

FRIDAY, 6 JUNE 2003

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

PRIVILEGE

Comments by Leader of the Opposition

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (9.30 a.m.): Mr Speaker, on Wednesday you advised the House in a statement that it was clear that the Leader of the Opposition had either inadvertently or recklessly misled the House with a question. I draw your attention to a speech made by the Leader of the Opposition in the parliament yesterday, in which he stated that 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. The Leader of the Opposition yesterday tabled a document which was an opposition analysis of Budget Paper No. 4. The coalition claims that it put the balloon up. In there is a graph which shows that in 1996-97 45,000 jobs were created.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr MACKENROTH: The 45,000 jobs were actually the estimates in the 1996-97 Budget Paper. What the Leader of the Opposition would like to do—

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr MACKENROTH: No, the reality is that in the 1996-97 financial year the number of jobs created was not 45,000 but 22,300. I would suggest that the Leader of the Opposition recklessly misled the parliament yesterday. I would say now that his balloon has burst.

PRIVILEGE

Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Staffing

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.32 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! That is my final warning to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr BEATTIE: I make reference to the same speech and to the reckless misleading of the House. The Leader of the Opposition's dodgy figures have shown once again why the coalition cannot be trusted with the keys to the Treasury. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the figure of 785 staff in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. That figure of 785 staff includes coalition staff. The true and accurate figure as per the 2003-04 Ministerial Portfolio Statement is 482 staff, not 785 staff. I am advised by my department that 246 staff are either working for the non-government parties or working in ministers' offices. I have now approved the allocation of another six staff in opposition offices.

Mr Mackenroth: He wants to sack them.

Mr BEATTIE: They do want to sack them before appointment. They are appointing six additional staff at the cost of \$416,000. This will bring the total number of staff to 22. I should note that they plan to spend \$13,600 on hospitality, compared to \$11,200 in my office.

I have also recently approved an extra adviser for One Nation. All of these staff will show up in Department of the Premier and Cabinet staff numbers. Our system is very different from that of the Commonwealth, where opposition and ministerial staff are not included in the staff numbers of the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

About 60 staff in my department provide corporate services support to the Department of State Development, the Commission for Children and Young People and the Office of the Public Service Commissioner. The sharing of corporate services is an effective use of government resources, reducing duplication. The Leader of the Opposition has indicated that he would abolish 170 positions from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet under a coalition government. We have to ask what programs and what areas he intends to abolish. Will it be Security, Planning and

Coordination, Multicultural Affairs Queensland, the Office of Women, Protocol or E-Democracy? They are not positive policies but a threat to axe staff.

Let me clearly put on the record that the Leader of the Opposition misled the House yesterday. He misled it in terms of the number of staff and he included his own staff in the numbers. He should tell the truth.

PETITION

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

Halse Lodge Guest House, Noosa

Ms C Molloy from 5,347 petitioners requesting the House to ensure the protection of the cultural and heritage history of, and public access to, Halse Lodge Guest House by preserving forever the land and buildings that are so crucial to the Noosa community.

PAPERS

MINISTERIAL PAPER TABLED BY THE CLERK

The following ministerial paper was tabled by The Clerk—

Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy (Mrs Edmond)

- Response from the Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy (Mrs Edmond) to a paper petition presented by Mr Seeney from 428 petitioners regarding the allocation of locum doctors to assist as private general practitioners in the Tara Shire—

Mr N Laurie
Clerk of the Parliament
Queensland Parliamentary Service
Parliament House
George Street
BRISBANE Q 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

Thank you for your letter dated 16 May 2003, enclosing a petition regarding the allocation of locum doctors to assist as private general practitioners in the Tara Shire.

I am advised that Queensland Health officers are assisting Dr Issa to attract private medical practitioners to join the private practice component of his medical practice. As well, Queensland Health has purchased the building at 33 Day Street, Tara for the medical superintendent with right of private practice to accommodate his private surgery and options have been offered for locum relief.

It is also pleasing that the Tara Shire Council and community are also providing support to assist in recruiting extra medical practitioners to Tara shire. The Council's assistance in purchasing minor medical equipment for the private surgery and possibly providing suitable housing for a second private general practitioner for the community is also commendable. Through the local council and community working with the Northern Downs Health Service District and Dr Issa, there is the best chance to ensure medical services to the Tara shire are sustainable.

Australia is facing a shortage of doctors and for some time now I have been lobbying the Federal Government, who is responsible for matters to do with private general practitioner services, to take action. The State Labor Government has called on the Federal Government to train more of our own doctors in Australia, and we are actively pursuing the establishment of a new Medical School on the Gold Coast.

If you require further advice regarding Tara health services, please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Linda Mulligan, Acting District Manager, Northern Downs Health Service District on telephone (07) 4662 8843.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention and I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely

SIGNED

Wendy Edmond MP

Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier for Women's Policy

MINISTERIAL PAPER

The following ministerial paper was tabled—

Minister for Local Government and Planning (Mrs J Cunningham)—

Copy of her reference of a reviewable local government matter to the Electoral Commissioner of Queensland in relation to the division of the Area of the Shire of Maroochy for the 2004 local government elections.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Trade Mission, United States

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.37 a.m.): Next week I will lead a trade and investment mission to the United States. The 70-member delegation will include leading Queensland scientists, researchers and businesspeople involved in the biotechnology and information technology sectors, education, financial and legal services, mining and agriculture. I am pleased to announce that Dr David Watson, the shadow minister for innovation and information technology, will accompany me on this mission.

Last year the leaders of the National, Liberal and One Nation parties accompanied me on a similar trade mission. The mission's key focus will be BIO 2003 in Washington D.C. BIO 2003 will be the largest gathering of biotechnology leaders in the world and is expected to at least match BIO 2002 in Toronto, Canada, which attracted representatives from 52 countries. This is our opportunity to sell the Smart State to the world. I will be unveiling details of our \$100 million Smart State strategy, included in this week's budget. The Minister for Innovation and Information Economy, Paul Lucas, who will be accompanying me, will announce them with me.

While in Washington I will also be meeting political and business leaders with a view to helping Queensland companies pursue potential subcontracting opportunities in the reconstruction of postwar Iraq. I will also be holding meetings on this issue in New York and will be promoting our education export sector. The trade and investment mission will also visit South Carolina to strengthen our economic and cultural ties with our sister state. This is particularly important given the change of government which occurred at the last US election.

We will also be visiting Los Angeles to promote our movie and tourism industries, which the Minister for the Arts, Matt Foley, has been so vigorously pursuing. The trade and investment mission also offers a significant opportunity to promote Queensland's commitment to the proposed USA-Australia free trade agreement. This will be my fifth trade mission to the United States since I became Premier. It underlines the importance we attach to our relationship with the US. Exports are vital to our future and to job creation.

As I have told honourable members before, exports are directly responsible for one in five jobs in Queensland overall and one in four jobs in our regions. It will be a privilege to promote the Smart State and its growing biotechnology and information and communication technology sectors to the world.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Medical School, Gold Coast

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.39 a.m.): I should also congratulate everybody on Queensland Day. Today is Queensland Day. I wish everybody a happy Queensland Day.

While talking about Queensland Day and Queensland Week, news that there is to be a medical school at the Gold Coast is the best Queensland Day or Queensland Week present we could get. Whilst the facility is to be based at the Gold Coast, the benefit for all the state is obvious. It is what this government has been calling for for years. In fact, the Minister for Health, Wendy Edmond, and I launched this with Griffith University at the last ALP Conference on the Gold Coast a year ago. The news that the Commonwealth has approved 50 medical places paves the way for the Gold Coast to add another element to its envied education, social and lifestyle claims. A Gold Coast medical school will be the magnet for even more medical and science related gains. The news also recognises and enhances the Gold Coast's status as the nation's regional powerhouse.

Already Griffith University has won broad support for its proposed new medical school in recent months, particularly from the Gold Coast community. Placing medical schools in regional centres is logical. It is about giving Queenslanders and Australians the opportunity to become doctors. It is about educating future medicos in the regions where we are looking for them to eventually work.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT
Laura Dance and Cultural Festival

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.40 a.m.): From 20 to 22 June the Ang-Gnarra Aboriginal Corporation will host the 15th Laura Dance and

Cultural Festival at Laura, 300 kilometres north-west of Cairns. As the local member, the member for Cook, the Minister for Transport, the Hon. Stephen Bredhauer, has highlighted on many occasions, this is a fantastic festival. The biennial festival takes place at a traditional dance ground in the Laura River valley, overlooked by a sandstone escarpment that houses the famous Quinkan Art Galleries. At least 1,000 performers and artists will travel to Laura to perform traditional dance, music and song, and to display traditional arts and crafts.

The event has become a focus for reconciliation. About 6,000 people from around the state, the nation, and overseas, including some members, joined in the last festival. The festival helps sustain the indigenous cultures of Cape York and the gulf. Arts Minister Matt Foley will open the festival, and Arts Queensland is the major financial sponsor. It contributes \$50,000 to the event itself, plus \$100,000 for ancillary facilities. I commend the Laura Dance and Cultural Festival to the House as an example of the good work being done to foster reconciliation in Queensland.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Vocational Education and Training

Hon. M. J. FOLEY (Yeerongpilly—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts) (9.41 a.m.): The alarm bells are ringing for the Howard government on the vital issue of vocational education and training. With unemployment in Australia still unacceptably high, it is a national scandal that there are significant skill shortages in many industries throughout the country. In Queensland alone, 10,000 young people aged 15 to 17 are out of school, out of work and out of training. We should not tolerate a situation where so many young people have dropped out of the system when there are so many jobs going unfilled in numerous skill shortage areas. Neither should it be acceptable to industry, which pays a high price for skill shortages.

The *Australian Financial Review* in its editorial of 22 May 2003 argued that the skill shortage issue can only be resolved if all states and territories, employers and communities renew a commitment to vocational education and training. I table that editorial. The Queensland government strongly supports that position.

In his comment on the federal budget in the *Australian Financial Review* of 28 May 2003 John Spierings of the Dusseldorp Skills Forum said—

Australia faces a significant gap in trade skills. Measures to improve the quality of schooling, develop worthwhile learning options for early leavers, and attract them to skill and vocational pathways that can help meet this gap were notable omissions in the recent (federal) budget.

I wholeheartedly endorse that view and ministers for employment, vocational education and training from all states and territories have written to the federal minister, Brendan Nelson, expressing concern for the future.

The Howard government has failed to fund vocational education and training in Queensland adequately over the past six years. So far the signs for the next three years are not good. It is about time some of those people on the opposition benches got in touch with their mates in Canberra and stood up for Queensland for a change.

The offer to date to states and territories from the Commonwealth means no new funding for vocational education and training and no real growth funding over the next three years. Federal Minister Brendan Nelson signed the ministerial declaration *Stepping Forward: Improving Pathways for Young People*, and yet there is no financial commitment to back up his intentions. The Beattie government, on the other hand, has put its money where its mouth is through the trialling and implementation of the Education and Training Reforms for the Future. I call on the Howard government to invest more, not less, in the skilling not only of our young people but of all Australians.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Queensland Bone Bank

Hon. W. M. EDMOND (Mount Coot-tha—ALP) (Minister for Health and Minister Assisting the Premier on Women's Policy) (9.43 a.m.): It gives me a great deal of pleasure to be able to inform the House today about the construction of a new facility for the Queensland Bone Bank. Construction on the \$4.2 million project is expected to begin in February next year. Queensland Health is building the facility in response to increased demand for bone products.

The project design team studied information on leading tissue engineering centres around the world and we believe this centre will be at the cutting edge of technology. The Queensland Bone Bank provides an invaluable and highly specialised service. The new facility will utilise state-of-the-art technology, ultraclean operating conditions and the capacity for providing a nationwide service.

