to be based at Redcliffe and servicing the Pumicestone electorate.

Members will recall the frantic lobbying for this service last year and although the squad went to the northern part of the Sunshine Coast—I see the member for Noosa here and I know she lobbied very strongly for her area last year—I certainly am delighted that we have been able to

get one included this year. This is very good news for the residents of Caboolture and Pumicestone. I have contacted the Caboolture and Bribie Island Police and they are happy to be able to have access to more police in the near future to tackle identified problems sooner. These extra resources are further proof that the Beattie government is committed to the overall safety of Queenslanders.

I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

As a former primary school teacher, I take great pride in seeing Education as a major focus in this year's budget. Recurrent expenditure will increase by 5.8% taking the total to \$4.488 billion. Another billion dollar business which of course the schools in the Electorate of Pumicestone will benefit from.

A highlight of the education budget is the employment of 636 extra state school teachers in 2004, at a cost of approximately \$42 million a year. The increase includes 327 teachers allocated over and above usual growth and another 60 teachers to support students with special needs. This is the largest single initiative to increase classroom teachers and the only one focused on reducing class sizes since 1980. \$67 million, including \$35.6 million allocated as part of the package, will see an increase in the number of computers and internet connections at school which means the Beattie Government is on target to achieve a student to computer ratio of 5:1 for Years 3 through to 12 by 2005.

Locally, schools in Pumicestone will directly benefit through a number of initiatives set up by Education Queensland.

Caboolture East State School will receive a \$100,000 boost to upgrade the Special Education Unit and \$34,000 for classroom hire. I would like to congratulate Principal, Mark Hunter and the wonderful staff for their dedication to the children in their care and the enthusiasm with which they are always looking to foster new and unique learning strategies for the students.

Caboolture East School has also been involved in this year's very first full-time preparatory year trials. This is one of the most significant educational reform packages in the history of Queensland and has made a difference to the lives of those children participating in the trial. From all accounts it has been a great success.

Both Caboolture State High and Beachmere State Primary schools will share in \$157,000 for repainting under the Triple R Maintenance Program. This will further add to Caboolture High's ongoing expenditure of \$156,000 as part of the Secondary School Renewal Program Phase 3.

Also included in this budget is a welcomed \$260,000 for additional toilets at Banksia Beach State School that is part an area experiencing high growth.

The Government's economic plan is directly aimed at maximising the state's economic performance and providing an even better quality of life for all. With regard to employment and training, the budget will allocate a record \$784.6 million for vocational training and youth services, including a \$577.7 million for training delivery by the State's 15 TAFE institutes. I am a big supporter of apprenticeship schemes and am pleased to see up to 44,000 apprentices and trainees are expected to begin schemes in 2003-04. An estimated \$4.38 million will be allocated in this region to help create 507 entry-level jobs in crucial, skills-shortage industries and the public sector through a range of apprenticeship and traineeship programs. This time there is a strong focus on youth participation strategies with emphasis on the important contribution young people make in the community.

I'm delighted that the Beattie Government has once again delivered a significant boost to health funding. Compared to last year's budget, the next 4 years will see a cumulative increase in health spending of over \$2.6 billion for wage increases, operating cost increases and for increased and better services for a growing and ageing population. Locally we see an additional \$1.05 million for cancer treatment services, an extra \$1 million for inpatient medical services to manage demand on emergency departments at Caboolture Hospital and a further \$800,000 for the intensive Care Units in the district. The hospital's car park will be expanded and the road access will be upgraded as well. There is also \$330,000 for new family support and respite services in Caboolture.

The Bribie Island Home Assist Secure (Bribie Island Voluntary Community Help Association Inc), a Goss Government initiative, will receive \$117,000 to help provide subsidised services to the elderly who remain in their homes.

Disability Services will get \$200 million or an increase of 16.3% in new funding over 4 years including \$35 million in 2003-04 for a range of initiatives that will provide better outcomes for people with a disability, their carers, their families and providers. We are doing what we can, but it is a shame that for the second year there has been no real growth funds for disabilities from the Federal Government.

This year many areas faced a frightening series of bushfires including Bribie Island. It prompted a visit by the Emergency Services Minister, the Hon Mike Reynolds to comfort those who had been affected by the fires and congratulate those who helped fight the fires. Both emergency services and the Police fought to ensure that not even a fence paling was lost. Residents will be pleased to see \$12,000 has now been allocated for firebreaks in the Bribie Island National Park.

While on the Park, I would like to commend the work done by the trainee rangers in Poverty Creek Camping area. When this area is complete, it will make a wonderful addition to existing park facilities.

Protection of the environment has always been important to this Government being one of its 5 core priorities. The budget provides more than \$300 million to the EPA for its three key strategies namely protecting our natural and cultural heritage, promoting sustainable use of our natural capital and ensuring a clean environment. The further declaration of National and Marine Parks shows the Government's ongoing commitment to bring the total % of Parks to 5%. Many residents are looking forward to the official declaration of public lands on Bribie Island's northern section as a recreation area under the Recreation Area Management Act 1988.

I keenly support the Government's \$100,000 trial of residential rainwater tanks in Brisbane through the City Council. I am positive the trial will be successful and I will be encouraging further trials to be implemented in the future. The advantages of installing rainwater tanks in towns are numerous and I commend Minister Wells for his foresight in this area.

Community Renewal is still progressing well in Caboolture South. It is in its final countdown with less than 12 months to go. With about \$1 million still to spend, residents have already seen a significant change to the area with improvements to the liveability and appearance of Caboolture South. In the same area, a further \$60,000 has been allocated for Crisis Accommodation program which will help address the affordable housing issues there.

The Opposition has said much about the rates of unemployment in Queensland and I'd like to draw to their attention the huge population surge that the state has experienced over the past 12 months. We do a good job of encouraging people to come and live in the Sunshine State. The highest number of people both from overseas and interstate have been recorded migrating to Queensland and this of course affects job figures. This budget however provides an additional \$85 million per annum commencing in 2004-05 to continue until 2006-07. The electorate of Pumicestone has benefited through Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiatives with many more to come.

There are many more initiatives for the Electorate including \$1.5 million to the local Council for the redevelopment of the Bongaree foreshore and \$12,000 for a Solar Sludge Drying Plant to encourage the use and development of new and/or innovative wastewater treatment technologies for Council.

I have already received some response from the budget and so far it has been reasonably favourable. However I will continue to lobby on behalf of my constituents for more services, facilities and opportunities in the future.

**Ms STONE** (Springwood—ALP) (10.13 p.m.): First, I congratulate the Treasurer on once again delivering a budget that looks after the people most in need in our state, which of course is what the Labor Party does.

The Beattie government's high priority for families, health, education, police and disability services is clearly seen in this budget. I have to say that the Wednesday, 4 June edition of the *Albert and Logan News* said it all. The headline was 'Budget Bonanza for Police, Health and schools— Our Big Winners'. Kylie Forsyth wrote—

Police, health and the Springwood business district were the big winners for the Albert and Logan News area in the 2003/2004 state budget.

This edition of the newspaper focused on the state budget, and I want to congratulate editor Ray Goodey, Kylie Forsyth, Natalie Newell, Kristen Webb and other journalists who certainly have done a great job of telling my constituents and the other residents of Logan exactly what the state budget offers.

I listened intently to what the Opposition Leader proposed to the people of Queensland as an alternative government. I could not believe my ears. The Leader of the Opposition wants to sack 170 people in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. He wants 170 people to go home and tell their families that they are no longer required. How devastating this would be in a one-income family. It is obvious that the opposition is not fair dinkum when it comes to finding jobs for Queenslanders. I would encourage everyone to log on to the web site of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and take a look at what it does. To start with it coordinates community cabinet meetings throughout the state, a forum that is for the people of Queensland to interact with the Premier, ministers and departmental officers and to put their views and ideas to the government. The Leader of the Opposition does not want the people of Queensland to do this. He does not want the voices of the people in the bush to be heard. The people of Springwood know that the Beattie government listens. They will be interacting with the government at a community cabinet meeting on Sunday, 6 July at John Paul College, where they will get the opportunity to discuss ideas that are important to them.

Community engagement is an important part of good government. The regional community forums engage regional members of Queensland in government decision making. Springwood in the City of Logan has representatives on regional community boards. They meet regularly with representatives from the Gold Coast, Redlands and Beaudesert. Many important issues that relate to those areas are investigated, and recommendations are presented to ministers. Ministers attend meetings and hear the findings of these investigations. On Monday, 23 June I will be attending the regional community forum in my electorate at the Chung Tian Temple. What a fantastic place to hold this forum. I want to place on record my thanks to all of the people on the committee for taking the time to participate in these forums and investigations because they are making a difference to our community. In particular I want to thank Paul Stafford of Springwood and Thomas Gribbon of Group Training Australia at Shailer Park for representing the needs of Springwood and Logan residents on that committee.

I will be telling people in my area that the National Party does not want people in jobs to coordinate community engagement events such as community cabinet meetings or regional

community boards. Instead, it would rather have men in suits telling the government what to do. In other words, I cannot see much of an alternative being offered to the people of Queensland.

I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Health is certainly one area that is dear to the hearts of all Queenslanders and indeed all Australians—except for the federal Howard government. One of this budget's highlight would have to be the four year \$1.6 billion boost to public health care. What a shame that the Commonwealth government will not match that \$ for \$ instead they will contribute a \$1 billion over four years.

I am pleased to be apart of a government that listens. I know that many backbenchers including myself have been lobbied by our constituents to have more funding for health and I am pleased that the Treasurer has listened to not only the government members but has also answered the concerns of Queenslanders.

Logan Hospital shares in this record health budget. This budget has funding to open a new 30 bed ward at Logan Hospital by April next year. There will be thirteen new positions created to staff the new ward. But that is not all.

Logan / Beaudesert Health District will receive over \$2.1m to provide additional medical inpatient services and emergency services.

Cancer treatment services across Qld will get a major \$13.2m boost in the state budget to help meet increasing demand and address waiting times for less urgent cases.

Logan Hospital will receive over \$1.6m to improve oncology, intensive care and home based care services. This includes the purchase of a new CT scanner, medical imaging equipment, colonoscopes and gastroscopes.

Logan Community Health Centre is also to receive \$4.1 million to build a three-storey building to replace a number of stand-alone and demountable buildings that have catered for the needs of the community for nearly 30 years.

The state government has also invested additional money in intensive care services. Logan will receive \$500 000 to improve the hospital's capacity to handle increasing demand for intensive care and to provide more timely treatment to patients requiring surgery.

The demand for renal dialysis services has grown by an average of 8.2% each year over the last five years. The Beattie labor government will inject an additional \$13.1m into renal dialysis services. Once again Logan/Beaudesert district is on that list and will receive \$500 000.

This health budget reflects an increase of 6.9%. It is a record health budget and the budget recognises that Logan/Beaudesert Health District is one of the fastest growing health areas in Queensland.

Education is also a big winner in the budget. I am delighted to see the government put money into extra resources for students with disabilities, additional computers and better facilities for schools and of course extra teachers.

The highlight of the education budget is the employment of 636 extra state school teachers in 2004. I believe that it doesn't matter what resources schools have. If we don't have committed teachers—that is teachers that are not committed to wanting to teach our young people—then our education system will fail. At the end of the day it is commitment from teachers, students and parents that will ensure successful educational outcomes.

I have received a number of representations from people with children who have disabilities attending state schools in my area. I know that they would like to see the government give more commitment to and improved facilities for students with disabilities. I am extremely pleased to see the Building Inclusive Schools program introduced. This program will provide \$50m over five years to improve facilities for students with disabilities and I note that \$8.2m of that money will benefit approximately 45 schools in the year 2003—2004.

This budget is directing funds where it is needed most and that is in the classroom.

Police is another big ticket item. The police budget has reached \$1b and has seen an increase of 9.2%. \$84m has been injected into the police budget.

Springwood will see the completion of the new 24 hour police station at Loganholme. Construction is under way, barring any unforeseen delays, the station will be completed by the end of the year.

The provision of \$2.11 million in the 2003/04 budget is delivering the funds needed to complete this project and give us another police station with additional resources to fight crime in our growing community.

The location of the 24-hour station, on Bryants Road and Timor Avenue, will provide a central location and a highly visible police presence to further enhance the policing service provided to our community.

The new station will service the suburbs of Loganholme, Cornubia, Shailer Park, Tanah Merah and Carbrook.

This extra police division will provide facilities for general duties officers, the criminal investigation Bureau and Juvenile Aid Bureau, electronic interview rooms, witness quiet rooms, a home look-a-like room, holding cells, storage areas and other amenities.

"The Beattie government has provided the Logan police district with an additional 72 police officer positions since it was first elected.

"The provision of a 14-officer tactical crime squad to service this area has also provided police with additional resources to tackle crime in our community."

The tactical crime squad targets known crime hotspots and places an emphasis on property crime and possession and supply of drugs offences.

I am pleased that the Beattie government has put additional dollars into police. This will be a record police budget and I know the people in my electorate will benefit from this.

I stated before that I have had representations from parents and carers who have children with disabilities. Not only were they concerned about the level of commitment and money spent in education for their children. They were also concerned about the commitment and dollars spent on services to support them and their loved ones.

I am very proud to belong to a government that has recognised the need to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities, their families and carers by boosting Disability Services budget by \$290.5m over four years.

This sector has been forgotten about for years. Minister Spence has fought very hard to ensure this message has been loud and clear and has achieved a wonderful outcome for Queenslanders with disabilities. I congratulate Minister Spence for the hard work she is doing in continuing to reform the state's disability sector and improve the quality of life and opportunities for all Qlders.

Health, education and police are the priorities for families in my electorate and this budget certainly demonstrates that they are also the government's priorities.

The environment is very important to the people of Springwood electorate. With Daisy Hill forest as our backyard the people of Springwood and indeed all of Qld expect the government to protect our cultural and natural heritage.

The Beattie labor government has placed a high priority on valuing the environment. \$3.2m has been allocated to continue the implementation of the Great Walks of Qld project. This will result in a world-class network of walks and visitor facilities for all Queenslanders and tourists to enjoy.

I note that \$10.1m has been allocated for capital works on national parks, forests and other protected areas.

An initiative of this government that is dear to all my constituents' heart is the preparation of a conservation plan for koalas to guide the protection of koalas and koala habitat across Qld.

Springwood will be amongst those areas that will have increased assessment, monitoring and enforcement of legislation concerning vegetation, water and land resources and pests; with SLATS satellite imagery for vegetation monitoring purposes to be performed on an annual rather than biennial basis.

Last Sunday I attended the inaugural meeting of the Logan East Community Fire Ant Group. What a fantastic group of motivated people that want to ensure our backyards are safe and can be used by us to enjoy bbq's, games of footy and cricket or just to lie in the sun. All of this would not be possible if our community was to have fire ants. I note in the DPI budget that \$41.1m has been committed from states, territory and Commonwealth government to continue the eradication of the red imported fire ant. I look forward to completing my training and trying to do my bit to ensure we don't lose our wonderful lifestyle.

Home and community care services in Queensland will be boosted by at least \$7.5m in this budget. HACC funding is what keeps our Home Assist, Meals on Wheels and neighbourhood centres operational. These services support people to live independently in the community. They help prevent premature or inappropriate admission of people to residential care.

In Qld we have seen the demand for HACC services increasing as more and more people are choosing to retire in this wonderful state.

I am a volunteer Meals on Wheels driver for Springwood / Rochedale. I do this once a month and I love doing it. The volunteers at this centre are just superb and I enjoy chatting to the clients. I am pleased to see this funding in the budget to continue these wonderful services in my electorate and all over qld.

Jobs! Jobs! Jobs! That is also another priority people want to see the government invest in. This budget the state government will invest a record \$877.3m in jobs, training and youth services to ensure Qld has a workforce with the relevant skills needed to achieve its economic and social goals.

The greater Brisbane region which includes Logan will receive around \$26.4 million to create an estimated 4,230 jobs through the government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative during 2003/04.