The Queensland Bone Bank is the largest facility of its kind in Australia and was the first to be licensed by the Therapeutic Goods Administration. It has functioned as a fully self-funding service since 2001. Although it primarily provides the service for Queenslanders, the Bone Bank also supplies allograft material to surgeons and hospitals all over Australia and New Zealand. Allografts are tissue that can be used for bone grafting the skeleton in patients with a variety of conditions, such as tumours, cancer, failed joint replacement or bone loss through injury and spinal fusion.

Tissue used to make the allografts come from donors. I must pay tribute at this point to the Director of the Bone Bank, Dr David Morgan, a pioneer in bone transplants. Dr Morgan started it off as a one-man operation, and he now has a staff of 14 with a worldwide reputation. Last year, the Bone Bank provided allograft material for 900 patients.

The new purpose-built facility will be built at Coopers Plains in close proximity to the John Tonge Centre, QE II Hospital and the Prince Alexandra Hospital.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Smart Site

Hon. T. A. BARTON (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for State Development) (9.45 a.m.): The remarkable advances in communications technology are having a major impact on the way governments provide services for business. Here in Queensland, the Department of State Development is spearheading provision of these e-government services through an initiative called the Smart Site. The Smart Site provides a single platform from which State Development designs and delivers its online services.

It is very easy to establish whether a web site is actually used by people. Today it is clear we have an extremely popular means by which businesspeople can access the government's business services. Latest figures show the Smart Site is visited 40,000 to 50,000 times a month, and I am talking about users not only in Queensland but from elsewhere in Australia and overseas.

The web site is particularly valuable to someone looking to establish a new business and to a small to medium sized operation. Smart Site has a wealth of services and information, which includes such features as business matching services, business directories, online business learning and Smartlicence Online, which enables people to obtain business licences.

In promoting small business capability, it is certainly pleasing for me to see the popularity of the online business learning service. From our desktop we can undertake business training at all levels, whether learning the first steps in establishing a business, right through to exporting a product or service. Elsewhere on the site, we can follow step-by-step diagnostic programs to establish whether our firm is properly licensed or is adequately prepared to enter export markets for the first time.

Having been established for three years, the Smart Site has certainly proved its worth and offers valuable insights into the needs of the department's clients. Recently, State Development conducted an analysis of the web site's usage. This showed that its most popular area is 'Starting a Business', which speaks well for the entrepreneurial spirit of Queensland. Sections on exporting and on investing in this state were also well patronised.

Finally, it is worth pointing out that anyone using Smart Site is given the opportunity to join an online virtual community—a venue to exchange information and ideas and conduct 'virtual' meetings with other businesspeople and State Development staff. In an age where technological advances are changing the global business environment, the Smart Site provides a responsive online tool that offers current information and a new channel for service delivery by State Development. Accessing these windows of opportunity is as simple as logging on to www.sd.qld.gov.au.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Tourism Green Paper

Hon. M. ROSE (Currumbin—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading) (9.48 a.m.): The federal government's much-vaunted Tourism Green Paper is a rousing endorsement of Queensland's approach to tourism development and marketing. Federal Tourism Minister Joe Hockey has taken many leaves from the Queensland book in compiling his long-awaited blueprint for the future. This is far from an industry rescue plan, as claimed by some; it is a blueprint for the future which in many ways mirrors how we do tourism business in Queensland.

Many of the recommendations contained in the document are already part of Queensland's strategy to grow the industry and promote the state nationally and internationally. The green paper confirms what we already know—that Queensland is the undisputed leader in terms of tourism product, innovation, marketing strategies and industry professionalism. The paper recommends a renewed focus on regional development.

Queensland already has a network of 14 regional organisations working cooperatively to promote the industry in regional and rural Queensland. Our regional tourism development policy generates economic activity and creates jobs in communities across the state. The green paper mirrors Queensland's goals of growing regional economies, expanding and improving tourism product and growing our export markets. It also adopts our strategy of focusing on niche markets such as seniors, indigenous tourism, students and study tourism, nature-based tourism, business tourism, sports and other events.

The strategic directions contained in the green paper establish the framework for a closer working relationship between the three tiers of government and the industry. The green paper highlights the importance of tourism to the national, state and local economies and underlines the vast benefits which can be derived from sustainable tourism development. The paper offers the states an overdue opportunity for input into the federal government's 'tourism blueprint'. It is the first time that state and territory governments and tourist organisations have had a chance to assess where the Commonwealth is heading.

Many of the issues raised require detailed assessment. We require specific strategy and structure on how the government proposes to implement its initiatives. About 80 per cent of the new initiatives proposed by the Commonwealth are currently not part of its direct responsibilities. The Commonwealth has its role to play and we welcome its involvement, but we need to ensure that the initiatives outlined in the paper enhance the existing structure rather than duplicate it.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Harbour Town Shopping Centre

Hon. N. I. CUNNINGHAM (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Planning) (9.51 a.m.): Members may be aware of some cheap politicking that is occurring on the Gold Coast and incorrect statements in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* regarding the Harbour Town Shopping Centre development. I would like to outline the history behind that project.

The Local Government (Harbour Town Zoning) Act 1990 was put in place to refine the controversial ministerial rezoning made during the Bjelke-Petersen era for Harbour Town and enabled the project to proceed. That act expired on 7 December 2000. Prior to the expiry of that act a broad agreement was struck between council, the shopping centre owners and my department that appropriate provisions would be included in the council's IPA planning scheme to reflect Harbour Town's entitlements, thereby negating the need for the Harbour Town act to be extended. The public notification of council's draft IPA planning scheme reflected this agreement. However, following public notification, council made changes which were inconsistent with this broad agreement.

On 1 May 2003 I signed off on the draft Gold Coast IPA scheme subject to a small number of conditions, including one that required council to reinstate the notified domain provisions for the Harbour Town site in accordance with my previous condition and the broad agreement that was struck between the parties prior to the expiry of the Harbour Town act. It is not my intention to give developers extra privileges through these planning schemes, nor is it my intention to condone council's taking rights away from developers. I recently met with the mayor and council staff and undertook to carefully consider the request made by council that I review the condition relating to the Harbour Town site.

We have reviewed the material provided, and following advice I have concluded that the condition I imposed to reinstate the Fringe Business Domain for land west and north of the existing shopping centre provides a fair outcome for all parties. A major factor in my consideration is that while council is suggesting that the application of the Fringe Business Domain to this area of the Harbour Town site gives development expectations for showrooms beyond what was intended by the repealed Harbour Town act, that use is only one of 48 uses for that part of the site that were able to be considered on their merits by the previous act.

On balance, the Fringe Business Domain provides a better fit than the alternative provided by council, that is, Industry 2, and it is important to note that council chose that option from the three that were offered as part of my initial sign-off for public notification of the draft scheme.

I have advised council that if they continue to have concerns with the provisions now applying to the site under the new scheme, I would encourage them to work towards a local area plan for the site, in close consultation with the owners and stakeholders, to ensure that a negotiated solution acceptable to both parties can be incorporated into the scheme. Meanwhile any future application for further development of the Harbour Town site will be regulated under the Gold Coast City Council's new IPA planning scheme, the same as for any other developer.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Barcaldine Power Station

Hon. P. T. LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Innovation and Information Economy) (9.55 a.m.): I wish to advise the House of the recent purchase by the government owned corporation Enertrade of the Barcaldine Power Station in central-west Queensland. This is an important issue. One thing I want to do as Energy Minister is to ensure that our government owned corporations actively manage their exposure in terms of power purchase agreements that were entered into prior to Queensland becoming part of the national electricity market in 1998.

Since entering this market five years ago, \$3 billion has been invested in new assets in Queensland. Some 70 per cent of this investment has been from the private sector in generation projects such as Millmerran, Callide C, Tarong North and Townsville. As a result of this investment, Queensland now has an abundant generation supply and there is a significantly lower risk of the lights going out or disruption to supply. There are also a number of new generation projects planned which will be built when market conditions determine that this new investment should occur.

These days power generators are developing projects based on commercial assumptions which reflect the nature of the current national electricity market which, as you can see, has shifted dramatically in the past five years. The power purchase arrangements that were entered into before the market began in 1998 do not reflect the conditions of the current market, which is why we need to actively manage our exposure in these areas. One example is the GOC Enertrade, which manages the long-term power purchase agreement under which the total output from the Barcaldine Power Station was purchased. This power purchase agreement was established prior to the commencement of the national electricity market.

I am pleased to advise that Enertrade has taken advantage of the opportunity arising from the owners of the Barcaldine plant putting the plant up for sale and has acquired the plant and associated infrastructure. By purchasing the plant Enertrade is reducing the cost to the state under the pre-existing power purchase agreement. Enertrade expects to spend up to \$4 million to ensure ongoing reliability of the plant.

It is important to ensure appropriate reliability of supply in the area served by the Barcaldine Power Station. This objective will continue to be recognised, as Enertrade also seeks to maximise the financial interests of its owners—the people of Queensland. When Enertrade did its numbers, it realised that it would be better off financially to acquire the station as a means to end this outdated power purchase agreement, rather than let it run its full course until June 2016. Purchasing the station was a cheaper option than letting the power purchase agreement run its full course. By gaining control of the operation, maintenance and dispatch of the power station, it means that Enertrade can run the power station when market conditions require and when it is economic to do so.

This is one way of actively managing our long-term exposure to these power purchase agreements and is part of the government's ongoing commitment to ensuring that energy is delivered to Queensland customers efficiently.

LEGAL, CONSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW COMMITTEE**Report**

Ms STRUTHERS (Algeria—ALP) (9.57 a.m.): I lay upon the table of the House a report of the Legal, Constitutional and Administrative Review Committee titled 'Meeting with the Queensland Ombudsman—29 April 2003'.

The committee has prepared this report in accordance with its monitor, review and report function regarding the Ombudsman. Matters addressed in this report include: the impact of recent changes to the organisational structure of the office; office resources; and complaint closure rates. The report confirms the continuing positive impact of new structures and processes in the Ombudsman's office.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE**Sugar Industry**

Mr SPRINGBORG (9.58 a.m.): My question is to the Minister for State Development. I refer to the minister's walkout on discussions in Canberra last night in relation to the future of the Queensland sugar industry held between the minister and the federal minister for agriculture, Warren Truss.

Given that this proves that the minister has unilaterally pursued the deregulation of the Queensland sugar industry and that the Premier has given an assurance that if the Commonwealth does not support his legislation it will be withdrawn, will the minister now withdraw these unsupported reform measures?

Mr BARTON: I thank the member for the question—not so much the tenor of the question but at least the opportunity it provides to put some facts on the table. The first thing that should be said is that there was certainly no walkout. I was there for something like two and a half to three hours last night, exhausting as fully as we could all of the issues that were on the table.

An honourable member interjected.

Mr BARTON: A member interjected that I spat the dummy big time. Well, De-Anne Kelly is reported as having said that. Let me assure this House that she was not there. Alternatively, the outcome of this meeting, as the parliament is aware, is that a letter was received by the Premier from the Prime Minister some 36 hours ago. It came in late on Wednesday night and the opposition has copies of it. In that letter the Prime Minister asked the Premier to urgently arrange for discussions between me and Minister Truss to look at clarification of the implementation of our legislation in two areas. It also indicated that, subject to the discussion on the clarification of that implementation, we may need to consider further amendments.

I want to say very clearly that we did discuss very thoroughly the exemptions model from the single desk, and I understood when we left that we had reached agreement on that issue. Very clearly, the model of outcomes that Minister Truss said the federal government required we agreed with. We said, 'Yes, exactly. That protection for farmers, that capacity for farmers to be owning the stream and doing deals with third parties, we absolutely agree with.' We guaranteed him that we believe the wording of our bill provides for that to occur. Nevertheless, I guaranteed him that, if the Commonwealth believed the wording of our bill was inadequate, not clear enough or required further clarity, we would make the necessary amendments to ensure that that was achieved.