This builds on the funding already allocated to the Springwood electorate under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle, where approximately \$3.5 million has been allocated between October 1998 and March 2003. This has resulted in 701 jobs being created for Springwood."

The Breaking the Unemployment Cycle will also assist 6020 long-term and unemployed and other disadvantaged job seekers with targeted job placements and job search assistance and training with more than \$25m through the Community Jobs Plan and the Community Employment Assistance Program.

The Community Jobs Plan also provides invaluable infrastructure for local communities. I cannot list all the wonderful projects the young people on the Community Jobs Plan has done for schools, sporting clubs and other community groups in my area. I thank Mr Brett Webster, Mrs Carol Cronk and other staff at Springwood High State School for co-ordinating this wonderful program in Logan East.

Recently, Mr Glen Thomas, Principal, Chatswood Hills State School informed me of the good work being done by the Community Jobs Plan participants. He said to me "he believed this was one of the best programs the government has ever done. He also expressed to me the strong commitment and work ethics of these young people and how he was pleased to hear that this program has a high success rate for participants finding jobs."

I agree with him totally. This program is a win-win—a win for the community and a win for participants.

There are two more big ticket items for the people of Springwood. Firstly, integrated ticketing. This will improve public transport in my electorate and indeed in Logan.

\$21.4m has been budgeted to develop south-east Qld's integrated ticketing system. This will change pricing structure; it will allow more flexibility within different modes of transport and will definitely benefit the people of my electorate.

I am extremely pleased the government is getting on with the job of improving public transport in Logan and I believe integrated ticketing will be the biggest change with the largest effect to public transport in Logan when it begins.

I would like to finish on something I believe will have a big impact on Springwood.

A \$4 million project to revitalise the Springwood CBD and continue the Logan landscaping program will create significant benefits for Logan city and residents.

I am extremely pleased the state government will contribute \$1 million towards the second stage of the Springwood project, and \$1 million towards the continuation of the landscaping program, with the funding provided as part of the Beattie government's Regional Centres Program, announced in the state budget.

The works being undertaken in Springwood will not only help create more visually appealing areas for the local community, but it will also help create a sense of place which reflects the character and vitality of the area.

Following a full feasibility study, the council will begin works to upgrade footpaths, drainage, lighting, gardens, road surfaces and street furniture in one of the city's major commercial centres. The landscaping work will also help create more visually appealing areas in the city by landscaping the medians and verges of major roads throughout Logan.

We all have a great opportunity to work together in this project to create special things for this special city.

Since 1998, the Beattie labor government has paid the Logan City Council more than \$18.3 million in Department of Local Government and Planning grants and subsidies.

The beauty about this funding is that not only does it provide councils with the opportunity to fund projects they could otherwise not afford, but the Beattie labor government, together with Queensland's local governments, is helping to create jobs.

I believe the budget is a back to basics with more funding for health, disability services, extra teachers and a record police budget. This is what residents in my electorate want and the government has delivered.

**Hon. K. W. HAYWARD** (Kallangur—ALP) (10.16 p.m.): It is a great pleasure to speak in support of this budget which delivers real benefits to people in the electorate of Kallangur. The district of Narangba in my electorate is one of the fastest-growing areas in Queensland. I am pleased to see, in line with an election commitment made before the last election, that an ambulance station will be established in Narangba at a cost of \$700,000. It is to be opened in mid-2004. The station will front Oakey Flat Road in the heart of Narangba. The ambulance station is very welcome in our local community. Importantly its construction demonstrates a powerful symbol of the benefit of the ambulance levy—raising money to address desperate needs in a fast-growing area. On behalf of the local residents I congratulate the Emergency Services Minister, Mike Reynolds, for his urgency in meeting that commitment. Last year I acknowledged the proposal for a police beat in Narangba. That commitment has now been met, with this budget setting aside \$48,000 to complete the construction.

Narangba Valley State High School has been a beacon of learning within our local community. This budget provides funding of \$7.107 million to complete stage 5. Next year the school will cater for students to year 12. As I have often said, that school continues to develop a knowledge culture in young people from Narangba and Burpengary. Money has been set aside for much-needed maintenance work at Narangba State School. That \$250,000 is very welcome to replace sewerage pipes at this school. An amount of \$38,000 has been set aside to repaint school buildings at Dakabin State High School.

The North Pine United Soccer Club will benefit from the Beattie government's Sport and Recreation Minor Facilities Program to the extent of \$74,230. This money has been granted to reconstruct a field and install irrigation at their Dakabin grounds. This money is granted under a program which provides up to 66 per cent of total project costs.

I am pleased to see that \$29,000 has been set aside for the Frederick Marsden Youth Centre as part of the Crisis Accommodation Program and \$650,000 for housing to support people with an intellectual disability. Crisis accommodation will see that properties are leased to provide accommodation for homeless people, including women and children escaping domestic violence. The aim of this program is to support people with an intellectual disability by providing innovative support and housing for people with high and complex support needs. This is an exciting project, where the residents will be supported on a 24-hour basis by a non-government service provider. It is planned that the house will be located on an acreage site in Morayfield and that the dwelling will be home-like in its design, construction and its presentation, consistent with local planning by-laws.

The northern suburbs Tenant Advice and Advocacy Service will be able to continue its excellent work as a result of a grant of \$247,000 in this budget. I am very aware of the work that is undertaken from its office in Burpengary, providing tenancy advice and help to many people who rent in the northern suburbs, Pine Rivers and Caboolture.

I am pleased to see that more funding has been allocated to complete the six-laning of the Bruce Highway from Dohles Rocks Road to Boundary Road at Dakabin. As I have previously said in this parliament, I welcome the \$30 million funding budgeted for this project which comes

principally from the Commonwealth government. The total cost of the project when completed will be \$40 million.

Earlier this year I attended the launch of this project by Senator Ron Boswell and Queensland Minister for Transport, Steve Bredhauer. I urge highway users to show patience during the new construction and plan for a slower journey to their destination. When this section to Boundary Road is completed, traffic flows from the Kallangur electorate will be greatly improved. The improvement in traffic flow since the widening of the Pine Rivers Bridge was completed has been well received by users from the Kallangur electorate. I again want to thank people for their patience during that construction. I am sure the people who now see the upgrade occurring on the Bruce Highway to Boundary Road will exercise the same patience, because in the end it is a great improvement to the local area.

Money has been set aside in this budget for the 14-officer tactical crime squad at Redcliffe to target known crime hot spots, with an emphasis on property crime and drug offences. This \$390,000, while not dedicated solely to the Kallangur electorate, helps to emphasise the importance of community safety to the Beattie government.

Economic growth for 2002-03 in Queensland was 4.75 per cent, and for this year Queensland's economic growth is expected to moderate slightly to four per cent. That figure is an estimate reflecting a combination of factors—namely, inflation is expected to remain at low levels, economic growth in major trading partners is not expected to slow and there will be a sustained recovery until 2004, interest rates will remain at current low levels and the Australian dollar exchange rate will remain at current levels.

It is interesting to note that in last year's budget papers economic growth was estimated to be 4.25 per cent and in fact turned out to be 4.75 per cent, a significant increase over the originally budgeted amount. So in order to achieve the estimated state growth of four per cent, the budget forecasts that growth in household consumption will moderate slightly to 4.75 per cent, reflecting a slowdown in the housing industry from record levels. However, low interest rates will underpin consumption expenditure and combined with continued high levels of interstate migration will continue to provide consumption demand.

The budget papers reveal that business investment is forecast to rise by 9.75 per cent in 2003-04 due to ongoing construction activity and purchases of machinery and equipment. The Queensland unemployment rate is expected to remain at seven per cent during 2003-04, the same as this financial year and the lowest in Queensland since 1989-90.

Although the Kallangur electorate is a working area, with unemployment generally below the state rate, I think any rate needs to be addressed. The Beattie state government will continue its successful Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative during the next year. Between October 1998 and March 2003, about \$5.6 million has been spent in the Kallangur electorate as part of this program. This has resulted in 861 jobs being created in Kallangur. I welcome the continuation of this initiative in Queensland and, importantly, its direct effect on the electorate of Kallangur.

This budget provides funds for real assistance to individuals and families and for resources that will enhance the quality of life in Kallangur. The Beattie government has put the right settings in place locally, but, as we know, Queensland's economic growth is linked directly to the national economy and to our trading partners. I am pleased to support the 2003 Beattie state budget. It is certainly welcomed in the electorate of Kallangur.

**Mrs PRATT** (Nanango—Ind) (10.25 p.m.): I rise to address the House on the appropriation bills 2003. The impact of these bills will be felt not only by the constituents of the Nanango electorate but also by the people of rural Queensland generally. As with any budget, there are good and bad points. I believe this budget has more bad news than good for rural and regional Queensland and creates a concern over where, after three deficit budgets, the bottom line really lies. I believe this budget is a masterpiece of deception and has, by its very deliberate deception, proved that Queensland still teeters on a financial precipice and casts serious concern on just how far the government is prepared to go to cover its failure to manage the economy.

The raiding of government owned corporations of hundreds of millions of dollars, the inclusion of revalued assets and many other contrivances, including the rehashing of previous budget promises, has resulted in the delivery of a budget that lacks any real substance. Promises were made to the people that there would be no new taxes, but in all portfolios there has been the raising of levies, fees and other charges. All of these may be known as levies, fees and charges, but no matter what they are called, they are in effect taxes, and people are paying more and more and receiving less in many areas.

The ambulance levy is one such tax, and although I have yet to find one person who is not prepared to pay the levy as all believe it is a most worthwhile cause and the Ambulance Service deserves to be paid for by all, it also needs to be fair to all and there are many people who will pay this tax numerous times. Shire councils have also found that they will be paying the levy numerous times, and they will—as will any other business—be passing the cost on to the general public, and that includes pensioners.

It is ludicrous to say that there are no new taxes. This compulsory ambulance levy is by its very definition a tax. One aspect of the budget which I am very pleased about is that the Treasurer has focused on health and disabilities. This is one area that badly needs attention, because since it was first elected in 1998 this government has all but stripped many rural communities of their health services. I consider the so-called boost to health more an attempt to catch up with the neglect of many years than the major initiative that the government is touting it as. It is in fact patching up a long-term neglect of the entire health industry from medical staff to services and facilities.

Throughout the budget, population growth is constantly used to reinforce and justify much of the budget expenditure, and so it should be. I recognise that the majority of new arrivals from other states are here to retire rather than to find jobs. It must therefore follow that in years to come that will put an even bigger strain on the Health budget. What is really alarming, though, is the neglect of medical services in rural areas and the minor consideration that it receives when compared to urban areas.

In the Nanango electorate we have been penalised over the past few years by a major decrease in health facilities, closure of many acute care beds, loss of medical practitioners and restricted ambulance services. For instance, I have been told just recently of an 84-year-old Nanango woman with severe leg fractures who was unable to get a road ambulance service to Toowoomba, and the doctor concerned was told to tell his patient that she had to get herself there as no ambulances were available. In another incident at Kingaroy recently the Royal Flying Doctor Service had five calls to the hospital but could only attend four because it had exceeded its flight time.

In a more recent experience, I was told only on Monday before I came down to parliament that a woman admitted to the Kingaroy Base Hospital found little relief from her severe symptoms. Days later, and still in serious distress, the woman was taken by a relative to a private doctor and an X-ray was undertaken, which revealed an obstruction that was operated on immediately. In fact, it was bowel cancer and a foot of her bowel was removed. It is my understanding that at no time while the woman was in the Kingaroy Base Hospital had an X-ray even been considered. The question needs to be asked why this woman's condition was failed to be detected when she was in such distress. Was it because the staff were not able to attend to this woman's needs, or was it because staffing levels do not permit the attention that was required?

In saying that, I know that the staff work very hard under difficult conditions and, overall, we would not find a more dedicated team of people. But the ever-increasing need to tighten belts or to do more to stay within budgets has become increasingly more stressful for all of those people and that is reflected in the number of serious complaints that continue to be expressed. It must also be recognised that the Kingaroy Base Hospital is increasingly taking up the load of other hospitals in the area, such as the hospitals at Wondai and Nanango, whose services are slowly being diminished to the point at which their closure is imminent.

The fundraising arm of the Energex rescue helicopter service, Crisis, is now stating that it may have to close due to concerns that, now that everyone who receives an electricity account will be forced to pay a levy towards the Ambulance Service, they feel that there is no longer the need and will be disinclined to contribute to the air ambulance. The ERHS is an aerial ambulance service, yet it has been neglected and does not receive full funding from the ambulance levy. I have to ask why. Anyone living in the Burnett region would testify to the constant use of both services in the region.

How much would the government save by increasing the acute care capacity and supplying more expert medical staff to the Kingaroy Base Hospital, which is located in an area that is fast becoming a large regional centre, rather than just relying on the emergency air ambulance service and the enormous costs associated with its operation? I do not suggest for one minute that this air service should be abandoned, but these services could be kept for extreme emergencies only. The ambulance levy is exactly that: a levy that should be for all ambulance services, road or air. Both are vital as many road accident and trauma patients in rural and remote areas rely heavily

on them. I do not suggest a return to the days where most rural hospitals were capable of treating every patient in all emergencies. That is not feasible. But many minor procedures used to be undertaken at the Kingaroy Base Hospital and still could be undertaken.

It cannot be said that rural communities are not trying to address the slow, deteriorating hospital situation themselves. Kingaroy Shire Council actually bought the former St Aubyn's Private Hospital, which was operated by the Wesley group, so as to entice more specialist visits for people in the area. Being an ex-nurse, I appreciate the new EBA and awards for nursing and non-nursing staff worth \$175 million, but I must ask: is this additional funding, or 6.9 per cent increase over last year's budget, sufficient to keep up with the inflationary increases in medical and health costs? Many question that it will.

I commend the government on its \$290 million boost to help people with disabilities and their families. I still have major concerns about the waiting time for dental work in the Nanango electorate, which is backlogged by more than two years. Where is the \$5 million allocation for dental health going? It definitely is not going to rural areas. It appears that the majority of this \$5 million is earmarked for urban centres. It is a miserly amount and will not even scratch the surface of the need in rural areas.

One of the major, pleasing aspects of the budget is the continuation of major roads projects that began under the previous budget. Many of these I have watched as construction has been undertaken during the past 12 months. I look forward to the start of the construction of the overtaking lanes on the Blackbutt Range. I actually witnessed Main Roads workers measuring the lanes. I can say to members that it was a highlight of one of my trips down here. At this point, I must also acknowledge the enormous amount of assistance that is given to me with any problem or concern by the district managers who cover the Nanango electorate.

I would like to move on to police matters. I notice that an additional squad has been allocated for the Wide Bay Burnett. Although I assume that this squad is going to be located on the coast, further police have been needed in many of the towns in the Nanango electorate. It is my most fervent desire, as it is of many others, that the towns that have been experiencing high juvenile crime rates be beneficiaries of greater police numbers. Since the Kingaroy Police Station was made a 24-hour police station, it must be acknowledged that the crime clear-up rate has reportedly increased to approximately 85 per cent because of high public support. No police can work effectively without community support and Kingaroy's clear-up rate reflects that. It must be noted that the incidence of motor vehicle thefts, break and enters and drug related crimes is on the increase statewide. So we can be grateful for an effective police force in the Nanango electorate.

However, the Queensland Police Union has already stated its opinion that the budget is disappointing. It claims that it actually makes a \$6 million cut to the Police operational budget in real terms. It also stated that the ratio of one police officer per 100,000 residents and the 297 extra police and 25 more civilian and general staff again reflect the deficit in actual police numbers; that it is only a token gesture and still falls far behind the actual numbers that are needed to effectively police the state. The Police Minister claims that the operational budget has risen by 9.2 per cent. It would appear that it all depends on which side people are looking from.

I want to now turn to what will affect rural and regional areas the most. The decision to allow \$25 million of the budget for drought activities, including farm counselling, will do very little for land-holders. Bills introduced over the past four years have all been aimed at the rural land-holder, depriving them of water, land clearing and vegetation management that will, in hundreds of cases, make what once were viable farm businesses now redundant. The statement by the Premier that there be a total ban on vegetation removal by 2006, without consultation, has angered so many that this government has alienated the rural community to such an extent that what little trust in the government there was—if any—no longer exists. To top it off, land-holders are just downright sick of being described as land vandals.