The other area on which we had an inability to reach agreement last night was the question of bargaining. We have moved very significantly from our initial position on bargaining, but Minister Truss was indicating that he wanted some form of compulsory arbitration to be implemented. Our concern at this point is that that is fundamental to the type of regulatory change we are seeking. It is very difficult to have arbitration where we do not have known parties or a known agreement, because with this arbitration we do not yet have an agreement in place.

We do provide for mediation and arbitration once there is an agreement in place where there is a disagreement, but we are examining that. Minister Truss indicated that he would provide a model. He provided a concept. I said that if he provides a model we will consider it. When we left the meeting I promised to write back to him to clarify those concerns and said that we would meet again if necessary. So I am somewhat surprised at reports in the media quoting people who were not at the meeting.

Mr J. Lund; Detective Sergeant W. Pennell

Mr SPRINGBORG: My question is directed to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. I refer the minister to my question to him on Wednesday, 28 May in relation to matters concerning Builders Labourers Federation official Mr John Lund. During that question I tabled a statutory declaration from Mr David Scott which dealt with an investigation being conducted by Detective Sergeant Wayne Pennell of the Townsville Criminal Investigation Branch and alleged political interference. Can the minister confirm that following my question on Wednesday Detective Sergeant Pennell went on 10 weeks unrequested leave on Thursday, 29 May 2003? If this is so, does the minister consider this an appropriate matter to be investigated by the Crime and Misconduct Commission in the investigation it is now conducting into issues surrounding the failure to proceed with the prosecution of Mr Lund?

Mr McGRADY: I thank the member for the question. I can tell the House, as I said in my answer to that question, that I referred the matter to the Commissioner for Police. I have had no involvement whatsoever following that and I was not aware that this gentleman had taken leave. So the answer to the member's question is no, I did not know, and no, I was not aware. After question time I will again check the circumstances.

International Business Cadetships

Ms NOLAN: My question is directed to the Premier. The government is pursuing a swag of reforms to help young Queenslanders reach their full potential. Can the Premier inform the House of any initiatives that give tomorrow's business leaders international experience?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the member for Ipswich for her question, as I know she is particularly passionate about this issue. The Department of State Development's international business cadetships give motivated young people invaluable international experience. The government launched the innovative program in 1999 as part of our Smart State drive and our drive to increase exports as part of an election commitment I gave in 1998. Since then 28 young people have taken once in a lifetime opportunities to advance their career prospects overseas. Each cadetship lasts six months and includes a period spent offshore at one of our 10 trade and investment offices, which are in Indonesia, Japan, Los Angeles, Shanghai, Taipei, Hong Kong, London and Korea.

Many cadets are recent graduates in international business or marketing, but there are no prescribed qualifications. Their qualities include being quick learners willing to work in cross-cultural teams. While overseas, cadets research business projects for the Department of State Development and corporate sponsors. Queensland wins out of that. Research by the cadets builds State Development's store of market intelligence, which businesses then tap into.

In the past four years cadets have furthered careers in biotechnology, information and communication technology, film and television, health and aged care, agribusiness, environmental management, venture capital and rubber recycling. Since completing their cadetships they have worked for companies including IBM Global Services, Japan; Australia-Indonesia Business Council, Indonesia; Selected Seeds, China; Roche Pharmaceuticals, Japan; PricewaterhouseCoopers, Brisbane; Pacific Bridge, Brisbane; and CSIRO Livestock Industries, Brisbane.

This is about developing a culture of exports in Queensland as part of our quiet revolution to make Queensland the Smart State. Their experiences have helped Queensland businesses move in a market such as telecommunications in China and health and aged care in Japan. Cadet experience has also helped Queenslanders get ahead in the world's biggest biotech and venture capital market, the United States. Industry clearly recognises the program's value. This year for the first time the private sector is contributing \$20,000 to each cadetship.

Members should not take my word for this. I will read some comments from former cadets. Jack Josephsen, a 1999 cadet who now manages two companies with a \$400,000 turnaround, said—

The cadetship taught me a number of business skills and an overall attitude to successful business. I had some great mentors and I was exposed to the practicalities of venture capital, angel investors and successful entrepreneurs.

A cadet from 2002, Guie Hartney, said—

This program is an excellent opportunity for graduates in the business field to gain exposure to the real world of international business.

Our small population makes international networks a necessity, not a luxury, for Queensland's economic future. International business cadetships are just one way of plugging Smart State achievers into global networks. Smithsonian fellowships are another. These cadets will move through the corporate world and create exports and jobs. They are mastering the language of global business and driving the Smart State into the future.

Suncorp Stadium; Sun Engineering

Mr HOPPER: My question is directed to the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing. As the minister in charge of building Lang Park, will he explain why subcontractors who worked on the job are now owed as much as \$40 million? Can he also confirm that Sun Engineering, which is owed over \$3 million, has now had to sack 180 staff? As one who has always stood up for the workers, what is the minister doing about the jobs that are being lost as a result of a construction project that he has conducted?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I congratulate the honourable member in taking my advice and finding out that he is actually my shadow and not the Police Minister's, to whom he directed a question the other day. I want members to understand that he is completely new to the building industry and as such would not know a batten screw from a battered sav, and that is why he has asked these obviously ill-informed, idiotic and inappropriate questions.

A government member: Tell us what you really think.

Mr SCHWARTEN: Let me say this: if he knew one thing about contractual arrangements—and I will get it done in cartoon form if he so desires—he would understand that a managing contract is just that. The managing contractor of the joint venture, Multiplex Watpac, has the day-to-day arrangements—that is what we employ it to do—of managing contracts on that job, every single one of them. It is improper and indeed illegal for the government to interfere in the contractual chain. So, no, I will not be breaking the law. If there is a subcontractor there—

Mr Horan: \$40 million owing.

Mr SCHWARTEN: That is not true. The member has done everything to knock this project. He is the biggest hypocrite in this House. He is on record condemning this project, yet he is the first one to try to get a free seat.

Mr Seeney: You can't answer the question.

Mr SCHWARTEN: I have not answered the question. Let me say that the member for Callide—

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Deputy Leader of the Opposition! I have already warned you. I have been very lenient this week because it is budget week. I now warn you under standing order 123A.

Mr SCHWARTEN: The answer to the question is very simple. If there is any subcontractor out there who has a dispute with Multiplex Watpac, then they have the responsibility and the legal right to take up that matter. There is no evidence whatsoever that the figure that was suggested is correct. It is a matter of argument between the subcontractor and the contractor. It happens every day on building jobs in Queensland.

The reality is that there are always subcontractors who claim that they are owed money and there are always contractors who say that they do not owe money. It is not a new thing in the building industry. To show its ignorance, the opposition is yet again having a go at this project, but this time through the back door. If the members of the opposition have any decency and morals, none of them will be at the stadium when the State of Origin is played and none of them will be at the stadium for the World Cup.

School Instrumental Music Program

Mrs LAVARCH: I direct a question to the Minister for Education. Queensland is held in high regard around the world for its state school instrumental music program. Can the minister advise honourable members how this program is unearthing and nurturing musical talent in our state schools?

Ms BLIGH: I thank the honourable member for her question. She is a strong advocate and supporter of the school music program in her electorate. So she should be, because the music

programs in Queensland state schools are one of the great successes of public education in this state. In my view, we do not show off our music program often enough. It began in 1971 and now boasts in excess of 45,000 students in 750 state schools playing an instrument. There are also well over 1,000 bands operating in state schools in Queensland.

The instrumental music program operates in schools as far north as Wonga Beach, which is north of Mossman, and as far west as Mount Isa. It is one of the largest programs operated under one administration system in the world and is now internationally recognised for its quality.

One of the key parts of the program is the Musically Outstanding Students Program—better known as MOST. This program is a residential biennial program that showcases some of Queensland's most talented young high school students in music. MOST commenced in 1983 and was the brainchild of a long-term Education Queensland officer, Anne Carroll. Today I would like to pay tribute to Ms Carroll for developing the idea and making it happen during her time as supervisor for music. I commend her for her passion and dedication to supporting music in Queensland state schools. She and all those associated with MOST can feel very proud of their legacy.

This year the program has received 300 nominations, with 230 students invited to submit an audition video. Of those, 77 have been selected for the 2003 program. They hail from across Queensland, including from Townsville, Cairns, Biloela, Yeppoon, Gladstone, Kingaroy, Bundaberg, the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast, and metropolitan Brisbane. Each of the 77 students will attend an intensive residential program from 22 June to 4 July at St Peters Lutheran College in Indooroopilly. There they will have the opportunity to work with internationally respected musicians, including eminent conductors, composers, senior tertiary music lecturers and principal players from the Queensland Orchestra.

The climax of this week will be a gala concert in the concert hall of the Queensland Performing Arts Complex on Thursday, 3 July at 7 p.m. If members want to enjoy a sensational night of stunning music played by inspired performers, it is hard to beat MOST's gala concert. Students will perform a challenging professional repertoire that they have learned and developed during the program. The concert will be recorded by Brisbane radio station 4MBS and excerpts broadcast during their Young Space program.

Previous recipients of MOST will be represented, and have been represented, in some of the world's most respected and famous orchestras. Jason Redman, who was a 1987 MOST participant from Mount Gravatt State High School, was at the age of 19 the youngest principal player ever appointed to the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. I am pleased to report that he will return to MOST in 2003 as the trombone tutor.

Racing Industry

Mr HORAN: I direct a question to the Minister for Racing. Is the minister aware of any investigation being conducted into a conflict of interest involving any members of the Queensland Thoroughbred Racing Board?

Ms ROSE: I thank the member for the question. I received a letter from Queensland Racing a few weeks ago containing some allegations about the possibility of a conflict of interest. I referred that matter and that letter back to the chief executive officer of the department. My understanding is that that matter has then been forwarded on to the CMC for investigation. It has in fact been referred by the chief executive officer of my department to the CMC.

Counter-Terrorism Measures

Ms STONE: I direct a question to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. Can the minister elaborate on any new initiatives that Queensland is partaking in to enhance our preparedness to deal with any potential threats of terrorism?

Mr McGRADY: I thank the member for Springwood for the question. She is a member of my caucus committee and takes a great deal of interest in these matters. I want to advise the House that there is a very important event coming up soon which will assist in enhancing our ability to respond to potential threats to this state's security. The national counter-terrorism committee will conduct an investigation and consequent management exercise in Queensland from 29 September to 3 October. This exercise is called Fast Ball. It will focus on investigative and consequential management aspects of a terrorist chemical or biological attack on critical infrastructure or on mass gatherings.

I do not need to remind members that the current global climate means that there is a heightened awareness of the potential threat to our security. The scope of this exercise is still being determined, but it will probably involve the coordination of emergency responses and management agencies; on-scene investigative response procedures involving chemical, biological and contaminated areas; the threat of secondary attacks by terrorists; the integration of the Defence Force response regiment with Queensland government agencies; and the integration of emergency management agencies with national and state intelligence and investigative bodies.

This exercise is extremely important in terms of ensuring our preparedness to deal with terrorist incidents. Members would recall that earlier this year we established two new counter-terrorism units that strengthened Queensland's safety and security. One is within the Queensland Police Service; the other is part of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. The two units ensure that dedicated resources are available in the new security environment and allow Queensland to maximise its security response.