There is more land vandalism occurring in the coastal and urban areas than what rural property owners, including primary producers and farmers, will ever commit. It is okay to decimate the coastal strips and build concrete jungles and nobody cries 'environmental vandalism' to these developers. They are just allowed to continue regardless. The Primary Industries Minister has allowed the rural economies to be decimated. His department and the Minister for Natural Resources have all but destroyed the livelihoods of so many Queenslanders who have been on the land for generations. The continual restrictions that are placed upon them without any compensation are, as I have often said, akin to daylight robbery, but because this is occurring to the mythical, so-called landed gentry, with its falsely earned reputation of wealth, no-one seems

to care and instead willingly allows them to be devoured by the banks and reduced to pauper status.

Our rural industries are in crisis and, unfortunately, those who have the power to make a difference do not appear to give a damn. I must acknowledge in a recent conversation with Minister Wells that he admitted that he now understands the reason why land-holders feel that they have been robbed because of many of the bills passed in this place. I thank him for that willingness to not only admit his previous lack of understanding but also his assurance that, after his visit to Kilcoy and with his greater understanding, he will not sign off on some documentation until at least after the graziers' concerns are addressed.

One of the greatest needs in our rural areas is a guaranteed water supply. Water is a fundamental essential to growth and the lack of it determines an area's future. That is just what this government has done. It has decreased the Kingaroy shire's water supply, therefore making it very hard for that shire to expand its commercial and industrial base. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition will agree that in his electorate, which encompasses Wondai and Murgon—which previously were located in my electorate—two major employers, who live in Kingaroy, depend on water. I know that the Murgon abattoir and the Murgon leatherworks alone could employ a further 200-plus employees tomorrow if it could get them. Further, a number of other businesses in many of the other towns in the Nanango electorate which rely solely on a single industry that exists within their town are scared stiff to expand because they are not guaranteed a water supply.

So where is the water actually going? It is going to the Paradise Dam project, which is now to be another government owned corporation to supply water to Bundaberg. It will rob many shires north of the dam of water. The government has pledged \$60 million next year towards the dam that will supply water to sugarcane growers in Bundaberg. At no stage has the government taken into account—or appears to have taken into account—the consequences for the inland Burnett above the dam site. With an overall cost of \$210 million, the dam will rob the inland Burnett of precious water resources to supply water to one of the most irresponsible water users in the state.

With its open irrigation system, coupled with evaporation and unrestricted water supply, it is nothing short of criminal. It is just a total waste of a very valuable resource. The question often asked in the Burnett is: why not spend far less money and build the weirs on the Burnett River so they can release water from natural run-off into the Burnett catchment as needed and still supply the shires above the dam? Their only conclusion is that it is a political decision. There are many attractive alternatives but, being cynical, I guess there would be few votes in these alternatives. For such a Smart State I believe this is the epitome of stupidity.

The Coominya township is only two kilometres from the Wivenhoe and still has no reticulated water supply. I know the Minister for Local Government continually states that it is up to the Esk shire to apply for grants, but surely there is some way this government could encourage the shire to address the needs of this long suffering, often waterless town.

Tourism is one major economic hope for most rural towns. We are often told to venture into tourism as that is where the future lies. They plan tourism to survive, plan and promote for the future. The bush has again been bypassed in funding to make regional and rural tourism a realistic industry and to create the jobs that are so desperately needed. I have heard many speakers talk about the devastation that the racing industry now faces, especially in the rural areas. Many of these clubs may survive but others may not. Only time will tell.

I would like to quote from part of a statement by Commerce Queensland CEO, Joe Barnewall, on the budget's effects on business, which applies equally to tourism operators. He says—

In the budget papers, the Treasurer said a challenging external environment explains the downward trend in the Queensland economy and clearly these external factors are likely to continue. So why has the Treasurer forecast a surplus of \$153 million in 2003/04 with a \$1 billion plus revenue from interest on investments? It is now clear why the Treasurer extracted nearly \$900 million currently from government corporations. Without that GOC cushion, the deficit would have exceeded the billion dollar mark. Such extractions are unsustainable. Hiding public debt off the state's balance sheet is a shifty way of doing business in anyone's language. Although the budget has a reasonable spend on research and services such as education, health and police, these do not enhance the major vehicle for wealth creation in this state, which is business. In fact, there is a distinct lack of recognition in this budget that business creates wealth and that it needs to be appropriately cultivated. We know from our surveys that businesses want a reduction in payroll tax and provision of more tax breaks for establishing new, small and medium businesses. But while business is disappointed there are no such tax breaks, it is hardly surprising considering the recent sting on business through the ambulance tax. Small and medium businesses remain aggrieved by this inequitable tax that will steamroll through state parliament and Commerce Queensland believes the government needs to take a long, hard look at its revenue streams. Mr. Beattie continues to say there will be no

new taxes. How can we believe him, given that the ambulance levy is a tax? In fact it is a double tax on many businesses.

I think that sums up how business feels about the government's budget. Honesty is what the government offered, but there is no honesty in this government, especially for businesses and rural and regional Queensland. I urge the government to look at drawing new boundaries to the economic statistical divisions within the state.

The total Wide Bay-Burnett dollar allocation does not give a true and meaningful breakdown of capital expenditure by this government. As a whole, the Wide Bay-Burnett receives quite an acceptable amount, but break it down to the dollars allocated to the coastal areas as opposed to the inland region and it is very obvious how uneven the dollar distribution is. The needs of a coastal region combined with a rural economy may make the allocation of funds look good, but in reality they distort the true allocation of funds to the region.

Inland Burnett is a distinctive rural region and Wide Bay is a coastal economy and therefore their financial needs are totally different. If this state is to progress as much as the government claims it will, then that distinction must be recognised and the needs addressed appropriately. Only then can the budget be fair and based on the needs of vastly different regions. I find that this budget, like the previous three budgets, is not a rural friendly budget. It is neither fair nor equitable, nor is this government a government for all Queenslanders.

**Mr ROWELL** (Hinchinbrook—NPA) (10.44 p.m.): The interpretation of the budget is really about the financial needs of so many people in this state. Many members on the government side have said that it is a good Labor budget. We on the opposition side are concerned about a deficit of some \$350 million. Of course, there was also a promise some time ago by the Premier—back in 1998—that he would bring the unemployment rate down to five per cent. It actually has not got within a bull's roar. It is forecast to be seven per cent and it is the worst of any of the states in Australia.

Talking up the assets is not a solution to overcoming deficit problems. In the short term it may assist greatly in terms of being able to get hold of money at the right rate but, unfortunately, we have seen this happen with many entrepreneurs in Australia in recent times. Including \$150 million of cars in capital investment does not really represent an investment of any substance. The inclusion of Q-Fleet is absolutely preposterous. Because those types of assets depreciate so quickly, they are not worth talking about.

One of the issues I would like to raise as it relates to the Hinchinbrook electorate is that there is no hospital planned for the Ingham district. I am aware that things have been happening there, but there is nothing definite in this budget. It is possibly the oldest hospital in the Townsville region. There is little question about the fact that it needs to be improved. I think there is no option now other than to make some plans about its long-term future and inevitably build a new hospital. This may take a number of years, but we have to look at how we phase it out and eventually build a decent hospital.

A service that is very important in areas such as Ingham, Tully and, to some extent, Innisfail is the patient transit scheme. This enables people who need specialised treatment to travel to places such as Cairns, Townsville or even Brisbane. The cost is quite substantial, but there is no reason that people should be disadvantaged because they live some distance away from the major centres.

Another difficulty we have had has been maintaining staff such as doctors and dentists. This is a serious issue in country hospitals. Up to eight to 10 months ago we were doing reasonably well, but we have now found that it is extremely difficult to attract doctors with anaesthetic skills. In many cases when there is a requirement for this type of procedure to be carried out, the local doctors chip in and assist greatly. But of course if a doctor who possesses the skills goes away—and this happened recently—and there are babies to be born, there must always be a doctor there with the skills with anaesthetics. In that particular case, that group of women who were going to deliver babies had to go down to Townsville. It is extremely disappointing that we have reached a point where we do not have a doctor with that level of skills. It is always hoped that we are going to attract them, but there is an enormous problem in terms of recruiting those types of doctors.

The district is very much behind its hospital. It has raised something like \$50,000 for a laparoscope that inevitably will cost something like \$80,000. That money has been raised by a whole range of people using a whole range of different methods. People have run considerable distances, conducted country music festivals, run chook raffles and a whole range of things. The

community is right behind the hospital. It is extremely important that we get this type of facility there but, once again, we need the people with the expertise; we need the doctors there who are experienced at using this type of equipment. Now we are finding that patients are actually coming up from Townsville for elective surgery. They can get in so much quicker in Ingham and the attention they are receiving at Ingham Hospital has been praised by those people who have gone through a number of procedures there.

We also do not have a full-time dentist. There is a dentist available for only three days a week and there is a considerable backlog of people wanting to use the services of dentists. I have people constantly coming into the office needing dental care and they cannot get in for some weeks, months or even a year. It is unreasonable and unfair.

The Hinchinbrook Shire Council is quite prepared to chip in, assist and participate to get a resident dentist or doctor. It will not be very long before we meet with the district health executive officer, Ken Whelan, to discuss the manner in which the district can go about assisting acquiring resident doctors and dentists and what measures it can adopt to assist them staying in the district. There has been some \$300 million made available to provide additional services for health, and that is good. We need that. As I understand, it is a total of \$2.6 billion cumulative—that is, \$1 billion from the federal government and \$1.6 billion from the state. Those initiatives will be quite good. We can only hope that the services we receive in areas such as Ingham, Tully and Innisfail—which inevitably will get a new hospital built for some \$16 million—will certainly be an added benefit to those who live in the area.

The main issue we have to look at is incentives to keep people of that calibre in the area—that is, dentists and doctors. One of the problems with dentists is the extremely high amount it costs to set up a dental surgery. However, the hospital has quite a reasonable dental facility. The budget also provides for two new sign monitors worth \$8,500 and operating tables to the extent of some \$65,000. That is small change as far as what is needed. However, I constantly hear from people in the private profession that they are fed up with the intermittent nature of being able to have full-time doctors at the hospital, because they have always been willing to chip in. They have always been willing to serve on weekends when there has been a gap to fill or an emergency. They are playing their part, but we need Queensland Health to play its role in maintaining the presence of full-time medical clinicians and dentists.

The disability sector is getting something like \$290 million over four years, and that is a rather good news story. I congratulate the government for putting that money together. We hope that the Ingham respite centre will be better funded. There has been a major crisis there over the last few years with inadequacies of funding. This respite centre services areas well beyond Ingham. It is extremely important that it gets due recognition through some assistance with the budget to increase the number of people it can look after who need respite care. In some cases in this regard, the parents of those who need this service within our community are getting old. I know of some situations where the parents are in their 70s and 80s and the children are 50, and I suppose it is not right to be calling them children. The fact is that people need that support to, say, go away to conferences or to just have a weekend off. That service is fulfilling a great need not only in the Ingham community but also further afield.

The road budget is falling behind its needs. When the coalition was in government, 28 per cent of the capital works program was taken up by roads funding. That is an inordinate amount of money. It is important to note that in this budget only 14.7 per cent of the capital works program is going into roads. The Hinchinbrook Council is really strapped for cash. Of course, it has major problems with a downturn in terms of the sugar industry. It has no capacity to carry out work in many cases. It has actually sold off machinery to enable it to keep going, to keep the core of a work force. Certainly, it has laid off staff and there are no jobs available for those staff who have been laid off. As a consequence, many have had to go onto Centrelink support. That is a debilitating situation in that people who, over a long period of time, have been prepared to work 40 to 50 hours a week have no work. That is happening quite often throughout sugar areas.

We will not know the fate or what is happening in terms of roads funding until we see the Roads Infrastructure Program, and the details of that expenditure will probably come out in about October. I will be watching with bated breath to see how that progresses. In terms of the ambulance tax, some 900 petitioners said that it was ridiculous that they had to pay two, three, four and five times. That is a very big issue in that part of the world. Many people have rung me about it, and I am quite surprised at the number of phone calls I have received on this particular issue. This is something that has touched a raw nerve. It is not just the money. In some cases it is because businesses are being squeezed in trying to maintain their presence in the community

with the downturn in industry. I do not think the government has won many friends when it comes to the ambulance tax. It is an enigma. It is something that has not in any way been looked at closely enough to see if there is a better alternative. People may say to us, 'What would you do?' We would have to look at the books in government and make a decision on the way we would go about addressing this issue, because it is a very contentious one.

The Black River water supply is an issue that is important to people at the southern end of the electorate. Some time ago—as I recall, it was early February—I took a submission to the Minister for Local Government regarding this particular matter. In terms of a reticulated water scheme for Black River Road, McKinnon Road, Moree Road, Vivian Voss Court and Glessman Road near the Black River, there is very limited access to underground water and rainwater tanks and that dependency is limited. The Black River Progress Association has been actively involved in seeking a water supply extension to the Black River area to alleviate many of the problems the area is now experiencing. About 80 per cent were supportive of it out of 110 allotments. In addition, something like 7.5 litres of water a second could be used for firefighting, and that is essential coming from the reticulation system.

As I said, the Local Government Minister, Nita Cunningham, has certainly received the message in terms of the urgency that exists for a decision to be made regarding a 40 per cent subsidy for the supply of reticulation water. That is in her hands at present. I was in touch with her staff today. They said, 'No, it hasn't gone into the budget but it is still being considered.' The concerning thing is that it has been discovered that out of the 41 test bores only three comply with the Australian drinking water guidelines. It is getting quite dangerous in terms of health issues. There are many issues there at the present time—that is, the hardness of the water, chlorine, salt and nitrates. All of those things have the prospect of compounding health issues. There is an estimate that it would cost \$10,688 per block to the front gate, and from there whoever wants that connection will have to pay it themselves.

There are other issues I want to raise in the short time I have left. I turn now to projects in the capital works program. In many cases they have taken years to implement, and very often we are seeing a regurgitation of them. When I look down the columns relating to the capital works program there is a column that says 'post 2004'. There has been a costing done on them. There has been an appropriation for them to be carried out this last financial year and another one for the next financial year and the other column—that is, 'post 2004'—is in never-never land.

In some cases, there is at least 50 per cent in those areas beyond the three-year period. I wish to cite an example of this. In the lovely glossy brochures put out by the government there is an indication of some funding for my area—\$600,000 for north Queensland. The capital works program refers to a figure of \$3.198 million for sugar industry infrastructure and states that \$1.398 million has been spent. This has taken 10 years. In 1993 this money was put up. In 2003-04 there will be \$1.8 million to be spent for the rest of the program. A lot of money has been spent—something like \$1.398 million—on planning, replanning and regurgitating the program. In 10 years not a damn thing has been done. Yet this government is saying how great it is by putting this into the budget. It is a fallacy.

The glossy brochure also refers to \$1.12 million in capital infrastructure for the Lower Herbert for sewerage, reticulated water supply and so on. That money was given back in September or October of last year. Some \$400,000 of it has been spent. There is still some money to be spent and it has to be spent before the end of the financial year. The government actually put it into the budget paper, which I thought was interesting.

For the police station and watch-house at Ingham there is \$3.8 million post 2004. I guess that is on the never-never. We have seen some \$200,000 spent. I do not know what has been done. It was probably spent on planning, looking at one another—whatever they do when doing the planning. For the Halifax Police Station \$200,000 was to be spent this year. Some \$175,000 is to be spent in 2003-04. There has been no movement at the police station for the \$375,000 that has been allocated.

The Stanwell Corporation is modifying the Kareeya Power Station at a cost of \$9.2 million, according to the glossy brochure. The capital works statement cites a figure of only \$7.95 million. That is a bit of an error, but what is a million dollars between friends, anyway? The Ports Corporation is putting \$28,000 into minor works at Lucinda and \$97,000 into minor works at Mourilyan. That is quite good. We have also got \$73,000 for installation of lighting on the Fairford soccer complex at Ingham. That is a sporting facility grant. I did not think it should be included in the budgetary items. However, the lulu of all times is the tilt train.

**Mr Mackenroth:** The money comes out of the budget.

**Mr ROWELL:** But it had been granted.

**Mr Mackenroth:** No, it hadn't.

**Mr ROWELL:** It had been granted. I do not see included in every other budget statement money made available for sporting grants.

The tilt train is really interesting. The government is going to spend \$2.4 million on allocations for works associated with the Cairns tilt train. Let us look at the costs for a trip from, say, Ingham to Townsville and going on to Brisbane. For a person travelling to Brisbane it will cost \$262.90. But if someone gets on an aeroplane—one of those things that flies; people can get plenty of fares for \$100 or less—the trip takes only two hours. How attractive is the tilt train going to be?

Time expired.

**Mrs REILLY** (Mudgeeraba—ALP) (11.04 p.m.): I am delighted to rise to support the appropriation bills and the Treasurer's third budget. At the outset I congratulate the Treasurer, his staff and the Premier for delivering another great budget for the people of Queensland—a budget for the people, as the *Gold Coast Bulletin* so astutely reported on Wednesday.

This budget again makes me proud to be a member of this Beattie government—a government which is committed to improving quality of life for all Queenslanders and which is consistently delivering through its budgetary priorities the services needed to achieve that quality of life. This is a core Labor budget with its focus on health, education, support for people with disabilities and their families and housing. It is also a budget that places job creation at the top of the agenda through a massive capital works allocation of \$5.3 billion and a continued commitment to labour market programs, including the employment of a further 300 public sector apprentices over the next four years in skill shortage areas.

There is no doubt that the Gold Coast will benefit from the major capital works injections to the region for projects such as the Gold Coast Convention Centre and a further \$6 million under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle program, which will create over 1,000 jobs alone. This builds on the funding already allocated to the Mudgeeraba electorate, where \$2.8 million was spent between October 1998 and March 2003 to create 673 jobs under Breaking the Unemployment Cycle programs—projects which have also provided great benefits to local communities.

The Gold Coast has also been a big winner when it comes to Main Roads and Transport. The record \$3.51 billion operating budget is delivering the big-ticket items such as the Tugun bypass, integrated ticketing and smartcard technology for south-east Queensland. As the *Gold Coast Bulletin* highlighted, the people of Carrara in my electorate have much to celebrate. Long awaited and badly needed roadworks on the major east-west arterial road of Nerang-Broadbeach Road will be completed with the injection of \$2.9 million to intersection upgrades at Ross Street, at a total cost of \$8.8 million, and \$1.195 million to complete the realignment of four lanes at the Goodings Corner deviation, at a total cost of \$11.3 million. A further \$1.4 million has been allocated to commence interchange improvement works on the Pacific Highway at Nielsens Road at a total cost of \$14 million. These allocations meet election commitments to address these congested traffic centres. I have lobbied long and hard for this, as have the residents of Carrara and Nerang and local councillor Bob La Castra. All are to be congratulated on their efforts.

However, I wish also to mention the local Main Roads office district manager, Eddie Peters, and his staff and their engineers for their dogged determination, broad community consultation and careful planning of these works. There is also an additional \$586,000 for local road and drainage works. This government is delivering major roads infrastructure for the Gold Coast in the areas which need it most. We will continue to deliver outcomes for the Gold Coast, systematically prioritising roadworks projects throughout the region to meet the needs of a growing population and an ever-increasing demand on our road network.

The Minister for Main Roads, Steve Bredhauer, is to be commended for his attention to the Gold Coast, which has been over and above what has been expected in the past five years and possibly to the expense of other areas of the state that are also crying out because of their growing demand for additional Main Roads funding. Other initiatives in the electorate of Mudgeeraba include a \$200,000 allocation under the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme for a bus set-down area and car park at Emmanuel College, at a total cost of \$510,000. I thank council for its cooperation on that project, which will be funded on a fifty-fifty basis.

Education has been and remains a cornerstone of the Beattie government and our Smart State agenda. Almost \$10.5 million has been allocated to the progress of the new school on Somerset Drive at Mudgeeraba, where construction and site preparation is well under way. I want to thank the local community for its enthusiasm and positive commitment in embracing this new primary school. Community consultation on aspects of the school such as its name, uniform, philosophy and curriculum have begun and has been met with excitement by local parents ready to enrol their children. My thanks go to all those who attended, especially to the site manager and the crew who prepared a safe and attractive area and provided the barbecues so that we could all enjoy the magnificent view which the lucky children of this state-of-the-art facility will be able to enjoy when the school opens in January of next year.

The local community and I look forward to welcoming the founding principal, Stephen Loggie, when he moves to the area and begins his official duties next month. I know from his visits to the Gold Coast, where his family has already settled, that he is keen to become an active member of this community and to call the Gold Coast home. Further capital works spending of \$520,000 in total will provide new toilets at William Duncan and Worongary state schools. Another \$44,000 will be spent repainting school buildings at Worongary State School.

The 'green behind the gold' remains a popular tourist destination and we recognise that hinterland tourism must be managed and, most importantly, it must be safe to leave visitors with a life-long memory and a lasting commitment to the preservation of the region for generations to come. An additional \$87,000 has been allocated for safety fencing at Purlingbrook Falls, \$35,000 for the Rush Creek Bridge at Twin Falls Circuit, both in the Springbrook National Park. Funding has also gone to support the work of local Parks and Wildlife officers. Some \$471,000 has been allocated to the Gold Coast Hinterland Great Walks project at Lamington National Park.

While I am obviously excited by the allocations of funding within my electorate and throughout the Gold Coast—which I could not and did not have time to elaborate on fully—the area of the budget which brings me the most joy is the unprecedented commitment made to providing a better quality of life for Queenslanders with a disability. Last year the government initiated a funding reform project to address the existing and emerging needs of people with a disability and their families and carers. As a member of the minister's backbench task force advising on the project, I followed the progress on the statewide consultations closely and had the opportunity to have an input into the process and make my concerns and those of my constituents known to the minister and the department.

I met with a number of peak bodies and individuals involved in the sector—some local service providers and others who provide services across Queensland—as well as many parents, carers and people with a disability. Since I first worked in the Office of Disability in 1991 I have been acutely aware of the issues, the concerns and the daily struggle to survive and to live some semblance of the normal life which we take for granted which people with a disability and their families face every day.

Then for much of last year my staff and I worked closely with a single mother of two autistic children who, after struggling to cope without adequate support after the breakdown of her marriage, made the heart-wrenching decision to relinquish into the care of the state her eldest child who has high support needs and is severely intellectually disabled. As any mother would, this woman regretted that soul-destroying decision the minute she made it. Having been unable to secure for her the additional support she had originally begged for, I felt responsible in a very deep way for her pain, and I committed myself to the task of advocating on her behalf for the reunification of her family.

After almost a year that outcome was achieved with the full package of support the family needs to stay together, but it is not the end of the story because for these families the story never ends. The reality is that they will always need ongoing support just to live from day to day and then to face the new challenges that come with their children's progression to adulthood and their own ageing.

I am safe in saying that, while the members opposite bleat on and on like castrated lambs about budget deficits, this family and every family like them could not care less. They just want to see the money. This woman never, ever said to me, 'I'll only take the money if it doesn't mean that there is a budget deficit.' I challenge the Opposition Leader to look into the face of this burdened single mother of two and tell her that she should not have the support she needs because it will put the budget into deficit. If the members opposite have so little heart that they could do that, let us see them try it, because this is the true heart of the Treasurer's third budget. This is the true heart of this Labor government, and the members opposite do not want to hear it.

The members opposite cannot stand it because they are struggling to feel their own hearts beating through their cold, hard chests.

Some \$290.5 million over the next four years; that is the heart of this Labor government. The disability sector has been crying out for this injection of funds for years. Its cries have been falling on the deaf ears of those opposite who do not want to hear it, including the years when the coalition was in power and over years and years of conservative governments. It took a Labor government with heart to deliver it.

Tuesday was a proud day for me, and all those in the disability sector who have committed their lives to improving the lives of people with a disability should also be proud. This historic injection of funds will mean amongst other things an extra \$54.5 million to strengthen families and build community capacity. I hope that that funding boost will mean support for families so that that mother and no other family will ever again find themselves in the untenable position of having to give up their child in order to secure the support that they need.

Coalition governments shamefully neglected Queenslanders with disabilities for decades, but we have made them a priority. If the members opposite listen, they might hear something. Since coming to power the Beattie government has consistently boosted funding to the sector from the tragically low levels at which it lingered in the past. By 2006-07 funding for disabilities will be almost 164 per cent greater than when we came to office. The Minister for Disability Services, Judy Spence, her staff and her department, especially Paige Armstrong, the previous Minister for Disability Services, Anna Bligh—I see her in the chamber—the Treasurer and the Premier can all take the credit for that. I thank them and I look forward to sharing the good news with local service providers and constituents.

I know that many service providers like Gold Coast Family Support, Bethany Respite Centre, Gold Coast Sport and Recreation, the Endeavour Foundation, the Cerebral Palsy League, the Gold Coast Autism Support Group, members of the Gold Coast Disability Task Force and the local service of DSQ, just to name a few, will already be working hard on securing the region's share of these new funds. With our growing population and our demand for disability services the support needs are high and increasing. I will be there to support my local providers in the process, because I am confident that this budget through this historic allocation will go a long way to improving the lives of people with a disability and their families on the Gold Coast. I commend the Treasurer on his work and I commend the bills.

**Mrs SMITH** (Burleigh—ALP) (11.16 p.m.): I am proud to stand here today and acknowledge that this sixth state budget of the Beattie Labor government focuses on the essential service areas of health, education and law and order. It provides money in areas that will impact on the lives of every family in the Burleigh electorate with no corresponding increase in taxes.

I am especially pleased to see that a further \$200,000 has been allocated to complete stage 2 of the upgrade to the special education unit at Miami State High School. Last month I was honoured to officially open the first stage of this project. Students in the unit are mainly vision and/or hearing impaired. Before the upgrade the unit's 47 students attended lessons together in one large classroom, which was hardly conducive to learning. Special kids need special facilities and there was a serious lack of special facilities. This additional \$200,000 will give these students facilities equal to those of their able-bodied peers; not better but just equal, which is all they ever asked for. I thank the Minister for Education for hearing my plea for this funding.

To residents, particularly those on the southern side of my electorate, funding to complete planning and begin construction of the Tugun bypass is particularly welcome. This bypass is long overdue and I welcome an anticipated start date for later this year. Facilities at the Gold Coast Hospital are set to improve, with \$1.2 million to be spent on refurbishing the Mental Health Unit. There is also substantial funding for other services including oncology, renal health, intensive care and emergency services. The Gold Coast is the state's largest growing city and the budget reflects the increasing demand for health services.

Residents in Varsity Lakes, the former suburb of Stephens, will benefit from a further \$1 million to continue the upgrading of Department of Housing homes. This housing estate, developed in the early 1970s, has more than 250 dwellings. The funding will not only improve the appearance of housing in the area but will also enhance the quality of living for residents. The budget also includes \$7 million towards the completion of the \$18 million redevelopment of the Tallebudgera Outdoor Recreation Centre. This has been a three-year project that is coming to fruition.

Nearly \$538,000 has been provided to North Burleigh Surf Lifesaving Club to construct a new two-storey clubhouse and Burleigh Heads Junior Rugby League Club will receive \$150,000 to upgrade its clubhouse. In addition, the Gold Coast Gymnastics Club will receive \$75,000 to upgrade its Miami indoor facility and the Burleigh Heads Tennis Club will receive nearly \$31,000 to construct an outdoor tennis court with ancillary lighting.

These grants are wonderful news for local residents. The money will go straight into projects that a lot of people can use and enjoy. As a member of parliament, the most heartbreaking stories I hear from my constituents are from those with disabilities or with disabled children. I am very pleased that this budget contains substantial funding for disability services. This budget provides funds for real assistance to individuals and families, and for resources that will enhance the quality of life in our communities. I commend the bills to the House.

**Mr MALONE** (Mirani—NPA) (11.20 p.m.): It is with some pleasure that I rise to speak to the appropriation bills for this year. The Labor government has been nothing if not constant when it comes to the budget. We have heard over the last three years of promised surpluses, and the little pamphlet handed out today certainly highlights that. We have heard promises of surpluses every year for the last three years, and whilst the government did not necessarily deliver increasing deficits we have seen pretty extensive deficits over the last three years since the Labor Party came to power.

I would like to pick up on the points made by previous government speakers when talking about this good Labor budget. I guess this budget meets the requirements of a good Labor budget. There is a problem and Labor finds somebody else to fix it and, more importantly, it finds somebody else to pay for it. At the end of the day somebody has to pay for the delivery of services in Queensland—and right across Australia, for that matter. The government cannot continue to dip into surpluses to the extent that it has been doing. Indeed, this year's deficit would be substantially more than \$350 million if money had not been raided from GOCs and every other corporation around the country.

At the end of the day, to deliver services across Queensland we have to raise money. As I said, if we keep dipping into the bickie tin, sooner or later it will be empty and someone will have to fill it up again. We have continually seen in this country over the last number of years Labor governments spend money, and sooner or later someone else has to fill the bucket up again. Unfortunately, it seems to be the other side of politics that has to do that.

I would like to speak a little on the issue of job creation. In 1998 the Premier convinced Queenslanders that they should be pleased that he was going to offer a five per cent unemployment rate and he was going to deliver on that. It is five years this month since that promise was made. It appears we are locked into seven per cent for this financial year. The federal rate is six per cent and would members believe that rust bucket place down in Victoria is down to 5.75 per cent. I have to ask what is going wrong. For 31 months the Queensland government has had the worst unemployment figures in mainland Australia—31 months! It is quite incredible, considering the record this state has had over all these years, that for 31 months we have had the worst unemployment figures in mainland Australia.

Let me go back to 1997-98 when the coalition was in power. We created 50,000 jobs in that financial year. The best job increase that we have seen in the intervening years since the Beattie government was 42,000 jobs. The prediction for this financial year is 38,000 jobs. We have seen a downgrading of our employment prospects. After all of the hype, all of the glossy brochures and all of the money that has been spent on job creation, at the end of the day we have 12,000 fewer employed people or job creations in Queensland than that of the financial year of 1997-98.

I would like to speak a little about the provisions in the budget for the Mackay region, which I represent. It was pleasing to see some money flow into the region. Certainly I am very appreciative of that. I was particularly impressed to see \$1.85 million to construct a North Mackay fire and ambulance emergency complex which will house the rural fire administration area and SES administration and also work as an office and an operating complex.

I was pleased to see the minister turning sod there two or three months ago. Whilst I saw the great promotion in the local paper, it would have been nice to get an invite because it is actually in my electorate. Next time the minister goes up there and opens something I would like to stand alongside him and pat him on the back for spending that sort of money. Not getting an invite is happening on a regular basis but I would be pleased to be supportive of those sorts of things.

Some \$929,000 will be provided to purchase land to replace the south Mackay ambulance station, and that is certainly heading in the right direction. The unfortunate part about that is that,

in Mackay on the Peak Downs Highway whilst the ambulance station will be decommissioned and in its stead a new one built, it will not help out to any great extent the response times along the Peak Downs Highway. Anybody who knows that region well would know that that is the main access to the coalmines. It is a very busy road and not a real good one at that. There are a lot of accidents on that road.

To the west of Mackay the highway goes to the Pioneer Valley. We are having some real problems in terms of response times, and I have spoken in the parliament about this previously, but it continues to be a difficulty. At Walkerston, which is probably only a five- or six-minute drive from the edge of town, people are waiting up to 40 minutes for an ambulance. Indeed, just a week ago a person became very, very ill and called urgently for an ambulance. It took 40 minutes for the ambulance to get there. Unfortunately, people west of that area again—which, to the extreme, is probably another 100 kilometres further out or 60 kilometres up the valley—would wait considerably longer than that again. It is becoming quite an issue. As I say, the \$929,000 allocated for the new ambulance station will not substantially decrease those response times but it is timely that that station is being looked at for renewal.