This exercise follows in the wake of last month's successful FBI conference on the Gold Coast, which the member for Springwood attended, which had terrorism at its focus. The national and international focus on Queensland reflects the hard work and preparation being undertaken by our authorities to prepare for any eventuality in the event of a terrorist attack. I look forward to discussing the success of this exercise in the parliament after it has been completed.

Princess Alexandra Hospital, Emergency Department

Miss SIMPSON: I direct a question to the Minister for Health. I table a taped interview from 4BC's drive program where Evelyn from Birkdale described a series of events centring around the Princess Alexandra Hospital emergency department leading to the premature death of her husband in March this year. I understand that the minister was also sent a copy of this tape. Has the minister followed up this incident in any way? What has been done to ensure that such a tragedy does not occur again?

Mrs EDMOND: I could not hear the patient's name. Queensland Health deals with about 7,000 patients per day in our hospitals and many thousands of others in our emergency departments. Any person seeking to get an explanation of circumstances from me can write to me and I will give them a considered response with full details. They are also encouraged, if they have problems with treatment, to talk to the individual hospitals so that they can access people who know the circumstances of their treatment. That has been the case since I have been minister. Everyone who has written to me about an issue has received a reply. If a patient's family is still unhappy about those circumstances, they can put that to the Health Rights Commission or write to me or to the Medical Board. There are a whole series of places to which people can make complaints.

In the main, the vast majority of people are very happy with the care they receive. Sometimes people will not be happy with the care they receive. I accept that. I apologise for that. I do not know the circumstances of this particular patient—I did not hear the name—and I do not know if permission has been given to discuss that particular case in this chamber in terms of private and confidential health issues, so I will not do so. If any member of parliament has a query about how a patient is treated, I ask them to write to me confidentially, not to score political points as we see on a regular basis, and they will get a proper response.

Miss SIMPSON: I rise to a point of order. It was an interview on radio. The details have been sent to the minister's office.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order.
Interruption.

PRIVILEGE

Department of the Premier and Cabinet, Staffing

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (Leader of the Opposition) (10.22 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. Earlier this morning the Premier attempted to mislead this House on the number of staff employed in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and attempted to claim the number of staff in his department was in fact somewhere around 480. This is not true. I table the following budget papers relating to staff in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet in 1997-98 during the coalition government. The budget confirms that the total

number of staff in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet under the coalition government was in fact just 607. The figure included ministerial staff and staff allocated to the then Leader of the Opposition, Mr Beattie.

I also table that section of the budget paper for 2003-04 relating to staff in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet under the current Premier. These show that there will be 785 staff in the Department of the Premier and Cabinet under Peter Beattie, which also includes ministerial staff and staff in the office of the Leader of the Opposition. So it is 607 staff compared to 785 staff. It is about time we compared apples with apples. The truth hurts. The figures are actually there. They compare apples with apples. Is it any wonder the government is embarrassed!

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Resumed.

Electrical Safety

Mrs CHRISTINE SCOTT: I refer the Minister for Industrial Relations to the government's significant and ongoing reforms to improve electrical safety in Queensland, and I ask: can the minister outline the new on-the-spot penalties which will apply from 1 July?

Mr NUTTALL: I thank the honourable member for the question. The honourable member, as we know, represents one of the largest electorates in this state and has been a keen supporter of the electrical safety laws in Queensland. I thank her publicly for her strong support for the reforms. The reforms in electrical safety in our state have been one of the biggest projects in my portfolio during this term of government. In an effort to improve electrical safety in the workplace and in homes, we have introduced, as honourable members would know, a standalone Electrical Safety Act. We have new laws. We have new safety regulations, compulsory safety switches and of course new responsibilities for people involved in the industry.

For the very first time in Queensland we have separated safety issues from the commercial operations of the electrical industry. As part of these changes, from 1 July this year there will be new on-the-spot fines of up to \$600. They will apply to power distribution authorities, employers, electrical contractors and electrical workers, retailers and of course suppliers. The fines will apply to almost 80 offences ranging from failure to provide testing and safety certificates to customers through to hiring and selling unapproved and unsafe electrical equipment. Under the legislation, electrical safety inspectors already have the power to issue on-the-spot fines of up to \$225 to buyers of homes and units who fail to have a safety switch installed within three months of property transfer if one is not already installed on the property. These on-the-spot fines mirror those that were recently introduced for the first time under the Workplace Health and Safety Act.

I would, as the minister, hope that these new fines serve as a deterrent and assist in providing our inspectors with an alternative enforcement tool to sometimes long and costly court cases that do occur. I would encourage anyone who is involved in the electrical industry to take a look at the full schedule of offences and fines that are available on the Electrical Safety Office web site.

Security Doors, Parliament House

Mr WELLINGTON: My question relates to the Parliament House precinct and I accordingly direct it to the Premier. Now that we have many more strategically located security doors in this building and all of these new doors are operated by electricity, I ask: what arrangements are in place should the supply of electricity to operate these doors be cut and there is a need for staff in this building to evacuate the building quickly?

Mr SPEAKER: It is not in the Premier's portfolio.

Mr BEATTIE: Mr Speaker, these issues of security are matters of great significance to us as a parliament. What I will undertake to do, Mr Speaker, is to have a discussion with you, because as Speaker you run the precincts of this parliament, and to assure the member for Nicklin that he will get an appropriate response in detail.

As the member would understand, there are a number of issues. Firstly, there has to be compliance with the Fire Safety Act. The member would be aware that Mr Speaker has enhanced security measures in the House, which I believe are generally supported. There are a number of other measures in place which would be inappropriate for me to discuss in the House, and I think

the member would understand that. Frankly, as the Minister for Police, Tony McGrady, understands, he and I, as part of the strategy the state government is pursuing dealing with terrorism and other security issues, work closely together. There is a unit in my department and we work closely with the police.

We would be quite happy to provide the member with a confidential briefing in relation to any issue, and I make this offer to members of the House generally. But as the member would understand, I would not want to put some of those measures on the parliamentary record because that would simply give terrorists a free hand as to what strategies were in place across the state. Mr Speaker, with your support I would be grateful if we could arrange for the member for Nicklin to be appropriately briefed. If he wants a broader briefing beyond the precincts of this House, I am happy for the Department of the Premier and Cabinet or the Police Service to brief him as well, because he has raised a very legitimate issue of concern. I want to make certain that he is appropriately—

Mr Mackenroth: Premier, normal practice would be that there would be a generator which would override. If the generator didn't work, then in fact the electric doors will go open and you would be able to open the doors.

Mr SPEAKER: That is exactly what happens. But I am quite happy—

Mr BEATTIE: Did the member for Nicklin get that, because it is important that we have this joint answer. This is a double answer. Mr Speaker, I have to say that I do not know of any member in the history of this parliament who has actually got three people to answer one question. With the help of the Deputy Premier and the help of the Speaker, I think that is the most complete answer any member has ever got in the history of the place.

Mr Mackenroth interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: I do not know about the rope under the bed, and that probably did not help that much, but the first part of it was very good. Mr Speaker, we will provide all of the assistance we can.

Seniors and the Law Kit

Ms STRUTHERS: I ask the Minister for Seniors: what is the Beattie government doing to ensure Queensland's seniors have appropriate access to information and advice about legal issues?

Ms SPENCE: I thank the member for the question because it gives me the opportunity to talk about a new initiative recently launched by the Department of Families, a seniors and the law kit. I actually launched this kit a couple of weeks ago at a highly successful morning tea run by the member for Lytton where 450 seniors in the Lytton electorate had the opportunity of discussing important issues with the local member and myself. I am going to Sandgate and elsewhere in the state next week.

Mr Purcell: You've been to Bulimba.

Ms SPENCE: Yes, I have been to Bulimba. We are out there listening to Queensland seniors. As a response to that, we know that legal issues are very important to Queensland seniors. Legal issues at that time in life are quite different from those at other stages in life. This kit was put together by the Department of Families, in cooperation with the Queensland Law Society and other government agencies. It is available on the department's web site. It is also available by ringing the 1300 seniors inquiry line. It is free.

I would like members to go out and promote this kit in their electorates because I know that their seniors will find it very valuable. It comprises seven brochures related to legal issues such as elder abuse and violence. That is something that this government acknowledges but the opposition fails to acknowledge. We remember that it voted against this in the House last year. It also talks about accommodation issues, such as access to retirement villages, and legal issues surrounding nursing homes. It talks about enduring powers of attorney. It does not attempt to provide answers to all of the legal issues that seniors might face, but it puts them in touch with service providers that they might like to use when they have a legal problem. The feedback about this kit has been overwhelming. Seniors have found it a great resource. I encourage members to get it out there.

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL
APPROPRIATION BILL**

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from 5 June (see p. 2781)

Dr LESLEY CLARK (Barron River—ALP) (10.31 a.m.): The *Cairns Post* summed up the budget for far-north Queensland with the front page headline 'Fair Share', and provided five pages of positive budget stories with good news for far-north Queensland in the areas that really matter—business, industry and families. I congratulate the Treasurer on another great Labor budget, because our region did indeed get a very fair share of the \$21.3 billion budget delivered this week. In fact, far-north Queensland received \$453.7 million in capital works alone as compared to \$416.7 million last year—an increase of \$37 million.

The Leader of the Opposition has claimed that the new coalition would present positive policies. So what was their response to the budget for far-north Queensland? The Leader of the National Party claimed that far-north Queensland was the only area of the state which suffered major capital works funding falls in the budget. Not only is this a very negative response; it is also absolutely untrue. What kind of accounting is he doing to claim that an increase of \$37 million is a fall in capital expenditure? In fact, at the risk of fuelling rivalry between Townsville and Cairns, it is worth noting that the capital works budget for the northern region, which covers Townsville, was only \$353.5 million—almost exactly \$100 million less than for far-north Queensland. However, this budget is very good for all Queensland regions—with 62 per cent of the \$5.3 billion in capital works allocated outside the Brisbane Statistical Division. The opposition's criticism of this budget has no credibility whatsoever, as shown by economic and industry commentators such as Standard and Poor's director Rick Shepherd, who was quoted in the *Courier-Mail* as saying—
Despite the rise in liabilities Queensland's balance sheet remains the strongest of the Australian States.

Australian Industry Group, Queensland, director David Whiting praised the strong Smart State component of the budget which he said would improve the business environment and acknowledged our status as the low-tax state. In fact, Queenslanders will pay just over \$400 less per capita in tax than the average of the other states. Not only has the Treasurer delivered a fiscally sound budget; it is a budget that reflects our priorities as a Labor government that puts families first.

The centrepiece of the budget this year is the priority given to health and disability services. Both are areas of need in which increased funding will lead to an improvement in services and quality of life for Queenslanders. This budget provides for a \$300 million increase in the Health budget, which represents a 6.9 per cent increase to \$4.6 billion. This is part of a cumulative \$2.6 billion four-year increase in health spending on the 2002-03 budget, with \$1.6 billion to be contributed by the state and only \$1 billion to be contributed by the Commonwealth.

The statewide priority on health services is evidenced in the additional \$3.7 million in recurrent funding to the Cairns Health Service District. The Cairns Base Hospital has been experiencing pressure in responding to increased demand in a number of areas. I am pleased to report that the Minister for Health has responded to the representations made to her by all of us local Cairns members, with significant new and recurrent funding that will reduce hospital waiting lists.

The specific extra allocation for Cairns includes \$700,000 for cancer treatment services, \$2 million for renal dialysis to meet demand on hospital inpatient and home based services, \$200,000 for cardiac services, \$200,000 for the Cairns Base Hospital emergency department and \$100,000 for patient transport. Most importantly, there is \$500,000 to establish an integrated stroke and rehabilitation service, delivering on a commitment that we as local members made earlier this year when young patients were being sent to Townsville instead of being treated in Cairns. I was pleased to hear that Queensland Health will be advertising immediately for a specialist director for this new service. In addition, the Cairns Health Service District will receive replacement health technology equipment valued at approximately \$2.26 million as part of the Health Technology Capital Program, which will spend \$52.9 million statewide.