I raise another issue which has come to my attention in the glossy brochure, and that is this \$19.59 million to construct a rail deviation for the Coppabella mine. That is brought about by the fact that under the Peak Downs Highway and the rail line that runs alongside there are considerable reserves of coal at the Coppabella mine at Macarthur Coal, and the deviation is taking place to enable them to mine that high grade coal. My beef is that I understand all of that money, the deviation of the road, the rail, the powerline, the waterline and all the infrastructure that goes with it is being paid for by Premium Coal. So I really cannot see how that would be a capital expense to the budget. Maybe it is paid out and later paid back in.

I was also very interested to read in the glossy brochure that we received some \$260,000 for new toilets at the Alligator Creek State School. I was exceptionally pleased with that. I was more than pleased because Alligator Creek State School is a strongly growing school. The only thing is that it does not need new toilets. It needs probably \$500,000 spent on it but not necessarily on new toilets. I was out there only a few weeks ago and in its early learning facility the roof leaks, the ceiling tiles are falling down, the carpet is soaked and it has a musty smell. It is almost impossible to stay in the room and kids are trying to learn in this room. It is quite unbelievable.

There is quite a lot of other work to be done on the school as well, not the least of which is the resource centre—the library—that is designed, I would expect, to look after about 50 children. We have 390 kids trying to work out of that library. At the very best, we would get half a dozen children in the library. It is not suitable at all. So I am hoping that the \$260,000 can be reallocated to do something with the school. It has gone past being a joke. I see that there is actually some money that could come out of the Triple R program for roofing. I just hope that that money will cover the cost of the roofing of that early learning facility, because that really is a very important aspect of that school. As I said, it is located in a growing area.

The other point I want to make is that we have a great school camp at the Kinchant Dam site. However, my information is that children are actually falling through the floor in the toilet block. So maybe we can do a swap, and perhaps with a little bit of extra money we can do both jobs. Certainly it is past time. That school camp is brilliant, but it really needs to be upgraded. Children should not be put in a situation where they can be hurt. I hear quite frequently across the chamber that when Joh was in power we had all of these terrible schools and all the rest of it. I can assure members that that problem has not gone away. We are still having problems with some of our schools and some of our facilities. It was pleasing to see that we are getting repainting done at Nebo State School, St Lawrence State School, Eton North State School and Sarina State School. I am pleased about that, but work on the Alligator Creek State School really needs to be brought forward fairly urgently.

I would like to talk about a few more matters. My colleague from Hinchinbrook talked about the tilt train. I am also concerned that the cost of using the tilt train will be out of the reach of a lot of people. I guess that a lot of Queensland Rail employees and pensioners will be able to use the tilt train at little cost, but at the end of the day the cost of travelling from Sarina to Brisbane will be quite expensive. Certainly from Mackay, \$80 and \$90 air fares are regularly available now. One of the issues that I have with the tilt train is that the trip from Sarina to Rockhampton takes five hours. I am not sure which way it is going, but it is less than a three-hour drive by car, sticking to the speed limit. So the fast train really is not very fast in that section. It does not go any faster when it goes north, either. So I am not sure what is going on there.

Another issue that is of concern to all of us in that region is that no provision has been made for boom gates, or safety gates, on the crossings. Indeed, QR is pressuring the land-holders in the region to actually pay money towards putting in boom gates. As members would well realise, a lot of farmers haul cane across the rail line to go on to tramline dumps or tramline sidings. QR is pressuring those farmers to pay up to \$125,000 as a contribution towards a boom gate, or else they will not be able to cross the line. That is just unbelievable. It needs to be sorted out quickly.

On a fairly regular basis I travel north to Townsville. North of Bowen there is a rail crossing on a curve. I do not see any provision for a boom gate on that section of the track. I assume that the train goes a little faster there than what it will between Rockhampton and Sarina. It certainly goes across a 100 kilometre an hour stretch of road that has very little visibility. It is an accident waiting to happen. I just hope that somebody is listening to what I am saying and we might be able to get something done about it. Perhaps I should write a letter to the minister about it.

It was also interesting, and certainly heartening, to see that the Great Walks program is being funded in the Whitsunday area as well as in the Eungella area. The walk goes from Broken River towards Nebo and through some magnificent country. There is a lot more work to do with the Great Walks program. I hope that this is really just the start of a larger program to get people into that country. It is useless locking it up. We need to build on the ecotourism base that we have in the Mackay district. I guess that is true for most other areas in Queensland. But the program needs substantial funds from the government to make it happen. Everywhere else in the world that has a Great Walks program in place finds that it attracts very substantial numbers of tourists from all over the world. As I say, I congratulate the government on moving on this program. It will need continuing funding. Unfortunately, in the past we have lacked the resources that have been needed to look after our national parks so as to be able to have them in a condition that attracts people from all over the world.

Another issue that I just want to raise quickly is the problem of erosion at McEwans Beach, which is just south of Mackay. That erosion has been going on for many years. The land is only a little above the high-water mark. We have been fairly fortunate over the past few years that we have not experienced really rough weather, but if we were to have a cyclone or a storm surge in that area there is no doubt that the ocean will break through into the residential area and there will be a considerable loss of facilities. The situation is becoming quite urgent. The land is breaking away and eroding at a reasonably fast rate now, so we really do need to do something fairly quickly.

In the last few minutes that I have available to me, I would like to refer to some of the things that I would have liked to have seen in the budget. I guess that I can live in hope, but I have been calling for a long time for a new police station at Sarina. I am looking for a new station and a new courthouse at Sarina that will reflect the amount of work that is undertaken in that station. It is one of the major stations that is located on the Bruce Highway between Rockhampton and Mackay. The police at that station actually relieve many of the officers who are stationed at the smaller stations to the south and even to the west when they go on leave, or whatever.

That brings to mind another issue and that is that, when the officer in charge of those smaller stations goes on holidays or leave of some sort, the station is closed for a fairly considerable length of time. About six or eight weeks ago the officer in charge of the Nebo Police Station was transferred. Nobody has been appointed to replace him as yet and it is probably unlikely that a replacement will be in place for at least another six weeks. The reason I raise the issue of the Nebo Police Station is that there is very substantial development taking place at Nebo. Currently, there are around 500 single accommodation units located around Nebo and most of them are full, around the clock, week by week. As members could imagine, come recreation time—whether it is night-time or on the weekend—there are a lot of people around Nebo. I think that a place of that size, which has 400 or 500 single people around, needs a police presence.

The Nebo Police Station is located right on the Peak Downs Highway, which carries a lot of traffic. A lot of people drive along that highway under fatigue conditions. They work 12 hours or 14 hours at the mines and then try to drive home late at night, or they travel along that highway early in the morning to start their shift. Some horrific accidents have occurred on that road. My belief is that relieving arrangements should be put in place to cover when the officer in charge of the station is on leave or for some other reason is away from the station. That should happen more regularly, particularly in relation to those stations that are situated on busy highways.

If we are going to insist that overtaking lanes be restricted to 100 kilometres per hour, we will virtually have to four-lane the Bruce Highway from Brisbane to Cairns. If anyone has travelled along that road and sat behind a car towing a caravan doing 90 kilometres per hour, they will

know that it will be impossible to pass that caravan if they stick to the speed limit. Most of the overtaking lanes are only a kilometre or so long and only one or two cars would be able to pass at any one time. So a bit of commonsense has to prevail here. I would hope that the government backs off the revenue raising in that regard or puts in place a program whereby the speed limit in overtaking lanes is 110 kilometres per hour.

Time expired.

**Ms MOLLOY** (Noosa—ALP) (11.40 p.m.): I am delighted to speak in the House tonight to draw attention to the tremendous benefits that the Queensland Labor government will continue to deliver to the electorate of Noosa and the Sunshine Coast region through this week's budget announcement. This budget has a focus on education, health and disability services and clearly reflects the Labor government's priorities of more jobs for Queensland, safer and more supportive communities, community engagement and a better quality of life, valuing the environment and building Queensland's regions.

During 2003-04 the north coast region will receive around \$7.2 million to create an estimated 1,060 jobs through the government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative. This includes an estimated \$4.4 million to help create nearly 510 entry-level jobs in industries with skills shortages and in the public sector through apprenticeship and traineeship programs. It also includes \$2.8 million to provide jobs for 550 long-term unemployed people and those at risk of long-term unemployment through community employment programs.

This builds on the funding already allocated to the Noosa electorate under Breaking the Unemployment Cycle, under which approximately \$5.1 million was allocated between October 1998 and March 2003. This has resulted in 705 jobs being created for Noosa. That is good news for Noosa and for Queensland. It is an initiative that I applaud, given the high levels of unemployment on the Sunshine Coast.

Noosa's youth have also been big winners in this year's budget, with the announcement that the state government would contribute \$1.538 million towards the construction of the Noosa Youth Entertainment Centre through the Department of Local Government and Planning's Regional Centres Program. I am keenly aware of the work the council has been doing with the community to develop a recreation and entertainment strategy, and this is a great result for young people in the Noosa region.

It is important to recognise the efforts of the YEC team. I mention Eloise Kinnear, Wayne Plant, Councillor Frank Pardon, Amy Ryan, Georgia Watson, Sue Griffiths, Peter Middap, Julia Knight and Robyn Goldsmith in particular. When completed, the centre will provide affordable access to a range of unstructured recreational activities that will include skating, gymnastics, dance, martial arts, table tennis, basketball and volleyball. It will also feature a cafe, computer room, meeting space, soundproofed rehearsal room with recording studio and outdoor seating areas. From construction through to completion, this project promises to provide jobs and build safer and more supportive communities. It also has an environmentally friendly design and will provide an excellent venue for social, cultural and physical activity for our young people.

Another example of safer and more supportive communities is that \$490,000 was allocated in the state budget to establish a temporary new Coolum Police Station at a site in the Coolum CBD. This announcement followed news that this government had delivered its sixth successive record Police budget, which in 2003-04 would tip the \$1 billion mark for the first time through an \$84 million increase. This funding will allow the Queensland Police Service to establish a temporary building to accommodate police at a leased site to be determined. The Queensland Police Service does not own any land suitable for a police station in the Coolum area, despite the former coalition government's claims that it purchased land during its final term in office for a Coolum Police Station. The temporary station will provide a visible police presence in the Coolum CBD until a long-term solution, including the acquisition of the required land, can be achieved.

I am delighted with this innovative solution to enhance our policing services in Coolum. I have lobbied hard during the last two years to ensure the Police Minister was aware of the need for a new station at Coolum. This decision clearly demonstrates that the Beattie Labor government has listened to my representations on behalf of the people of Coolum and has responded to the community's needs. This new station will provide the additional space required and up-to-date resources necessary to allow the local police to carry out their important work.

The 2003-04 budget also includes funding to continue the work of the successful Tactical Crime Squad in targeting drug and property crime on the Sunshine Coast. The Beattie government has shown its support for policing in our community through the provision of an

additional 105 funded police positions for the Sunshine Coast Police District since its election. All Queensland communities, including the Noosa electorate, will continue to benefit from the government's ongoing program to increase police numbers, with about 300 extra officers to be employed across the state this year. Indeed, the Sunshine Coast will receive a deployment of 13 first-year constables next week, after a group of 105 new police graduated from the Oxley Police Academy yesterday. I would like to wish these new officers every success in their new career and to assure them they will be a welcome addition for law and order on the Sunshine Coast.

Police alone cannot deliver safer and more supportive communities. That is why this government has also provided for better emergency, education and health services. This budget has included \$65,000 to upgrade the Coolum Fire Station and \$55,000 for an extension to the Noosa Fire Station to meet operational needs. We should also recognise the certainty and security that this government's community ambulance cover will deliver to all Queenslanders.

The pursuit of excellence in the classroom is a priority for the Beattie Labor government. This state budget continues to invest in Queensland's future as the Smart State. More teachers to reduce class sizes, extra resources for students with disabilities and additional and better school facilities are the cornerstone of the 2003-04 budget. Parents and students have welcomed the announcement that \$260,000 has been allocated for additional toilets at the Coolum State School and a further \$70,000 has been allocated to repaint school buildings at Coolum State School, Eumundi State School and Kin Kin State School. There will also be \$50,000 to assist the delivery of special education services at Noosaville State School and \$214,000 for book stocks for public libraries. This commitment to education is also demonstrated by the allocation of \$5.5 million to further develop the new Tewantin campus of the Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE.

In 2003-04 the Beattie Labor government is investing a record \$4.63 billion to secure a healthy future for all Queenslanders. This includes \$13.2 million in additional funding for cancer treatment, \$13.1 million in additional funding for hospital inpatient and home based care, \$6.2 million in additional funding for intensive care services, \$3.6 million in additional funding for patient travel requirements and \$3.2 million in additional funding for cardiac services.

Local health services in the Sunshine Coast health service district will receive an increase of \$1.59 million, including \$250,000 additional funding for cancer treatment services, \$950,000 additional funding for renal dialysis services, \$100,000 additional funding for intensive care units, \$191,000 additional funding for community mental health and \$100,000 additional funding for emergency departments. There will also be \$50,000 for telecommunication system upgrades at the Noosa Community Health Centre. The electorate will also benefit from \$156,000 to complete construction on one new public housing dwelling, \$133,000 for Noosa Home Assist/Secure and \$106,000 for the Crisis Accommodation Program.

The Queensland Labor government's commitment to community engagement, a better quality of life and valuing the environment is also clearly evident in this year's budget package. This budget has delivered \$440,068 to construct an aquatic complex, including a 25-metre pool, learn-to-swim pool, toddlers pool, change rooms and kiosk at Eumundi, and \$49,424 to construct two new outdoor tennis courts at Tewantin Tennis Club. The House would also be aware of the enjoyment the people of the Noosa electorate get from their natural environment and the value they place on icons such as the Noosa National Park. That is why this budget provides for \$174,000 for the replacement of visitor amenities at the Noosa National Park and \$46,000 to upgrade the walking track from Alexandria Bay to Sunshine Beach. The region will also benefit from \$30,000 to complete the vegetation mapping of the south-east Queensland bioregion.

This budget also provides important funding for improving the electorate's road network and includes \$3.12 million for pavement overlay on Eumundi-Noosa Road between the North Maroochy River and Dean Road, at a total project cost of \$5.6 million; \$1.11 million to complete intersection improvements at Duke Road on the Eumundi-Noosa Road, at a total project cost of \$1.5 million; as well as \$307,000 for local road and drainage works.

This is a budget continuing Queensland's place as the Smart State. It has a special focus on education, health and disability services. This budget delivers an extra 636 classroom teachers. It keeps up the Smart State momentum. It also offers \$100 million over four years for public and private job-creating research and development.

Some \$900,000 of the total \$1.4 million has been allocated to construct a women's shelter on the north coast to provide safe crisis accommodation for women. This budget delivers an additional \$2.6 million over four years for health. It reflects a caring budget. There is more for

acute hospital care, elective surgery, home and community care and mental health. This budget delivers more for families—\$2.6 billion over four years for health, an extra \$290 million over four years for disability services and \$32 million as part of \$188 million for families and children. This budget is targeted at those people in our community who most need a helping hand. I congratulate the Premier, the Treasurer and all ministers for what can only be described as a magnificent budget.

**Mr CHOI** (Capalaba—ALP) (11.50 p.m.): Tonight it is with great pleasure that I speak in support of the sixth budget brought down by the Beattie Labor government in Queensland. Firstly, I congratulate the Treasurer, the Hon. Terry Mackenroth, on the excellent budget framework presented to the House on Tuesday. The budget clearly demonstrated how this government wholeheartedly embraces the traditional Labor values but at the same time is able to deliver strong economic growth and maintain a strong fiscal position despite turbulent world conditions. This has been achieved despite a severe impact on the bottom line by lower investment earnings on the state's financial assets due to volatility in the domestic and international equity market. Firstly, I want to speak to the fiscal position of this budget.