Another highlight of the 2003-04 budget is an additional \$290.5 million in state funding over four years to Disability Services Queensland. This includes \$200 million in new funding to implement funding reform project initiatives which will provide improved services for people with a disability, their families and carers. This increased funding will see the budget for DSQ grow to \$385 million in 2003-04—an unprecedented increase of 16 per cent—to enable the wonderful

organisations such as Endeavour and the Cairns Independent Living Support Association to continue to support people with disabilities in my electorate.

The most important issue for all families is jobs and secure employment. I turn to another area of major concern to people in far-north Queensland and my constituents in Barron River—that is, the tourist industry, which a major employer in our region. I spoke in the House recently about the severe impact of the Iraq war and the SARS epidemic on our tourist industry and the need for government support. Tourism Queensland and its 330 industry partners will be spending \$35 million selling our state in domestic and international markets in 2003-04 to help the industry recover from the SARS induced downturn in tourism.

The Where Else But Queensland TV campaign is running at the moment with wonderful images, many of them from far-north Queensland, to lure tourists from southern states. The Get On Up campaign, specifically targeted on far-north Queensland, increased domestic tourists to Cairns by seven per cent in April and continues to be successful using print advertising, Internet, billboards and consumer brochures. A spring marketing campaign during August, September and October is also planned to boost visitation from Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane together with campaigns for niche markets such as the youth, gay and honeymooners markets, which are very important for far-north Queensland.

Whilst additional funding has been provided to Tourism Queensland for special projects at various times of industry need, the base budget for Tourism Queensland 2003-04 is \$39.7 million—the highest in its 25-year history. The budget also continues to support the operation of regional tourism organisations including Tourism Tropical North Queensland and the local convention incentive bureau, who do an excellent job of marketing our region.

The government's support for the tourism industry is not limited to marketing, important as this is. The budget provides \$33 million for the upgrade of the rail line between Townsville and Cairns to facilitate the introduction of the tilt train, which will soon be bringing more tourists to Cairns. As the Transport Minister said in the House yesterday, the experience will 'knock your socks off'. I look forward to joining the minister at the celebration when the tilt train sets out from Cairns.

The Cairns airport is another critical piece of infrastructure for the tourist industry, and the budget allocation for the airport, as shown in Budget Paper No. 3, is \$37.5 million, including \$16.8 million for enhanced bag security screening, \$4 million for additional plane parking bays and \$5 million for the Hawker Pacific development. The CPA North Cityport development, including the new reef fleet terminal, was officially opened last week and that, together with The Esplanade and lagoon development to which the state government contributed \$11 million, is changing the face of Cairns and increasing our attractiveness for tourists.

Roads are also a vital part of our tourism infrastructure, and this budget provides additional funding for the \$3.6 million planning study to upgrade the Kuranda Range road, the vital link to the Cairns highlands, as the tablelands are now known. The tourism industry on the northern beaches, particularly Palm Cove and Trinity Beach, has been affected by the irukandji marine stingers, which caused four deaths and closed beaches for long periods. The government formed a whole-of-government task force to deal with this threat. I welcome the \$550,000 to be spent on irukandji research and community education over the next four years. We have a great researcher at JCU—Dr Jamie Seymour—who is working to better understand this marine stinger, and this money will significantly enhance his efforts. I hope that the development of an effective vaccine or antidote to treat sting victims will not be too far off, removing a significant threat to both tourists and locals enjoying our coastal and reef waters.

Protection and management of our natural assets is also critical for far-north Queensland tourism. The reef protection plan and the Misty Mountains Great Walk are two projects to receive additional support in this budget.

In my electorate the Cairns City Council has received a \$489,000 subsidy to improve the water quality from the northern water pollution control plant as part of a major project to meet the requirements of the government's coastal management plan for tertiary treatment that will reduce the level of nitrates and phosphates in sewerage outfalls into rivers like the Barron River, thereby improving water quality, which is so critical for the health of the reef and the tourism industry.

The support of the Beattie government for the tourism industry is in stark contrast to what the federal government is currently doing to the reef tourism industry. I was shocked to read in yesterday's *Cairns Post* that the Australian Taxation Office has sent out bills to dive industry operators—some for tens of thousands of dollars—to pay a 10 per cent GST on the

environmental management charge levied on each ticket and this is to be retrospective over the last three years. This tax on a tax was never supposed to have happened, but the federal government has broken its promise to operators.

This situation came to light only when Senator Jan McLucas raised the issue at an estimates committee meeting in Canberra. Federal member for Leichhardt Warren Entsch has labelled this tax on a tax as an 'unacceptable development'. What a gross understatement this is. I urge the federal Labor opposition to keep up the pressure until the ATO ruling is reversed, because industry operators simply cannot afford this impost.

The other major aspect of the budget that I want to address is that of education, training, research and innovation—the cornerstones of the government's Smart State strategy. Our region cannot rely on tourism and agriculture alone but must take advantage of the latest technological advances to build the productive capacity of individuals and businesses and generate employment.

The quality of our education system is essential to the Smart State and the budget for Education this year is a staggering \$4.48 billion, and represents a 5.8 per cent increase in recurrent expenditure. The highlight of the Education budget is the employment of 636 extra state school teachers in 2004 at a cost of about \$42 million a year. This boost includes 327 teachers allocated over and above the usual growth and another 60 teachers to support students with special needs.

I am well aware of the Teachers Union campaign to reduce class sizes, but I believe that a targeted strategy such as we are providing is a better alternative approach, because it can put extra teachers where they are most needed and recognises that students in middle-class schools are different from those in areas of disadvantage, where there is a greater need for smaller classes.

The budget has once again delivered for my schools in Barron River. In particular, there is \$400,000 to replace the student toilet and shower block at the Holloways Beach Environmental Education Centre, and \$560,000 for two classrooms and toilets at Freshwater State School, which has experienced significant growth recently. My schools have also benefited from the Triple R program, and \$182,000 has been provided for repainting at Caravonica, Edge Hill, Kuranda and Trinity Beach State Schools.

Kuranda school will have roofing repairs carried out this year. The Cooler Schools program will also contribute \$171,000 towards airconditioning at Edge Hill, completing that school's airconditioning program, and will enable Kuranda school to aircondition its computer centre. The growth in Barron River, in particular in the Redlynch Valley and the northern beaches, means that we need to plan for the provision of education in the future, and I welcome the current study which is under way by the facilities branch of Education Queensland. This study will provide the information needed to determine the nature and timing of additional schools that will be required to cope with increased student enrolments. I am actively participating in this study, which should be completed by early August, and I look forward to engaging my school communities in this process. I share the aspirations of parents of students at Redlynch State School, who hope to see a high school built on land adjacent to the state school in the future.

However, schools are more than buildings and there is great work going on in my schools, with students achieving excellence in a wide variety of areas. I am particularly involved in the area of information technology in schools through my Smart Women—Smart State project initiated at the Premier's request last year to ensure that women are both contributing to and benefiting from our Smart State agenda. I have recently completed my report to the Premier on this project titled *SET for success—increasing the participation of women in science engineering and technology*, and I thank the Premier for his support for a key recommendation in this report, the creation of a new system of awards to be known as the Premier's Smart Women—Smart State Awards, which he described in this House yesterday.

Nominations for these awards open from today and I encourage women and girls to participate so that we can showcase their wonderful achievements and encourage more girls to embark on careers in science and technology that will shape the future in the Smart State. I look forward to seeing further recommendations from my report being implemented in due course.

An institution to be established with an allocation of \$4.5 million in the budget that will most definitely shape the future is the Australian tropical forest institute to be established adjacent to JCU Cairns campus on land that is to be acquired from the state government. I have been

involved with this exciting initiative from its inception and I look forward to construction starting early next year.

Another Smart State initiative in the budget is a \$100 million four-year package that will be outlined in a document to be released shortly *Queensland—Smart State—investing in science research and innovation*. I hope that a \$5.5 million proposal for the creation of a tropical public health institute for research and development also proposed at JCU will be a recipient of some of this new funding.

The government's commitment to regional Queensland is evidenced in the four-year \$50 million Regional Centres Program. These projects are carried out in partnership with local government, which provides 50 per cent of the cost of each of the projects. I thank the Local Government Minister for her support for far-north Queensland, which has received funding for four major projects, one of which is in Barron River. The government will be providing \$1.95 million towards the Cairns City Council's \$3.97 million Botanic Gardens and Tanks Arts Centre Precinct Redevelopment. Both the Member for Cairns, Desley Boyle, and I have been pleased to support this exciting development, which will see the integration of the Botanic Gardens and Tanks complex into one cultural precinct linked by an elevated boardwalk, with a new restaurant, interpretative and administrative centre and tanks upgrade. The project will also address the longstanding traffic problems in Collins Avenue, with construction of a new car park for 100 vehicles, streetscaping, traffic management devices to slow the traffic, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. These improvements will be welcomed by both Edge Hill residents and visitors to the gardens and Tanks Arts complex.

Finally, I would like to thank the Minister for Housing for his support for my efforts to improve housing in the indigenous communities in the Kuranda district. A major project is under way to redevelop the community of Top Kowrowa by replacing the existing old 10 attached units with 12 new detached houses. Following extensive community consultation to plan the layout of roads, open space and houses, this budget provides \$767,000 to begin construction of the first four houses in stage one. This \$4 million project will span some three to four years and will transform the lives of families in that community whilst also creating employment and training opportunities for local Aboriginal people. However, I will continue to work with ATSIC and the Department of Housing to provide additional housing in the Kuranda district, because there is still a great need in those indigenous communities. But there are other areas of need for public housing in my electorate outside of Kuranda, and I am pleased that funding has been made available for construction of another eight homes and the upgrade of six units.

In conclusion, I commend the Treasurer for another great budget, which will continue to support the ongoing growth and development of far-north Queensland and the diverse communities that make up my electorate of Barron River. I commend the bill to the House.

Mr LIVINGSTONE (Ipswich West—ALP) (10.47 a.m.): I rise in support of this great Labor budget. This is a budget for all of Queensland. It is a very good budget for Ipswich and the West Moreton region and it is a budget that most people in the community share in. I congratulate Minister Terry Mackenroth and all of those other people who have been involved in putting this bill together. It is certainly a great Queensland budget.

It is hard to believe the doom and gloom of those opposite. Day after day they claim that the state is going broke. Perhaps they do not understand why we have a AAA credit rating. They want increased spending, no new taxes and the budget kept in the black. How stupid do they think the public are? No wonder they became politically irrelevant.

When we look at the state as a whole we have economic growth at over five per cent, unemployment the lowest in 13 years and \$24 billion in improved infrastructure. In Queensland we spend \$600 per head of population. The highest of any other state is Western Australia, which spends less than \$500 per head. In the area of health, there is an extra \$300 million, taking health spending to over \$2.6 billion. There is major increased spending on Disability Services, 636 more teachers and approximately 300 extra police. We have a new police beat at North Ipswich, which has been received very well. The new policeman in charge is doing a tremendous job. We have a new Tactical Crime Squad in Ipswich with 14 police, at a cost of \$142,000. Total spending for the police budget has topped a billion dollars for the first time in history. That shows what a great job we are doing in increasing spending in that area.

In all of these areas of improved spending, Ipswich will get its fair share—something it never got under the coalition. A very high priority of mine is the schools in my electorate. Fernvale,

Glamorganvale, North Ipswich, Leichhardt, Lowood, and Rosewood schools will all see improvements this financial year. Hopefully we will be able to do a few other things as well.