General government operating revenues are budgeted at \$21.4 billion in 2003-04. This represents a budgeted increase of \$1.2 billion or six per cent from the 2002-03 budget. A net operating budget surplus of \$153 million is expected, which allows for a reasonable buffer against external risks and ensures service delivery is sustainable. Although a high surplus would be preferable, many global conditions and factors are simply outside the control of a small economy such as Australia, let alone Queensland. More importantly, the ratio of financial assets remains high at 85 per cent, which is well in excess of New South Wales in second spot at 40 per cent. This level of liquidity is important in times of uncertainty and volatile world markets.

I now turn to other economic indicators. The Queensland economy has continued to outperform the rest of Australia and indeed most of the rest of the Western world in terms of economic growth in 2002-03. Estimated growth in gross state product will be four per cent this year, which is a full one per cent higher than the growth expected for the rest of the country. Employment growth is also expected to grow. In 2002-03 employment has grown by three and a quarter per cent, which is also one per cent higher than the average achieved in this country. This means that 55,000 jobs have been created. Although a seven per cent overall unemployment rate is still high, nevertheless it is the lowest for the state for 13 years.

If one takes into account massive international and interstate migration, the high unemployment rate is understandable. A total of 62,000 people called Queensland their home in the last 12 months up to December 2002. A lot of these people will be on the job market looking for work. Business investment is also strong and increased to 9.5 per cent this fiscal year. Statutory deduction for residents will be increased from \$200,000 to \$220,000. The existing threshold for companies and trustees will be increased from \$150,000 to \$170,000. International rating agency Standard and Poor's also recognised that the underlying finances of Queensland were robust and the financial liabilities of the state remain to be the lowest of all Australian states. Industry groups lauded the government's commitment to secure a surplus, the increased capital works infrastructure and the commitment to Smart State developments.

I now move on to the service delivery aspect of this budget. This is a budget for the community. This is a budget for the families and also a budget for the future of our state. Firstly, \$200 million in new funding for disability services has been welcomed by the community. Shirley Waters of the Queensland Council of Social Services welcomed the budget particularly in relation to the disability package. She said that it is a great step forward in terms of recognising unmet need in the community for the delivery of new services. This budget also included a record boost for the Families Department and this year's budget delivers on that commitment with \$42 million of additional funding allocated for 2003-04.

Through the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative, the government will continue to support the region's young job seekers with \$26.4 million allocated to help create over 4,000 jobs across the region. Capital spending will be boosted to \$5.3 billion in 2003-04, supporting up to 45,000 jobs. As for education, the budget clearly demonstrated this government's commitment to the Smart State by providing \$4.488 billion for education in Queensland—almost 25 per cent of the entire budget. This coming year 636 extra teachers will be employed. It is also worth mentioning that \$12 million has been allocated to support students with disabilities. As for health, Queensland can be assured of massive spending by the government. A record budget of \$4.63 billion has been allocated to secure the health of Queenslanders.

I now wish to focus on the electorate of Capalaba. This budget allows for—  
\$300,000 additional funding for oncology services at Redland Hospital;  
\$200,000 additional funding for renal dialysis services;  
\$142,000 additional funding for the emergency department;  
\$493,000 for new medical equipment;  
\$877,000 extension to mental facilities;  
\$125,000 for X-ray machines;  
\$3.393 million for a 128 bed aged-care facility also at the Redland Hospital;  
\$1.4 million for roadworks on Redland Bay Road between Windemere and Vienna roads;  
\$1.66 million for intersection improvements;  
\$260,000 for additional toilets at Hilliard State School; and  
\$46,000 for repainting at Alex Hills State High and Birkdale South State School.

There will also be—

\$300,000 for the construction of a new ambulance station at Birkdale;  
a total of \$748,000 to provide assistance to Redland Shire Council towards the costs of capital works associated with the construction of roadworks and drainage;  
\$75,000 to reconstruct the Judy Holt Park at Birkdale for Rugby Union in support of the Redlands Rugby Union and Recreation Club;  
\$57,000 to reconstruct three fields and install irrigation at the Capalaba Soccer and Recreation Club;  
public housing general upgrade will receive \$717,000; and  
the maintenance budget has been increased to \$1.064 million.

This budget further allows for a grant of \$2.75 million over four years towards a Redland Performing Arts Centre. Myann Burrows, the President of the Redlands Arts Council, in a letter to me yesterday said that she was delighted with the state government's budget that appears to address the needs of many sectors of our community who need significant levels of assistance. She further said that she was particularly delighted with the successful funding towards the establishment of a dedicated public performing arts centre. She said the performing arts group and artists in the shire have waited for a long time for a public facility to cater for their needs and to provide the audiences with an appropriate venue for concerts and productions. She finally commended the state government on its generosity and foresight.

Indeed, this is a caring budget with vision. With record spending on health, we are looking after the health of Queenslanders. With record spending on disability, we are saying to those less fortunate than us that as a mature and civilised society we have not forgotten them. With record spending on education, we are investing in the future of our state on those most important—our young people. It is with great pleasure I commend the bills to the House.

**Miss ELISA ROBERTS** (Gympie—Ind) (11.58 p.m.): I rise this evening to provide my response to the budget and to comment on the impact it will have on the people who make up the electorate of Gympie. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge the \$3.5 million which has been allocated to the redevelopment of Gympie Hospital as part of a promise made by the Minister for Health last year to spend \$5.5 million on a new operating theatre, image facility and a central sterilising supply department. I must also take this opportunity to thank the minister for taking on board the concerns of the new hospital medical superintendent, the community, junior medical doctors and myself over the lack of senior medical staff at the hospital. We now have six senior doctors on the staff. This is a great step towards reversing the previous trend of understaffing and inadequate resources, which was the case when I was first elected.

To continue in the new positive direction of health care in the Gympie electorate, oral services will be receiving \$5 million across the state in order to reduce the four-year waiting lists. The employment of two new dentists in Gympie, who are due to move into their relocated dental clinic section of the hospital, is reassuring for many locals who have been waiting years to see their positions on the waiting list move closer to the top.

The old dental rooms will be amalgamated into the emergency department, thus increasing the size and overall capacity of the department. Emergency departments across the state will see \$2.2 million allocated to assist with the increasing demand. However, it is hoped that all emergency departments will receive some portion of this funding and that it will not be reserved for the selected few.

Another aspect of the budget in regard to Health that is commendable is the continuation of the elective surgery enhancement initiative, which is aimed at reducing waiting times for elective surgery in Queensland's public hospitals. I hope that with a commitment of \$10 million to the initiative we will see a real reduction in the waiting times for surgery for the people whom I represent. On a personal level, I am pleased to see that the demand for increased oncology services and cancer care has been recognised with a \$13.2 million injection of funds. As well, after representations by community members, me and others, there is \$13.1 million set aside for renal dialysis treatment for both hospital and home based services. Once again, it is hoped that Gympie will benefit in some way from this funding.

However, it is disappointing to see that Gympie was not included in the new community positions in adult acute services funding for mental health services. But at least the \$8.4 million commitment shows that the government has recognised the increasing need for and importance of mental health care services throughout Queensland.

Other areas which have received increased funding and which will benefit the Gympie electorate include the Home and Community Care Program, with an additional \$3.6 million to enable increased access to the Patient Travel Subsidy Scheme. This is a godsend for many people within my electorate. During a public meeting I convened last year, one of the main concerns for people in areas such as Tin Can Bay and Rainbow Beach was the lack of transport available for people to get to and from medical appointments.

The next area in which the Gympie electorate has seen benefit is in capital works for policing. Of the \$9 million needed to build the new police station and watch-house in Gympie, another \$500,000 has been allocated on top of last year's \$492,000. Whilst there is still a long way to go before we will see the completion of the station, with around \$8 million still needed, at least the ball is rolling, albeit slowly.

Due to the increasing requirement for extra police north of my electorate in areas such as Tin Can Bay and Rainbow Beach, the Police Minister has made a commitment to build a new station at Rainbow Beach, with an initial grant of \$100,000 allocated towards the total cost of \$590,000 for the building. The necessity for a station to be located in this section of my electorate stems from the distance between it and Gympie, which is approximately a 45-minute drive. Recently, there were two concurrent incidents, one at Tin Can Bay and one in the main street of Gympie. Because all of the rostered police were attending the incident at Tin Can Bay, there were no officers to attend the one in Gympie until five hours later. The new police station will be very much appreciated by residents and police from both ends of the electorate. At the opposite but no less beautiful end of my electorate, Pomona is to also receive a replacement station, with \$135,000 allocated towards its establishment, the total cost of which is estimated at around \$390,000.

In regard to the huge demand for public housing in my community, on behalf of my constituents I am extremely grateful to the Minister for Housing for listening to concerns raised regarding the lack of adequate housing in the region. This budget has allocated funding to enable approximately nine units to be built. This is very timely as the waiting list for public housing in my electorate is at around 284 and access to private accommodation has been exceedingly difficult and is often way outside the price range for many seeking to rent.

Interestingly, 62.5 per cent of capital works funding is earmarked for outside the Brisbane Statistical Division. These statistics are particularly welcomed by rural and regional residents, who often feel disfranchised due to their locality.

Turning to the vital area of education, there are no real outstanding benefits for the Gympie electorate, apart from a share, which is split between four schools, of the \$235,000 that the Noosa District State High School is to receive for upgrading the Special Education Unit. The Two Mile State School located in Gympie has also been granted necessary funding to be repainted.

One bone of contention, however, for my local students is the lack of airconditioning. The heat in summer months is stifling for these students and for some reason none of these schools has been provided with airconditioning. I sincerely hope that with the \$16.7 million provided for the purpose of continuing with the Cooler Schools program the Education Minister finally

concedes that the children of Gympie electorate are important and deserve the same working conditions as children in every other area of the state.

Another area of special interest to the people of my electorate is Disability Services. This is one area which has been severely lacking. I know the Minister for Disability Services repeatedly refers to the fact that this department receives more money than it ever did under previous coalition governments, but this is of little interest to the many families waiting for assistance. There is no point dwelling on the past and on what other people did or did not do; the point is that currently Disability Services Queensland is one of the lowest funded disability departments in the whole of Australia. Historical comparisons of funding regimes are cold comfort to people in need today.

People with disabilities, along with children, are the most vulnerable people in society. These are the people who cannot fend for themselves. This state and, most importantly, my electorate do not have sufficient respite care facilities, and the disability lifestyle support packages do not support anywhere near enough clients. One of the greatest fears for families of a person with a disability is the uncertainty of the future. The uncertainty of whether or not their son or daughter will be looked after adequately should they ever be without their family support is not being alleviated by the current DSQ programs.

For the majority of service providers within my electorate there is the belief that there is a huge disparity in the dissemination of funding throughout the region. There is concern about whether Gympie will get its fair share of the 100 lifestyle packages that have been offered. This is one area which I hope has been addressed in the department's funding reform project initiative.

Whilst this budget has been of some benefit to the Gympie electorate, it has done very little for rural residents, whose livelihoods are reliant upon farming. In fact, this government has done even less in the last two budgets to provide farmers with even a glimmer of hope that their farming futures are safe. The imposition of additional charges to farmers from food safety to water to land clearing and, last but not least, the compulsory payment, levy or tax—whatever we want to call it; they all have the same meaning—for our Ambulance Service has put more and more pressure on farming communities throughout Queensland.

The Agforce lobby group has stated that it appears that \$7 million has disappeared from the Department of Primary Industries and has been diverted to the Department of Natural Resources in order to help fund the money allocated to prosecute farmers for illegal land clearing. What most farmers I have talked to cannot understand is that, whilst they appreciate the need for competition, rather than making it easier for them to compete with other producers their government is doing everything in its power to make it not just difficult but impossible for them to do so. I know this is hard for government members to believe, but this is not a political issue; this is just the reality of what farmers are facing and thinking today.

To witness a close friend in tears because of the situation her parents are facing while trying to hang on to their farm, which has survived through two world wars and a depression, is heartbreaking. Since I have been elected, I have heard so many speeches from this side of the House practically begging this government to reassess its views about farmers and their needs, and we have all continued to be ignored. It was always my view that governments of all political persuasions were there to look out for their constituents no matter who they were. I have learnt that, sadly, this is not always the case.

I have a simple way of judging whether or not a budget is a good one for my electorate. Do the people of Gympie have access to the same services at the same standard and with the same accessibility as their Brisbane counterparts, considering that we are all Queenslanders and that we all pay the same taxes, fees and charges? With this budget the answer is, no, this government still has a little way to go.

**Mr LEE** (Indooroopilly—ALP) (12.07 a.m.): In rising to support the 2003 state budget, I thank the people of the Indooroopilly electorate for the trust they have placed in me as their local MP. It is always an honour to serve my local community in this place, and I am determined always to be an active and accessible member of parliament. Whether it is at a school fete, a P&C or P&F meeting, Neighbourhood Watch, a seniors gathering, a church picnic, on the University of Queensland campus or even just at the local shops, I want my constituents to feel able to approach me to discuss any issues that concern them. I believe that very little of an MP's work should be carried out from behind a desk in an electorate office; rather, our activities should centre on being out in the community meeting people and listening to their concerns, views and ideas. It is in the community that we find out just what projects and programs need government

funding and it is only after listening to the community that we should act to promote the interests of our constituents.

I want to speak of this state budget not just in specific dollar terms but in terms of the underlying philosophies that I believe should guide participants in the democratic process. We live in an increasingly uncertain international environment. It is one where an evil few who do not share our common commitment to freedom, liberty and truth can terrorise the majority. The tragedy of the Bali bombing clearly demonstrated this. However, the way to make the world safer and the way to make our community safer is to promote our common democratic values. This is adequately captured by Australia's citizenship affirmation: as an Australian citizen, I affirm my loyalty to Australia and its people, whose democratic beliefs I share, whose rights and liberties I respect and whose laws I uphold and obey.

I do not think it can be put any more simply than that. That is why I think that it is possible here in Queensland to bring down a state budget that divides over \$2 billion without the consideration that those who disagree with any part of the funding arrangements might take up arms against the rest.

What makes our democracy strong is an active citizenry and I believe that it is education that makes for an active citizenship body. That is why it is crucial that we continue to boost education spending. This budget contains education spending of around \$4.48 billion—a boost of 5.8 per cent—and it includes around 600 new teachers.

This budget also contains significant funding for local Indooroopilly electorate schools. I will just talk of some of this funding. There is \$209,000 to repaint school buildings at Indooroopilly State High School, Indooroopilly State School, Ironside State School and Toowong College. There is \$131,000 for new toilets at Indooroopilly State School and there is also a special grant of \$250,000 which will assist with Indooroopilly State School's swimming pool upgrade. There is also a grant of \$8,000 to help Graceville State School renovate their swimming school canteen and around \$27,000 to install sun safe equipment at the Indooroopilly After School Care Association.

I am very pleased with this funding in particular. I am a patron of the Indooroopilly After School Care Association and I know that Jaime Simmonds and the committee that work very hard there will be absolutely delighted with this funding. I spoke to Michael van Baarle from the St Lucia Kindergarten Association yesterday and they are absolutely delighted with \$21,105 for new playground equipment. There is also significant funding as well for Smart State initiatives at the University of Queensland.

I am fiercely proud of my electorate's schools, as most members of this parliament know, and I would like to reflect briefly upon some of the achievements of the students and also of the parent bodies in some of these schools.

Indooroopilly State School in particular has done very well out of this state budget. I know that Hilary Bachus has worked very hard this year as the new principal. Last year Graham Giles retired after 14 years at the helm and Hilary had very big shoes to fill and I think she has managed to do that. I had an opportunity to catch up with Graham last week. I think he is enjoying his retirement but like most lifelong educators he does miss the laughter and the questions of the students.

Indooroopilly State School was recently a winner of the district maths team challenge where they competed against not just state schools but also private schools. I am also very impressed that Gopi Ravindran from year 6 won the District Harvey Norman Ozspell in the 10 to 14 years division. He is 10 but he won the under 14 division. He will now go to Sydney for the National Championships. Olivia Degn, one of the school captains at Indooroopilly State School, was also one of just two primary school captains to present at a young leaders day in front of a state wide audience of 2,500 people. That is quite an achievement for a very impressive young lady.