Under the Regional Centres Program Ipswich will receive \$3.15 million towards the river heart project. That will be great for the city and for the business community. Honourable members should not just take my word for it. An editorial in the local paper this week stated—

The upcoming Ipswich project is one of the most imaginative concepts to receive funding and a real credit to those involved ...

The editorial also states that it is one of the best initiatives of the Beattie government. I am sure that everyone in the Ipswich area would agree.

In the town of Lowood we will spend approximately \$38,000 heating the local swimming pool and \$39,000 for the state government agent one-stop shop. Atkinsons Dam has been a problem in our area for a long time. The area of Lowood has been in National Party country basically forever, and it is fair to say that the National Party did not do very much to help the local farming community up there. It is little wonder that they have turned to us for support. Atkinsons Dam, which has not had much water in it for many, many years, has a real need for increased culverts. In this budget is \$658,000 to increase the size of those culverts. Weather permitting, work should start by the end of this month.

Another election promise of this government which I have spoken about on many occasions related to One Mile Bridge. We have worked tirelessly to have this come about and we are sharing the cost with the Ipswich City Council. Premier Beattie had originally made a commitment that this government would contribute a maximum of \$7.5 million for half of the construction cost of the bridge. The reason for it being for half of the construction cost is that it is a council bridge with a council road going over it. In this case we recognised that the Ipswich council was not going to be in a position to fund it, and in this year's budget is \$1.5 million to go towards stage 1 of what will be a maximum of \$9.5 million for the construction of the bridge. The costs will be shared with the council.

One of the other great success stories of this government has been the improvement in government housing. In this budget is \$2.9 million for the construction of new singles units in Flint Street, North Ipswich. For a long time a great concern of mine has been that under a future coalition government we will see government housing in this state sold off. When Labor came to government we inherited the situation of a company being given the right to look after a lot of the housing in Brisbane. A company called Chesterton looked after a lot of the housing in the Mount Gravatt area. The truth is that the scheme was a total disaster. It very badly affected a lot of the people living in those houses. I hope that this opposition will make a commitment that it has no intention of selling off government housing, because it would be an absolute tragedy if it did.

A tremendous amount of work has been done in Ipswich and certainly in the area of Leichhardt. Hundreds of houses have been done up. In around 1994 Terry Mackenroth as Minister for Housing actually kicked off the program there. The first thing that happened when the Borbidge government came into office was that that was frozen. Fortunately, under this government the first thing that happened when Minister Schwarten became minister was that that great initiative was kick-started again.

In addition to urban renewal we also have community renewal, which has certainly done a great thing for that area. I ask members to consider that something like \$20 million has been spent in this area, which had been neglected for many years. Could members imagine over \$20 million being spent by a coalition government in an area for poor people? I think not.

I would like to share with members some of the achievements achieved by the government's Community Renewal Program in the suburb of Leichhardt. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Leichhardt, in West Ipswich, is home to a unique community. Over the past three decades the Leichhardt community has grown to become one of the most passionate, determined and courageous communities I know of.

Leichhardt's community spirit was ignited by the great floods of 1974, when about 400 people were left homeless. This natural disaster brought what was quite a geographically and socially segregated community together to look after one another. This was a turning point for the people of Leichhardt. They realised they could work together as a whole; a single community united by a common purpose.

And since that day, the Leichhardt community has done just that—they have worked together, and with all levels of government to improve the quality of life for local residents.

An integral part of this community-government partnership has been the state government's community renewal program, administered by the Department of Housing, which has worked closely with residents, Ipswich City Council, and other government and non-government organisations to achieve sustainable solutions to local issues. Since the community renewal program began in Leichhardt in 1998, this government has invested \$4.2 million in nearly 50 projects which have enhanced neighbourhood amenity, community pride and access to services in Leichhardt.

Let me highlight how we have helped to deliver real outcomes for the people of Leichhardt.

In 1995 the Department of Housing helped to establish a Police Beat in Leichhardt, which has helped to combat crime in the area. The Police Beat has provided the community with an increased awareness of crime prevention, resulting in a dramatic reduction in crime, from 60 offences per month down to 10. This is one of the lowest crime rates in the Ipswich area—a remarkable achievement.

Community renewal has also helped very young children in Leichhardt to develop literacy skills, through a project which encourages parents to read to children under the age of five. This innovative project aims to minimise illiteracy by encouraging an interest in reading before children start school.

Continuing to nurture Leichhardt's next generation, community renewal has delivered leadership training and peer support for young people, who have developed skills in conflict resolution, problem-solving, teamwork and effective communication.

Community renewal has also funded a family support worker, who has delivered parenting, life skills, counselling and conflict resolution programs to many local families.

The government has also made a significant investment in upgrading the area's public housing, through a public-private partnership as part of the urban renewal program.

But perhaps community renewal's greatest success in Leichhardt has been its pivotal role in helping to create the new state-of-the-art community centre. This government has invested over \$1.5 million in this centre through the Department of Housing's community renewal program and the Department of Families. In 1999 Leichhardt residents began dreaming of a new facility, as their needs continued to outgrow the capabilities of the existing centre. And since then I have worked with community renewal, Ipswich City Councillor Charlie Pisasale and many others to make this dream a reality.

The purpose-built community centre has become a hub for the community, providing a much-needed space to meet and access services, resources and information. The centre makes a major entry statement to the area, rising like a beacon as you come over the river into Leichhardt. The centre houses a range of facilities and programs, including a community garden, a tool-lending library, playground and community bus. Residents can access job-searching programs, literacy and numeracy programs, counselling services and a range of health and welfare information through the centre.

Whilst the previous centre only provided a limited-hours child-care facility, the new centre provides long day-care, making it easier for parents to pursue education and employment opportunities. In fact the long day-care facility has been well received that it is already operating near capacity, with just a few places left. Proceeds from this service will help to sustain the centre over the long-term.

Also helping to ensure the sustainability of the centre are its tool-lending library and community garden, as residents will be able to maintain the grounds, which have been beautifully landscaped by locals under a community jobs plan initiative.

The Leichhardt community's 'can-do' attitude has seen them prevail over many challenges. And it is this attitude, together with an ongoing commitment from the department of families that will ensure the centre remains a vibrant, accessible and relevant resource for this and future generations. Leichhardt's community spirit was ignited well before community renewal came to the area, and will remain after community renewal is gone. And this bodes very well for the future indeed.

Interruption.

PRIVILEGE

Detective Sergeant W. Pennell

Hon. T. McGRADY (Mount Isa—ALP) (Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province) (10.54 a.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege. Following the question by the Leader of the Opposition this morning I immediately contacted the commissioner's office to seek information. I wish to read out the response I have received from the commissioner's office. It states—

TOPIC

LEAVE TAKEN BY DETECTIVE SERGEANT WAYNE PENNELL OF THE TOWNSVILLE CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION BRANCH

RESPONSE

- I am informed that the officer you referred to earlier today is in fact one Detective Sergeant Wayne Pennell of the Townsville Criminal Investigation Branch.
- The Queensland Police Service advises me that this officer is currently on a period of leave for the following dates:

Recreation Leave—2 June to 20 June 2003

SARAS Leave—23 June to 18 July 2003

...

Recreational Leave—21 July to 8 August 2003

- The first period of leave I referred to (2—20 June 2003) was applied for by the officer on the 24 January; the second period of leave which is granted for study purposes was applied for on the 7 April 2003; and the final period of leave 21 July to 8 August was applied for on the 24 January 2003.
- These periods of leave were applied for by the officer himself and no direction was provided to him from any person in authority to force him to take the leave at this time.
- The Commissioner has issued an internal memorandum encouraging all personnel to move towards reducing excessive leave balances. This is a sound contemporary management practice of benefit to the individual and the organisation.

That is signed by Superintendent Peter Martin, Chief of Staff, Commissioner's Office.

This is the third time in as many weeks that the Leader of the Opposition or one of his spokesmen has made false allegations. The Leader of the Opposition implied this morning that this officer had been forced to take leave, and by asking that question to me implied that I had something to do with it. This once again proves beyond a shadow of a doubt that the man who occupies the position of Leader of the Opposition in this state is unfit to do so.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL
APPROPRIATION BILL
Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from p. 2808.

Mr SEENEY (Callide—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (10.57 a.m.): I rise to participate in this budget reply debate with a sense of disappointment. I have to record my disappointment with the way that the whole budget process has deteriorated in this parliament, even in the time I have been here. It has certainly deteriorated from what it used to be in days gone by. It used to be an exercise in financial planning and it used to be an exercise in accountability, where a government laid out its program, was held accountable for its achievements in the immediate past and set out how it was going to achieve its programs in the future. Unfortunately, what the budget exercise has become is fairly typical of everything that the Beattie Labor government does: it has become a marketing exercise—an exercise in media hype and an exercise in selling a message that is more often than not a false and misleading message. The pile of budget documents gets bigger and glossier every year, but the information that is contained within them gets harder to find and means less.

On budget eve the Premier was asked what Queenslanders could expect from the 2003-04 budget. His response was that they could expect 'a solid Labor budget'. In that statement he was half right. It is a Labor budget, but it is certainly not a solid budget. It is a budget with more than its fair share of typical Labor traits. It is packaged in a sick, glossy document and boldly stamped as 'smart', when it has no claim to that title. This budget features unrealistic expectations. It is deceitful. It contains imaginative and misleading accounting techniques and voodoo economics that would put Alan Bond and Christopher Skase to shame.

There is nothing smart about a budget that is continually in deficit. There is nothing smart about Queensland possessing the highest unemployment rate in mainland Australia despite the government's target of five per cent, and there is nothing smart about a Treasurer who relies continually on unrealistic returns and creative accounting methods to deceive the people of Queensland.

That level of deceit is greatest in this budget when we look at the expected level of returns that the Treasurer has predicted. All of the calculations in this budget are based on an expected rate of return of 7.5 per cent for the state's \$12 million investment on behalf of superannuation holders. Yet to date the Treasurer has admitted that investment returns have been negative three per cent. This is not the first time the Treasurer has based his budget predictions on unachievable rates of return.

Despite receiving an actual investment return of negative five per cent in 2001-02, the Treasurer predicted he could achieve a 7.5 per cent return in the next year—that is, this current financial year. He was getting a negative five per cent return in June and yet he thought the market would somehow turn around by 12.5 per cent from July. But what has happened to date? The rate of return so far has been negative three per cent—a far cry from the Treasurer's predicted 7.5 per cent. Time and time again we see the Treasurer making these absolutely ludicrous predictions on which to base his budgets—budgets based on booming markets that are worlds away from reality.

This budget before the House outlines that the Treasurer is expecting to receive a negative three per cent return on investments until the end of June this year, and then on 1 July he thinks the market will somehow miraculously spring back to his much-loved and much-quoted 7.5 per cent. This is quite clearly laughable, yet the budget is based upon that laughable assumption.

The best analysts in the country believe that investors will be lucky to get a six per cent return on their investments. To give an idea of what will happen if the Treasurer does not get his expected rate of return, let me quote from the budget papers. The Treasurer said in the budget—

Given Queensland's large holding of financial assets, actual revenues are highly sensitive to small variations from the assumed long rate of return.

The budget papers go on to state that a one percentage point variation in investment earnings on assets held to meet future entitlements would lead to a change in investment revenue of approximately \$100 million. This means that, if investors receive a five per cent return, which is ambitious at best, given the current investment climate the Treasurer would forgo \$250 million in investment revenue, meaning his \$153 million surplus for 2003-04 would suddenly turn into yet another deficit to the tune of \$97 million and for the fourth time in a row the Treasurer would have predicted a surplus and delivered a deficit. Three times in a row already the Treasurer has presented budgets to this House which predicted a surplus but have actually delivered a deficit.

If investment returns continue at their current level of negative three per cent for the year, the Treasurer's \$153 million surplus could turn into an \$897 million deficit, as \$1.05 billion in investment revenue is forgone. If investment returns moderate out to zero per cent—and that is a very optimistic assumption—the Treasurer's \$153 million surplus would turn into a deficit of \$597 million, as some \$750 million in investment returns would be forgone.

So even at the optimistic end of the scale, even at the most optimistic end of any range of realistic assumptions, allowing for investment returns to be the best they possibly could be within any bounds of reality, the Treasurer should be predicting a deficit. If this budget document and this budget process are to mean anything, the Treasurer should be predicting a deficit. At the very best, the Treasurer can predict delivering a deficit in the range of \$100 million. If investment returns continue at their current rate, he can expect to deliver a deficit of nearly \$900 million and, if returns moderate, he can expect to deliver a deficit somewhere in the middle of \$500 to \$600 million, but a deficit is the only likely outcome.

The people of Queensland should treat the Treasurer's prediction for a 2003-04 surplus with as much caution as they should his prediction for a \$350 million deficit in 2002-03. Let us have a look at the record. Let us have a look at the history. In 2000-01 a surplus of \$29 million was predicted in the budget documents. Despite the mid-year review revising this figure down to a \$13 million surplus and a further revision in June to a predicted \$820 million deficit, the final outcome was in fact an \$858 million deficit. So we started off in the budget process with a prediction of a surplus of \$29 million and we actually ended up with an \$858 million deficit. That illustrates the absurdity of which this budget process is a continuation.

In 2001-02 the same pattern was followed. A \$24 million surplus was predicted in the budget documents—\$24 million in the black. The mid-year review revised this figure down to a \$148 million deficit. This figure was further revised in June to a \$486 million deficit. The end result again was an \$894 million deficit. So it is the same thing: the budget process started with a prediction of a \$24 million surplus. It was sold with all the bells and whistles and best efforts of the spin doctors as a responsible, financial prediction, but the end result was an \$894 million deficit—almost \$930 million out.

The pattern continues. In 2002-03 a \$23 million surplus was predicted in the budget process. This was revised to a \$741 million deficit in the Treasurer's mid-year review and then revised again in this budget document to a \$350 million deficit. We, like the people of Queensland, will have to await the outcome statement to see what actually happens, but I am quietly confident that the end result will be closer to my prediction of a deficit of between \$500 million and \$900 million.

Mr Mackenroth: Want to bet?

Mr SEENEY: Well, we will see when the outcome statement comes in. The Treasurer can be sure that I will be standing here pointing out to him what the actual figure is. Going on his performance over the last three years, we cannot have any confidence in the figures that he has included in the budget. He has included a deficit in the budget of \$350 million, despite the fact that the budget last year predicted a surplus of \$23 million. His latest estimate is a deficit of \$350 million, which he has clawed back from the mid-year review which revealed a deficit of

\$741 million. But we will see when the outcome statement comes in whether or not the pattern that the Treasurer has established over the last three years has continued.

It is a fair bet that that pattern will continue, because there is no evidence to suggest that the end result will be anything but a huge deficit in the range of \$600 million to \$700 million—unless, of course, the Treasurer can find a white knight, revalue the power poles, find another hollow log to raid, get some more money from taxpayers or from Canberra, or pull one of his accounting tricks to come up with a different figure from what appears to be inevitable to anyone looking at the situation.

That brings me to the revision of the operating result of the mid-year review. While Premier Beattie tried to give the Treasurer lots of credit for revising the mid-year review figure down from that \$741 million deficit to a \$350 million deficit, in reality he should be thanking Queensland taxpayers. The Premier should be thanking not only the Queensland taxpayers but also the Commonwealth and he should be acknowledging that that result is because of the dodgy accounting practices that the Treasurer has put in place. When we look at the actual figures to work out why that \$741 million deficit in the mid-year budget review is now in these documents as a \$350 million deficit—it has been halved—we see that taxation receipts have been revised up in the mid-year review from a budgeted position of \$466 million by another \$140 million to try to get to that \$350 million deficit. Whether or not those taxation receipts will actually be received remains to be seen. We will have to wait until we get the outcome statement to find that out.

The Commonwealth grants were also revised up another \$204 million. It got better from there. The state departments decided to review the way in which depreciation is applied to their assets in order to get a longer useful life on their assets. In other words, they are extending the value of their assets—flogging their assets—in order to save another \$195 million in the Treasurer's budget documents. They are the contributing factors for the \$391 million revision of Queensland's operating deficit. The Treasurer can take no credit for financial management, because none of those things are the result of responsible financial management. In fact, an extra \$586.3 million was received from the Commonwealth in 2002-03 than was first budgeted.

But perhaps the best figure can be spotted in the Treasurer's revenue projections. Here we can see that since the Beattie government came to power, Queenslanders have paid \$1.1 billion more in taxes. Nowhere is there more evidence of a government lacking in innovation and intelligence than in this figure. It illustrates clearly—if further illustration is necessary—that this Labor government, like so many of its predecessors, cannot manage budgets. It has proven time and time again that the Beattie government is as well known for its economic mismanagement as it is for its media tart tricks.

The government's sole strategy for managing the budget is to increase taxes, increase fees, increase fines, increase charges and impose hidden levies. We have seen it with the ambulance tax, we have seen it with the water and tick charges, we have seen it with the motor vehicle registration, we have seen it with the late fees and we have seen it with the endless list of other sly taxes and fines that the Beattie government has introduced under various guises.

I wanted to complete my overview of the budget before I start to talk about my portfolio responsibilities by restating an analogy that I used earlier this year when comparing Queensland's state budget to a household budget. It is not my analogy; I do not claim credit for it. It was one that was used quite often by previous treasurers and under-treasurers—senior public servants have used this analogy. The Treasurer has criticised me for drawing that analogy to illustrate the point that we cannot spend more than what we receive without borrowing. That is a truism that is accurate whether it is applied to the state or applied to us as individuals. I think the analogy is a good way of illustrating that point. It offers a very useful depiction of Queensland's state budget.

If we were to compare this budget that is before the House to a household budget, this is what we would find. We would see that the Treasurer has revalued the house and the fence in the backyard and the kids' playground equipment and borrowed against the equity in it to pay the bills. He has raided the kids' piggy banks, he has maxed out the credit card, he has mortgaged the power poles, sold the silverware and deceived the lenders by declaring every freestanding object in his house and around it as capital. The Treasurer's expenses have risen through the roof as he models his household budget on an assumption that his wage will somehow increase at an unprecedented rate that nobody else is going to get and no-one else expects. It is a vision that is not shared by either his colleagues or his boss. Worse still, the vision is not only unrealistic but it has been proposed year after year after year and never been realised. It has never become actual. The Treasurer relies on his big brother down south, whom he and his colleagues take great delight in blaming for anything and everything, but who has given him a bonus which, along

with the windfall from the kids' piggy banks, will be the Treasurer's sole saviour. He has predicted a positive household budget every year, but every year he has returned home with a budget dripping in red ink. The Treasurer is unable to explain where the money has been spent. He budgets again and again forecast unrealistic income and unsustainable expenditure. The Treasurer's only option is to borrow and borrow and borrow, but he does that in a way that is hidden from the normal observation of the financial documents.

This fictional budget is based on the same level of deceit and wishful thinking as the state budget that is before the House today. The Treasurer should be condemned for his irresponsibility. This is Mackenomics at its worst. It is a budget of deceit. It is a budget based on funny money. It is a budget that will deliver nothing else but a media headline and a media opportunity for this government.

I have a number of portfolio areas for which I am responsible, which time will not allow me to explore as part of this debate. Suffice is to say that I will be exploring each of those portfolio areas in detail as part of the estimates committee process. The deceit that I have illustrated as part of the overall budget approach has been continued on through each of these Ministerial Portfolio Statements, especially the portfolio of the Department of Natural Resources. The minister issued a press release claiming that the department's budget at \$412 million was somehow a record, despite the fact that the estimated actual expenditure for last year was \$448 million—most of which, by the way, was made up by Commonwealth grant moneys and a whole series of rollovers of existing funds. They are the issues that we will certainly have the opportunity to explore during the estimates processes. Suffice is to say that at this stage each of those departments has used the same budgeting techniques that the Treasurer has used in his presentation of the budget. It is a meaningless process, it is full of deceit and dishonesty and its only role is to hide from the people of Queensland the true state of the state's finances.

Mr MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (11.17 a.m.): It is a pleasure to speak in support of the 2003-04 state budget. Firstly, I would like to congratulate the Treasurer, the Hon. Terry Mackenroth, on his budget that will deliver a range of new projects and initiatives that will promote growth and deliver services and jobs to people across Queensland. It is a solid and responsible budget that builds on the foundation of previous Beattie Labor government budgets of broadening the economic base of the Smart State through investments in biotechnology, information technology and, more importantly, by providing improved services to our most important asset, our people.

The budget is based on a growth rate of four per cent in 2003-04, outperforming the rest of Australia by one percentage point. Strong domestic demand with increased spending on household consumption, housing construction and business investments and continued low interest rates are expected to underpin the four per cent growth forecast. General operating revenues are budgeted at \$21.4 billion. This represents an increase of up to six per cent on the 2002-03 budget. The general government operating expenses are budgeted at \$21.2 billion in 2003-04. This represents an increase of \$1.1 billion—up 5.3 per cent on last year's budget—delivering on a range of services and infrastructure across the state. The budget is forecast to deliver a general government net operating surplus of \$153 million and a cash surplus of \$152 million in 2003-04 maintaining Queensland's AAA credit rating.

The budget has been brought down under tight economic circumstances. The equity markets have continued to underperform, and this has had an effect on government investments. The forecast deficit for 2002-03 is expected to be \$350 million and will return to an operating surplus in the outer years. The Opposition Leader has been making great play of the \$350 million deficit. He has failed to mention the underperformance of the equity market and the fact that no investment house—government owned or publicly listed company—is immune to the downturn. We often hear the Opposition Leader speak about budget honesty. If this government applied the same budget honesty as the federal coalition government, then our operating result for 2002-03 would be a surplus of \$587 million, not a deficit.

Unlike the federal coalition government, the Queensland government's superannuation liabilities are fully funded. If we applied the same transparency to the federal budget—that is, including its superannuation liabilities—the federal government would have delivered a deficit of \$3.5 billion for 2002-03 instead of the \$1.5 billion surplus. So much for Howard and Costello's charter of budget honesty. The federal government does not apply normal international accounting rules accepted by the International Monetary Fund for government finance statistics.

Whilst the Opposition Leader is feigning denial over this important fact, the markets acknowledge this government's transparency on superannuation liabilities. I would suggest that

the Opposition Leader acquaint himself with Standard and Poor's assessment of this year's budget, which stated—

The budget brought down by the Government of the Australian State of Queensland was consistent with the State's comfortable positioning within the AAA rating category.

The assessment further states—

To some extent, Queensland is being penalised for its fiscal conservatism of fully funding its superannuation liability.

It goes on to state—

Despite the rise in liabilities, Queensland's balance sheet remains the strongest of the Australian States.

I table that release for the Opposition Leader's continuing education.

Another point the Opposition Leader raised which I want to comment on was the forecasted jobless rate. The Opposition Leader failed to mention that under the Borbidge coalition government unemployment peaked at 9.5 per cent in February 1997. Queensland has the highest job growth in the nation of 3.5 per cent compared with the national average of 2.8 per cent. In the 58 months since the Beattie government came to office, 200,000 new jobs have been created. Of these, 101,300 or 50.7 per cent were full-time jobs. If the participation rate fell to the same rate as nationally, our average unemployment rate for 2002-03 would have been 5.5 per cent. The Queensland unemployment rate is expected to remain at seven per cent during 2003-04, the lowest since 1989-90 and the same as this current financial year.