Ironside State School is already a centre of excellence and in fact the only centre of excellence in metropolitan Brisbane.

**Ms Keech** interjected.

**Mr LEE:** I take that interjection from the member for Albert. It is a very good school. I had the honour recently of launching at the school this year's Science Centre Travelling Roadshow, which showcases some of the exhibits that are available through the science centre and through the Queensland museum. The roadshow, while it was launched at Ironside, actually does the rounds of regional Queensland schools and communities, and provides students who would not get the opportunity otherwise to visit the museum to find out about science and science in action. It was a

pleasure to be able to launch that at Ironside School, which is very proud of its achievements in the area of science teaching.

Fig Tree Pocket State School is also quite close to my heart, and I am looking forward to Saturday, 14 June and opening the school's fete. All moneys raised at the fete go towards the students and towards the school and I know that everyone has a great day. Fete day is a day at Fig Tree Pocket where the whole community gets involved. The school also links in with other community groups in the local area. I know that Neighbourhood Watch is always involved, as are the local police. I know that Fig Tree Pocket has had a number of break-ins in the last couple of years. I also know that the Department of Education and the local Neighbourhood Watch group are working hard to make sure that if there are people getting up to mischief on the school grounds they are reported to the police straightaway and they are also working towards an increased level of security at the school.

My neighbour is Nudgee Junior College and Patrick Colley is the principal at the moment. Sean Gordon has taken leave. Nudgee is a very impressive school with some very impressive young men. Recently a group of year 7 students from Nudgee Junior won the national championship for future problem solving. Since last year when they won this competition they have been working towards heading over to the University of Connecticut to take part in the world championships.

Four boys are currently in the USA with Nudgee Junior's librarian Mrs Roz Peters and they are competing to become world champions in future problem solving. Their topic, and I think it is quite appropriate for a school from the Smart State, is 'World Wide Communications'. These boys have very big shoes to fill. Last year the team from Nudgee Junior actually became the world champions of the future problem solving competition. This is a competition that schools from all over Australia take part in. It is a competition that I know schools in America take incredibly seriously. There are schools in the United States that employ staff full time to train their students and to coach their students to do well at the future problem solvers competition. Our boys from Nudgee Junior went to Connecticut and absolutely trounced them.

Holy Family School in Indooroopilly is also doing very well. It recently received a grant of \$30,000 from the state government for some new toilets. I know that Margaret Gallen, its hard working principal, was delighted with this. The school has tremendous support from its parent body and that is no more the case when it is doing some fundraising. It had a very successful fundraiser recently at the Indooroopilly Hotel where they organised a trivia night with dozens and dozens of tables. I am also looking forward to meeting the year 7s from Holy Family next week. They are going to have a tour of parliament on Wednesday. It was a delight to visit their classroom two weeks ago to talk about the work that I do and also to answer their questions.

For many years I have been a parishioner at Christ the King Catholic parish in Graceville. Christ the King School means a lot to me. I know that John Wilson, the principal, works very hard with the community. It is a great school. They are also expanding the school at the moment. To do this they are having to move the church. The church, which was originally at Toowong, was literally floated on rafts down the river about 100 years ago. It is being moved again. It is something the church is used to, I guess. It has done it before, but it is going to give the students a much larger play area. The fete at Christ the King is on Sunday, 15 June. I can see a wry smile from the Treasurer because he opened the fete at the school last year and was a very popular attendee.

I would like to express my sadness though at the loss of Mary Tormey, the school's librarian. Mary passed away almost a month ago. Mary was taken well before her time. The outpouring of community support and sympathy for her family is indicative of the esteem in which she was held by the community at Christ the King. I know the staff and parents miss her and I also know that her family miss her. More than that, I know by the reactions of the students that they really miss her too. The school and the community have lost a great lady in Mary.

This year is the 75th anniversary of Graceville State School. Many activities have been carried out this year at Graceville. Graceville has received a lot from the government as of late, particularly its swimming club, which has received a number of grants recently. Also, the wonderful Graceville State School hall received a grant not so long ago to build a new stage, which is absolutely wonderful.

Sherwood State School has recently received significant funding to upgrade its swimming pool, which is absolutely wonderful. It is worth noting that this swimming pool virtually did not receive a cent of funding under the conservatives. The pool was built in 1967 and I think it barely

saw a lick of paint since it was opened. The school has a great pool now and I know the swimming club is absolutely delighted.

Montessori school in Fig Tree Pocket under the leadership of Allen Kloeden is opening a new secondary section next year and is accepting year 8 students. The combination of the Montessori philosophy and the international baccalaureate programs, which involved middle years program and diploma, and the Dalton Plan make this a world first. The school will be the only school in Brisbane offering this international program in 2004.

Glenleighden school, which runs through the CHI.L.D Association, has been servicing the needs of children and adolescents who have severe speech and language impairments since 1979. With the recent addition of an outreach program, this has enabled CHI.L.D to offer services to children, their families and educators at a statewide level. This is a quite remarkable school that does remarkable things with its students.

This year Toowong College is celebrating its 40th anniversary and under Jeanette Gentle it has developed a new direction for the future which the school community is enthusiastically embracing. The new vision for the school is 'Toowong College: Your way to a Brighter Future.' St Peters Lutheran College, which recently held its annual fete herbsfest, has done very well recently, with its film and television students, Julia Billington, Adriane Hayward, Nicola Andrews and Bonnie Holloway winning the Best Secondary Documentary category at the Queensland New Film Makers Awards. It is the fifth time that St Peters has been a finalist if not a winner at these prestigious film industry awards.

I want to say a few brief words about the young ladies from Brigidine College. Many of the year 12 students at that school visited parliament recently to meet with other members of my local youth advisory committee and also the state Minister for Youth, Mr Matt Foley. The girls always make a quite valuable contribution in meetings of the youth advisory committee and I think they demonstrate an understanding of local issues beyond their years. I hope they keep that up in the future.

I want to speak also about some of the wonderful things that are happening at Indooroopilly State High School. This is a school of which Professor Peter Doherty is a past pupil. That school is really living up to the example that he has set. Grace Moss and Eleanore Bridier are delegates this July to the United Nations Youth Association and National Youth Conference in Perth. They are the only two students from state schools who are representing Queensland.

Vicki Van Der Walt recently received her pilot's licence. She received her wings from the Royal Queensland Aero Club and I am told she did that before she got her driver's licence. Jodi Gardner, who is a student leader at the school, won the regional final of the Lion's Youth of the Year competition and the year 9 debaters remain undefeated. Indooroopilly State High School has a great track record in debating. A year 12 student and a friend of mine, Jack Fuller, won the Queensland Debating Union Best Debater Award last year.

I want to reflect briefly upon Milpera State High School. Milpera now has its highest enrolment in four years in this semester. It is undertaking a joint project with year 5 students from Graceville State School through a discovering democracy grant. Eleven students have successfully completed a trial program at the Construction Training Centre in Salisbury and a TPV Afghani IT trainee has just completed his traineeship with Milpera with the Benarrawa Community Development Association paying his wages, which I understand were denied to him by the federal government because of his temporary protection visa status. Milpera has over 100 volunteers working there every week and I think it is a great sign for the future of the Smart State.

I would like to finish on a positive note in commenting that the Sherwood Police Station received significant funding in this budget. This is a station that the National Party government sought to close and the community fought against. This government has committed significant funds to it. It is a reaffirmation of our desire to provide the best quality police service to the Sherwood community. I am delighted with this budget.

Debate, on motion of Mr Lee, adjourned.

## ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. A. M. BLIGH** (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (12.26 a.m.): I move—  
That the House do now adjourn.

**Mrs D. Steel**

**Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM** (Gladstone—Ind) (12.26 p.m.): I rise today to pay tribute to Debbie Steel, the Development Manager of Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Ltd, and the new project that it is currently promoting. GAPDL is in the process of contacting third and fourth year apprentices who have recently had their indentures terminated, inviting them to return to their training and complete their trade qualifications. This will provide them with the skills, formal qualifications and experience necessary to seek employment in their chosen fields. For Gladstone and those areas affected by the new industrial development presently under way, the availability of third and fourth year apprentices will provide businesses with productive employees who can assist in reducing the impact of construction on local business and industry operations. Debbie Steel of GAPDL has said—

We are assisting businesses and industry by identifying Apprentices who have firstly practical skills and secondly, who are willing and eager to return to their trade and complete their training. We will be asking the Apprentices to provide an overview of their skills and their location of choice. Businesses looking to employ staff can access the online database, input the skill area they require and the allocation of their business. The database will provide a short list of potential candidates for interviewing purposes. Through the project we are helping to fast track the employment process.

The introduction of third and fourth year apprentices to the regional skilled work force will assist in re-establishing the smooth and continuous transition of apprentices to trade persons, and certainly in my electorate it is a very high area of need.

The support and contribution of the Comalco Community Fund, funding this project to the tune of \$12,200, has provided the necessary financial contribution to make the project a reality. Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Ltd is acting as a lead agent in the development, implementation and promotion of the project in conjunction with GAGAL, the group apprentices, TAFE, DET and the Department of State Development.

On Thursday, 5 May in excess of 4,000 letters were mailed out to out-of-trade apprentices. This is a wonderful initiative. It means that tradespeople who have done up to their third or fourth year apprenticeships will be able to re-enrol, complete their indentures and ensure that they are productive, professional and qualified tradespeople. These people will be of infinite value to our electorate, and I commend Gladstone Area Promotion and Development Ltd for its initiative. I commend Comalco for its support for this measure, and I look forward in future years to the Department of Education and Training continuing to support this initiative. It certainly is of value.

**Mrs N. Bennet**

**Ms LIDDY CLARK** (Clayfield—ALP) (12.29 a.m.): I wish to bring to the attention of the House the recent passing of one of Brisbane's incredible heroines. On behalf of the member for Stafford, Terry Sullivan, and the member for Nudgee, Neil Roberts, I wish to profile and celebrate the wonderful Norah Bennet. David, who did the eulogy on Wednesday, gave Norah a middle name, Ethos. Norah, as well as being an active choir member and volunteer for Newstead House, was a community member who worked tirelessly for the ambulance sector for many years. She was a great driving force behind the Nundah and Airport Benefit Committee which, in 1995, looked at establishing a local ambulance committee at the airport. The member for Stafford, Terry Sullivan, also tells me that she was part of the ambulance—

**Mr Terry Sullivan:** The local area consultative group.

**Ms LIDDY CLARK:** I take that interjection.

**Mr Terry Sullivan:** To look at the Nundah bypass.

**Ms LIDDY CLARK:** That is correct. That was in 1991. On 7 May 1998, the Nundah Local Ambulance Committee was formed. Along with Norah, I had the pleasure of being a member of that committee. Its name was changed to the Northgate-Spring Hill and Districts Local Ambulance Committee when the new station was built at Northgate.

As president of that committee, Norah never ceased to amaze me at the extraordinary job that she did to make life and work a little less angst driven for our ambulance officers and paramedics. One fabulous initiative was the committee's annual dance extravaganza fundraiser. Those evenings were an absolute hoot. I would barn dance and gipsy tap the night away with Norah. The dance would then follow with an auction, at which I was honoured to undertake the role of auctioneer.

Norah was instrumental in the development of the new Nundah Business Association and was vice-president. She was a past president and life member of NOTION. Norah was committed to the rejuvenation of Nundah's business precinct and the community as a whole. Anything that was community related, we could guarantee that Norah was the heart and soul of the action. As was pointed out, she was a part of the Nundah cut and cover right at the beginning.

But wait, there is more. Norah was vice-president of the Windsor Historical Society, a member of the Friends of Newstead Inc., the Nundafest coordinator, a committee member of the Nundah Community Centre, a committee member of the Nundah Shopping Centre Improvement Project, a member of the Hendra Secondary College P&C, a member of the parish council of St George's Church, a member of St George's singers and a member of the Banyo Minstrels. Norah's funeral was held at the Gateway Presbyterian Church at Ascot on Wednesday, 4 June and was well attended by family, friends, community leaders, local ambulance officers, police officers, parliamentarians and the Director-General of Emergency Services.

Our condolences are with Norah's sons, Eddie and Peter, and her grandchildren. Norah was a passionate mother and grandmother. It was such an honour to be a part of her extended Nundah family. Her song was *Always*. I thank Norah. She was and will continue to be our shining star in Nundah.

### Toowoomba Hospice

**Mr COPELAND** (Cunningham—NPA) (12.32 a.m.): This Saturday we will witness the long-awaited official opening of the Toowoomba Hospice. This occasion will mark a very important milestone in the delivery of health care on the Darling Downs. The community owned and operated hospice will deliver to communities on the Darling Downs much-needed health facilities to care for the terminally ill and provide respite for their carers.

Well-equipped facilities providing palliative care for terminally ill patients who can no longer be cared for at home are a very important facet of community health care. This type of facility has been in urgent need on the Darling Downs for some time. The Toowoomba Hospice will be very similar to the Ipswich Hospice and will provide a warm and comfortable environment for its occupants, more closely resembling that of a large home rather than of a hospital. Importantly, the Toowoomba Hospice will provide dying people with the greatest possible level of comfort and dignity during their final days.

Caring for the terminally ill can be very distressing for the carers and families. The hospice will ensure that these people can access support and respite during this time of dying and bereavement. In line with its motto, the Toowoomba Hospice will truly be a place of unconditional love and dedicated care.

The hospice is completely community driven and the vast majority of funding behind it has come from countless local organisations, companies, businesses and individuals who have given their time and generosity, not to mention their money, towards creating a truly community facility. Previously, I have spoken in this House about this incredible fundraising effort and the true feeling of community ownership that has evolved in Toowoomba and on the Darling Downs for the hospice.

I acknowledge that the state government has contributed \$300,000 in recurrent funding for the hospice. However, I would like to put on the record that this funding was well below the requested \$490,000 in recurrent funding that is realistically required to accommodate the running costs and it falls well short of the funding that was received by the Ipswich Hospice. I certainly hope that the Health Minister will see fit to increase this recurrent funding now that the Toowoomba Hospice will be officially open and operational.

I would like to pay tribute to Graham Barron and the other members of the Toowoomba Hospice Committee for having the vision, perseverance and persistence to drive this community project to become a reality. I also congratulate and thank Sister Francis Flint, a marvellous woman who has worked very hard both in public and behind the scenes. Thanks must also go to the Heritage Building Society, which injects so much funding and goodwill into its home town of Toowoomba, and the hospice has been no exception. I also would like to acknowledge the continued support and contribution of the Toowoomba City Council.

Following the historic opening on Saturday will be a community open day and family fun fair at the hospice on Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. so that the community are able to tour the facilities that they helped create. I believe that this is a wonderful idea and will further serve to

strengthen the feeling of ownership on the Darling Downs of this truly great health facility. It is a fantastic day for Toowoomba and the Darling Downs. It is the culmination of a huge effort to raise the money to ensure that the hospice became a reality. I know that all of those people involved directly on the committee, all of those people who volunteered to help and everyone in the Toowoomba community are delighted to see the hospice actually come to fruition.

### **Queensland Day; Queensland Colour**

**Mr LEE** (Indooroopilly—ALP) (12.36 a.m.): It is Queensland Day. Recently, I was shocked to discover that Queensland has no official colour. Maroon, which is the colour that is most often associated with Queensland and which is used by a number of state-level sporting teams, organisations and even the government, is our colour by convention and tradition. The inaugural State of Origin football match between Queensland and New South Wales held in 1980 featured Queensland players in maroon guernseys.

But it was not the first time that Queensland teams sported maroon guernseys. Apparently interstate Rugby Union and Rugby League matches between Queensland and New South Wales, which have occurred since the beginning of the 20th century, saw Queensland wearing maroon. According to one historical source, the Queensland Rugby League team has worn a maroon guernsey and the New South Wales team a blue guernsey since around 1908. There is even some suggestion that these teams adopted their colours from the more established Rugby Union teams before then.

Maroon is used by a number of Queensland sporting teams, government authorities and businesses. The Queensland parliament's new crest incorporates a maroon belt. The Queensland government's corporate symbol features an almost maroon colour. I think that now is the ideal time to make maroon Queensland's official colour. I think it is time for the Premier, who I know is a very proud Queenslander, to take steps to make maroon Queensland's official colour. Queensland residents have the opportunity to show their support for maroon as our official colour by signing a parliamentary e-petition by visiting the Queensland parliament web page at [www.parliament.qld.gov.au](http://www.parliament.qld.gov.au) and following the links to e-petitions.

Some people have suggested that, since we already have an official state mascot in the koala and a state flower in the Cooktown orchid, there is no need for an official Queensland colour. But I disagree. I think that the colour of maroon translates beautifully onto the sporting field. I guess people could hardly see big Gordie Tallis running into a packed Suncorp Stadium wearing a plain white guernsey yet sporting a corsage of Cooktown orchid. I think maroon should be Queensland's colour and our official colour.

### **Events, Callide Electorate**

**Mr SEENEY** (Callide—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (12.39 a.m.): Last weekend I attended the Gin Gin show, which is the last of the shows to be held as part of the show circuit in my electorate. There are 13 shows throughout the communities in the electorate of Callide and they have all been very successful shows this year. The Gin Gin show was the last.

All of the show societies are staffed by bands of very dedicated and committed volunteers—people who give of their own time and in many cases give of their own resources in not inconsequential amounts to make sure that they do have a successful show in their particular communities. Show societies, like so many other community organisations, have had to battle with the problem of public liability insurance. It is great to see that they have been able to overcome that problem and continue to put on the local show in those 13 communities across the Callide electorate. I wonder whether any other members in this House have within their electorates 13 communities which could put on a very successful annual show—put on by volunteers—that provides an excellent opportunity for the community to come together and to celebrate all that is good about living in places like Murgon, Goomeri, Gayndah, Monto, Eidsvold, Biloela, Thangool and all of those other great communities that make up the Callide electorate.

Also this weekend four festivals will be staged in the Callide. The Gayndah Orange Festival is on the long weekend. The Murgon Dairy Festival and the Dillalah Horse Festival are also on. They are also great community events. Like the show movement, they are organised and put on by dedicated bands of volunteers.

Perhaps the festival that is gaining the best reputation in the Callide electorate is the Goomeri Pumpkin Festival, which was on last weekend. Some 12,000 people descended on the

small town of Goomeri. I can assure honourable members that there was a heck of a crowd there to see and witness the great Australian pumpkin roll, which is held behind the police station in Goomeri at a place called Policeman's Hill. It is a great event. It is wonderful to see how a small community can take an event such as that and turn it into a festival that can attract such a large number of people from right across the state.

Also held within my electorate is another great event called the Kilkivan Horse Ride, which was unfortunately postponed this year due to rain. However, it is to be rescheduled for later in the year.

### **Caboolture PCYC Boxing Club**

**Hon. K. W. HAYWARD** (Kallangur—ALP) (12.41 a.m.): I rise in the parliament this morning to speak about the efforts of police citizens youth clubs in Queensland. In particular I wish to highlight the efforts of the Caboolture PCYC under the guidance of its manager, Sergeant Dale Hennessey.

The PCYC movement was first established in Queensland in 1948 with the broad aim of improving communities through youth development. A major activity conducted at the Caboolture PCYC is amateur boxing under the direction of trainer Cliff Fooks. The amateur boxing club at Caboolture also provides supervised training activities for individual boxers and of course other clubs when they come to visit for sparring practice. The Caboolture PCYC boxing club, like most PCYC boxing clubs throughout Queensland, is registered with the Global Amateur Boxing Association. Like all PCYCs, the Caboolture club is always looking for financial support in order to fulfil its aims and objectives. Members may think that PCYCs focus only on the sport of boxing, but nothing could be further from reality. In fact, the Caboolture PCYC conducts a range of activities, as I said before, with the aim of improving the local community through youth development.

On Saturday night, 17 May, the Caboolture PCYC, with the assistance of the Caboolture Bowls Club as a venue, hosted an evening of amateur boxing as a fundraising event for the association. I wish to publicly acknowledge the sponsors of the evening, the Caboolture RSL club, DIY Plant Hire of Morayfield, Southern Pacific Sands and Bridgestone Tyres of Caboolture. Their support is gratefully received.

An excellent crowd was on hand to see the night of amateur boxing including Caboolture Shire Councillor John McNaught, who plays a substantial role in the local PCYC, and my parliamentary colleague the member for Pumicestone, Carryn Sullivan. A special guest of the evening was Mr Ron Hand, who is a dual Olympian. He represented Great Britain in the sport of boxing in Helsinki in 1952 and then later represented New Zealand in Rome in 1960. It is an interesting case of not just a dual Olympian from the one country but a dual Olympian representing two countries.

On the night 16 bouts were conducted featuring boxers and trainers from clubs from Gladstone to Logan City. I wish to take the opportunity to thank all of the volunteers who worked so hard to make the night such a success. As all members of this parliament know, organisations such as the PCYC movement and various sporting activities cannot be conducted without the support and hard work of volunteers. A lot of people are involved, but I wish to particularly thank a friend of mine, the master of cuts, bumps and bruises, Queensland's leading medico, the fight doctor, Dr Tony Moor. Boxing shows cannot be conducted without the support of a registered medical practitioner. Once again, my thanks go to the sponsors. Their support is very much appreciated by the Caboolture PCYC.

Time expired.

### **Beaudesert Hospital**

**Hon. K. R. LINGARD** (Beaudesert—NPA) (12.45 a.m.): The Beaudesert Hospital saga continues. This hospital was provided during the coalition period of 1997-98. It has been treated as a political football ever since. I notice it appeared on the front page of the *Beaudesert Times* yesterday. A report called the 'Logan-Beaudesert Health Services District' compiled on 30 August 2002 states—

The Beaudesert Hospital (40 beds) provides general surgery, internal and emergency medicine, obstetrics and gynaecology, anaesthesia and a range of clinical support programs.

The ALP government has treated this hospital like a white elephant. We had a long battle to keep our hospital in Beaudesert, which in years past saw patients travel from Kyogle, Oxenford, Greenbank and many other outlying areas to receive treatment, such was the regard for its services. Naturally, the community has become very critical.

In January 2002 the community of Beaudesert was told that its negative attitude could 'damage Queensland Health's bid to find a temporary medical superintendent and other senior medical staff'. The regional director of the district health services stated that she was concerned about talk that there were plans afoot to downgrade services provided by Beaudesert Hospital. She went on further to state that Queensland Health was committed to restoring all services at the hospital. A public meeting at the Beaudesert Civic Centre was held in February 2002 and various key players were invited to discuss the crisis. At that time we were told that the regional director had committed to returning full services to the Beaudesert Hospital as soon as possible. What did that mean?

Beaudesert shire has a population of over 55,000, with an annual growth rate of four per cent. Over 400 babies a year used to be born at the old Beaudesert Hospital. At the Beaudesert community meetings a commitment was made to keep the people informed by regular updates of the progress towards the goal to return the hospital services to the standard the locals had grown accustomed to.

In February 2002 another public meeting was held in Beaudesert. A commitment was made by Logan that there would be no downgrading of services. Since that time communication from Mrs Edmond and the regional director has been quite honestly non-existent. The surgical and maternity wards continue to be closed. People attending outpatients are told to see their private doctor. Some accident victims are airlifted to Southport, Logan or Brisbane hospitals. Others are taken by ambulance. The mother of a child with a suspected broken foot was told that she would have to drive her child to Southport because there were no X-ray services at the Beaudesert Hospital on weekends. A child with a temperature but in a stable condition was sent from Beaudesert Hospital to the Mater for treatment because Beaudesert Hospital was not able to perform the necessary tests.

Women who go to Logan to have their babies are supposed to receive postnatal care at Beaudesert Hospital. Recently a lady was waiting to be transferred to Beaudesert Hospital and she became aware that there were no midwives at Beaudesert Hospital. Her option was to go home with a new baby and midwives could call on her from time to time. The new superintendent finally commenced duties at Beaudesert Hospital in January this year. However, the services remain at the basic end of the scale. How long is this going to continue?

Time expired.

### **Academic Freedom of Expression**

**Ms MOLLOY** (Noosa—ALP) (12.48 a.m.): I refer to academic freedom in this speech and I hope it gives some comfort to those academics whose lives have been destroyed by the covert and overt activities of those who seek to silence them. At the core of suppressing intellectual freedom is the false assumption that if you go against government dictates then you are wrong.

The federal member for Fairfax, Alex Somlyay, is waging a covert pressure campaign on the deputy vice-chancellor of our university on the Sunshine Coast to crush academic and intellectual freedom of expression, which are the very basic tenets of universities. In the press he is overtly attempting to confuse and misguide the people of the Sunshine Coast by demanding that Dr Molloy not identify the university as his place of employment when he speaks out in the press. What Somlyay is doing is in direct defiance of democracy for which he must be condemned and resign from his position.

Australian history bears out this behaviour with a litany of examples wherein academics have been subjected to such censure in attempts to shut them up. Only this week have we witnessed attempts by Senator Alston to censure the ABC for what he claims as anti-American bias. The member for Fairfax, Alex Somlyay, in his apparent ignorance has played copycat and made a bumbling and stupid attempt to censure Dr Molloy, Senior Lecturer and Head of Politics and International Studies at the University of the Sunshine Coast, and my husband.

Dr Molloy's crime was a letter to the *Sunshine Coast Daily* citing the differences between the Howard government's budget which he stated would 'return Australia to the class ridden conservative days of the 1950s, a society of have and have-nots with adequate health care and

education increasingly out of the reach of the latter'. He went on to show how a 'potential leader on the other side would take us back to the early seventies and the politics of inclusiveness, affordable health care and education who would invest in our environment, both human and natural, and ratify the Kyoto protocol'. He also dared to suggest—

In Labor we have a potential leader who would not readily jump to a foreign state's bidding and send young Australians to serve a horrendous US neo-conservative agenda. Bring on the election.

Somlyay of course claims to support Dr Molloy's right to him expressing his 'left Wing socialist claptrap' but objects to him writing in his capacity as an employee of the university. This is a clear case of intimidation to squash intelligent debate and dumb down the people of the Sunshine Coast. I say to Mr Somlyay that it is our university—that of the people of the Sunshine Coast, to whom he intends to cut back support in the areas of Medicare and education.

The federal member's actions are a reminder of how much strife the Howard government really is in. Where are the weapons of mass destruction and why does the member not wish Dr Molloy to use his university position as a platform for informed debate? It is because he is running scared because Dr Molloy's opinions are educated, contentious and provocative. Alex Somlyay's answer to all of that is to try to shut him up. I suggest that the member for Fairfax acquaint himself with the enterprise bargaining agreement of our university. Intellectual suppression is flourishing not only in Australia but also around the world. While Australian universities continue to be de-funded by the Howard government and the universities have to seek private sources of funding, the threat of intellectual suppression will continue to be an issue and self-censoring is as dangerous as silence. But I guess one gets to keep their job and the university is seen to be toeing the line.

In closing, I wish it to be noted that if Somlyay had agreed with Dr Molloy there would have been no calls to the deputy VC, no emails and no letters. I believe that this is a concerted effort by the Liberal Party to not only censure Dr Molloy but also do him and our university very real injustice. That way, when our academics and universities put in for grants for funding they will be knocked back—

Time expired.

### **Lockyer Electorate**

**Mr FLYNN** (Lockyer—ONP) (12.51 a.m.): The federal coalition, via its state cousins, has launched a campaign in the Lockyer to suggest that the valley has been totally ignored and that service is declining, as espoused recently by the state Opposition Leader, Mr Lawrence Springborg. There is not one MP in this House who can say, hand on heart, that they have had all of their needs met by the state or federal government. We all want more, but reality dictates that priorities and money in the kitty count. But I would suggest that the state National Party has downright mislead the electors of the Lockyer recently by saying that services have not only not gone ahead but also have declined. I do not know what data it is reading, but I cannot find that anywhere.

Politics always plays its part when deciding priorities, and this state government no doubt wrestles with its conscience when deciding funding for a seat held by an opposing party. There is a great deal more that needs to be addressed in the Lockyer, and the clock is ticking for this Labor government to deliver. Its worth will be measured by whether it can look beyond party politics and deliver according to priorities. I am not letting this state government off the hook. It needs to examine whether funding a football park is a greater priority than addressing shortfalls in road funding for safety purposes or properly staffing our hospitals and schools. It is all a question of priorities.

That having been said, Senator Boswell needs to examine his conscience when deciding whether his decision to renege on funding to the Plainland intersection on the Warrego Highway was driven by funding priorities or the need to back up the announcement of the state Leader of the Opposition that services to the Lockyer are diminishing. I might add that all of this is happening in the dying months of the 50th Parliament of Queensland. I believe that it is the latter, and I believe that these tactics are shameful and barefaced political intimidation.

The services to the Lockyer have not declined. They are not what I want them to be, and I will continue to pressure this state government to deliver what I want them to be—that is what I am here for—but what has been espoused by the state opposition, led principally by the National coalition, is a downright lie. Nothing has actually suffered or declined in the Lockyer. We in the Lockyer will continue to work with anybody who has the ability to deliver us into the future.

### Maleny

**Ms MALE** (Glass House—ALP) (12.54 a.m.): Tonight I rise to talk about some of the great things happening in Maleny. Earlier this week I spoke about the issues that the Maleny community is struggling with, one of those being how to retain Maleny's rolling green hills, dairy farms, rainforest and village atmosphere—the very reasons people choose to live in and visit Maleny. I do want to make the point that a golf course could be a great way to provide leisure opportunities and retain the lush greenness of the Maleny hills, but cheek by jowl housing without environmentally sustainable planning around water, sewerage, electricity and lifestyle is not a good way forward. Maleny's rural lifestyle is reflected in two of the big events held recently.

Last weekend was the Maleny Show, the ultimate rural showcase of livestock, fruit, vegetables, dairy products, handcrafts, machinery and other associated industries. It is also an excellent opportunity for community groups to support the show—for example, Rotary running one of the food stalls; the Maleny RSL coffee tent, which makes great coffee; the junior Rugby Union food stall; the SES; the Rural Fire Brigade; and so many other groups that were involved. Friday was very successful. The opening and grand parade went well and was very well attended. Saturday was, unfortunately, a rather damp affair, so we missed out on the excellent horse displays and ring events. While that was disappointing, I am looking forward to seeing them next year when it will not rain. Congratulations go to Ivan and Kaye Hankinson, Monica Skerman, Gerry Cole, the stewards and all of the volunteers. It is an enormous effort as the show takes a whole year to plan. It always runs brilliantly.

Maleny's From Chainsaw to Fine Furniture Wood Expo is another showpiece run by Barung Landcare. The expo highlights landcare initiatives and issues and explores sustainable land practices, farm forestry, on-site milling, wood turning and other wood associated practices. Mim Coulstock, Elaine Green, Lin Fairlie and so many others—again, there are too many to name individually—all did a fantastic job. Every volunteer plays an important part. This is a prime ecotourism event, recognised nationally for its uniqueness, which draws thousands of people to Maleny over the Labour Day long weekend. It is Barung's major fundraising event for the year which helps to sustain its vital landcare education programs. I encourage local residents to get involved with either of these two events—events which contribute so much to the community.

There is much to celebrate in Maleny, and at the end of the day I love to see the community taking notice of each other's differences of opinion and focus but still working together for the good of the town. Maleny will continue to grow and develop. I hope that it always remembers its roots, that it tries to get a balance between development and wide open spaces and that the environment is not the end sufferer. During the show Bill Hankinson was telling me about the changes that he has seen over his life in Maleny. He reminded me that not all change is bad and that many people like to see Maleny move forward. I believe that we need to consider change, embrace the good, stop the bad and try to live with all of our neighbours in harmony.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 12.57 a.m. (Friday).