Also, the Opposition Leader has criticised the government on its policies of revaluing assets and obtaining interim dividends from government owned corporations. This practice is consistent with the policies of the former Borbidge-Sheldon coalition government which revalued assets and obtained interim dividends from government owned corporations. I thought with the Opposition Leader's so-called positive politics agenda he would have devoted time to outlining his vision for Queensland under a National Party-led coalition government. Instead, he advocated a contradictory or fuzzy vision. On the one hand he advocates smaller government and lower taxes and then on the other hand he advocates more spending on infrastructure and service delivery. The Opposition Leader needs to spell out to the people of Queensland how he will achieve these contradictory objectives. The key to this budget is sustainable economic growth through improving economic fundamentals, fostering innovation and investing in its people.

I now want to outline some of the announcements in this budget which will benefit people and families of the Mackay-Whitsunday region. I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The budget has a strong emphasis on health, education and disability services, emergency services, housing, and law and order, and will impact on the lives of every resident in the Mackay Whitsunday region.

Overall, spending in health has received a four year \$1.6B boost in this budget from the previous year's funding levels. When Commonwealth funding is factored into the equation, we will see a cumulative increase of over \$2.6B in public health over the next four years.

I was delighted to see the Mackay Health Service District has received \$1.5M as part of \$1.8M over three years to upgrade the Mackay Base Hospital Specialist Outpatient Centre.

In addition, the Mackay Health Service District will receive \$698,000 in additional funding to enhance health services such as patient transport, intensive care and mental health. \$500,000 has also been allocated for the construction of three new units of accommodation for Mackay health staff.

The Families portfolio was allocated a second instalment of \$42M in Future Directions and Forde Funding, as part of \$188M over four years announced in the 2002/03 budget. These funds will be used to progress a range of early intervention initiatives and strengthen state child protection systems.

These funds mean that Department of Families' expenditure has now more than doubled since the Beattie Government came into office, and I know this extra support for families will be welcomed by my electorate.

The historic Disability Services package increase of \$290.5M over four years will see the continuation and enhancement of vital support services for disabled people throughout the State.

Under this budget, recurrent expenditure for Education will increase by 5.8% taking the total recurrent 2003-04 budget for education in Queensland to \$4.488B. The capital works program will also increase by 4.8% on last year, up to \$257.2M.

In Mackay, funds of \$247,000 will go towards repainting school buildings at Mackay North State High School, Mackay North State School and Pioneer State High School and reticulation works at Mackay West State School.

\$3.79M has been allocated for air-conditioning at Andergrove State School, Mackay North State High School, Mackay West State School, Pioneer State High School, Slade Point State School, Victoria Park State School, Fitzgerald State School, Mackay North State School and Mackay State High School under the Cooler Schools program.

\$430,00 will help Mackay North State High School implement phase three of its Secondary School Renewal program.

Another highlight of spending in Education is the employment of 636 extra state school teachers in 2004 at a cost of about \$42M a year. This boost includes 327 teachers allocated over and above usual growth and another 60 teachers to support students with special needs.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the parents, teachers and schools communities in Mackay. The wonderful work that parents and teachers do to ensure the best possible educational outcomes for children across all schools in the region deserves the highest recognition.

The record \$607.6M Emergency Services budget expenditure represents an overall increase in funding of 8.77% on the previous budget, and contains many benefits for the Mackay region.

The focus of the Emergency Services funding will be to implement the new Community Ambulance Cover, and also the employment of 110 additional paramedics and a 37.6% increase in capital funding for the Ambulance Service, which will go towards new vehicles, equipment and stations.

Included in the funding is \$1.85M towards the multi-million dollar joint emergency services complex to be built at Holts Road, Beaconsfield, which will be the first of its kind in Queensland.

The complex will bring together the Fire Brigade, Rural Fire Brigade, Ambulance Service, and counter disaster and rescue services. The complex will greatly enhance the emergency services response in the North Mackay area.

An additional \$929,000 has been provided in the budget for the South Mackay ambulance station which will replace the city site.

That Mackay is able to share in this major expansion of ambulance staff, vehicles and stations is made possible through the introduction of the Community Ambulance Cover, which will provide universal ambulance cover for all Queenslanders.

Funding for Police has been boosted by \$84M or 9.2% in the 2003-04 budget, taking the operational budget to a record \$1.001B. Capital expenditure has been strengthened by \$5.3M.

It is great to see this funding will provide for an increase in police numbers by about 300, and also the establishment of five more tactical crime squads throughout the State.

The Mackay Tactical Crime Squad is already helping to create a safer and more secure community by targeting known crime hotspots with an emphasis on tackling property crime and possession and supply of drugs, and will be further boosted through a funding allocation of \$193,000 under this budget.

Police spending includes \$32.2M to progress infrastructure projects including a new 24 hour station at North Mackay. \$2.17M will go towards completing the new station.

I congratulate my colleague, the Member for Whitsunday, Jan Jarratt, for her efforts to secure funding for this project which will greatly improve response times to her constituents in the Northern Beaches. The impact of this new station and an increased police presence will also benefit Andergrove and Beaconsfield residents in my electorate.

The Beattie Government has also recognised the importance of providing for the growth of our region, as we continue to develop into a major centre of tourist and industrial activity.

The Mackay and Whitsunday region has received \$5M for initiatives that will provide further local training and employment opportunities in the region.

Unemployment is a curse on society and the State Government is not resting on its laurels in its job creation efforts. The State will continue the successful Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative, helping long term unemployed to get back into the work force.

To boost their efforts to expand the tourism market, funds of \$221,000 each for Tourism Whitsundays and Mackay Tourism and Development Bureau to promote our region have been provided.

The tourism appeal of our region will also be enhanced significantly by several major public works.

Capital works funds for our region will go towards the continued development of several major projects including the Mackay Courthouse and Multi-purpose Centre.

The Mackay Multi-purpose Centre is an exciting development that will help our region retain and grow our share of the lucrative conference and conventions market which generates more than \$250M per year in Queensland.

The Beattie Government committed up to \$38M towards this exciting development and I am delighted that this budget provides \$5M for the project.

The State Government is working very closely with the Mackay City Council in the development of principles and concepts for the state owned Multi-purpose Centre, which is likely to include a privately owned four star hotel.

Council also plans riverside boardwalks, public art and public landscaped areas extending from Wood Street to the Leichhardt tree beside the Pioneer River to enhance on our natural assets.

A site has been identified and the Department of Public Works has been appointed project managers. The project promises to be an impressive and significant development and it is rewarding to see the State working with local government to ensure the Centre includes the right features to showcase and benefit the Mackay region.

The Mackay Courthouse extension and refurbishment will receive \$8.42M in this budget, affirming our government's commitment to regional justice.

Both of these projects will be a massive injection into the revitalisation of the city heart.

Another fantastic tourism attraction received a funding boost under the budget. Mackay will share in \$3.2M of funding allocated for the Mackay Highlands Great Walks project which on completion will extend from Eungella National Park through to the township of Nebo.

In addition, Mackay City Council will be provided \$1.5M to assist in the completion of Stage two of the Mackay Regional Botanic Gardens, which is a wonderful asset for our region. This is on top of the \$1.3M given to Council previously to complete stage one of this project.

The Public Housing State Budget spending has been increased by 11% and Mackay will receive funding of \$9.6M for public and community housing as well as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing, which will go some way to addressing waiting lists and will boost the building sector in the Mackay Whitsunday region.

Mackay has also received a boost under the Transport and Main Roads operating budget, which has recognised the importance of remote and regional roads.

\$1.587M has been allocated to complete upgrading of the Willet's and Sam's Road intersection at a total cost on \$1.69M. This funding boost will ensure the safety of motorists using this busy intersection near the Mater Hospital.

An additional \$3.7M has been allocated to continue works on the Mackay Bucasia Road.

In addition, the Transport budget allocates \$13M for the Rockhampton to Townsville rail track renewal project, \$985,000 towards Mackay Airport works including runway approach lighting, and \$2.849M towards Mackay Seaport works and plant including the establishment of a commercial fishing facility.

The Department of Primary Industries budget makes key investments in biosecurity, as well as a commitment to assisting farmers in need and promoting sustainability.

The sugar industry in Mackay has been hampered by a poor season with drought affecting productivity. Things are tough, but the State Government is currently working with the Commonwealth to address industry issues. \$30M has been allocated under the budget for industry reform, pending the outcomes of negotiations with the Federal Government to reach an agreement on the restructuring.

Mr Speaker,

I have outlined some of the projects that will be funded in the Mackay/Whitsunday region under the capital works budget.

All up \$338M will be spent in capital works in our region which will provide jobs for local people and great opportunities for local building and supplies companies.

This funding for capital works in our region represents an increase of nearly \$100M from last year's expenditure of \$240M.

Across the State \$5.3B will be spent on capital works projects with 62% of the funds being spent outside the Brisbane Statistical Division.

The benefits to the Mackay region under this budget are significant and I would like to thank the Premier and Treasurer for their ongoing commitment to regional Queensland.

For Mackay, the budget includes funds for a range of new projects and initiatives that would promote growth, keep the local economy active and deliver services and jobs to the region.

This budget invests in our State's most vital assets—its people—by delivering funds where they really matter. The budget makes a strong commitment to the future of our State by looking after core areas such as health, families, education, and law and order. This budget will ensure that Queensland is totally skilled, economically strong and socially responsible.

I commend both bills to the House.

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (11.23 a.m.): The Ipswich community is more positive, more energetic and has more good things going on now than it has had throughout my entire life, and that is largely as a result of economic strategies that Labor governments—the Goss Labor government and the Beattie Labor government—have undertaken since 1989. Going back 20 years or so, the state of the Ipswich economy was really pretty unwell. Our traditional industries like woollen mills and coalmining had declined. Other industries like the railway workshops did not employ as many people as they used to. It looked like, in the long term, Ipswich was going to become some kind of commuter suburb to Brisbane. If one goes to Ipswich now they will realise that that is not at all the case. Some years ago an economic strategy was developed by state Labor governments in conjunction with the Ipswich City Council to diversify the Ipswich economy, and that strategy has a number of elements. Firstly, it was decided that we were going to keep the existing state sponsored industries in Ipswich. As a result, we upgraded the Swanbank Power Station, we built the gas-fired Swanbank E and we still employ about 100 people at Swanbank. There are still about 1,000 people employed at the Redbank railway workshops and it is still one of the biggest manufacturing sites around. So we have kept our existing state sponsored industries.

Another element of the strategy of diversification was to develop a tourist industry in Ipswich. It would not be all that long ago that if someone said that we were going to attract tourists to Ipswich we would have thought that they were a bit off the planet. But now that is not the case at all. In recent years the state government has spent huge amounts of money developing tourism in Ipswich. Last year we opened the \$20 million railway workshops museum, the final funding of which was devoted in last year's state budget. A few years before that we spent \$3 million on Global Artslink and just a couple of months ago we opened the Ipswich Visitor Information Centre.

This budget really brings together the tourism strategy that we have been developing over some years, and it does that by enhancing the heart of Ipswich. Over the years we have built fantastic tourist attractions around the city. As a result of the critical mass that those state sponsored tourist facilities have created, good private tourism infrastructure has developed. The area now has enough wineries so that people can do a wine tour and hot-air ballooning. It has beautiful function centres and great B&Bs. The thing with tourism is that it needs critical mass and there needs to be a few attractions to make it worth the effort to come to the region. The state made it worth people's effort and those private tourist businesses built up around that and we now have quite a healthy tourist industry.

The difficulty is that, as a result of many years of neglect, while there is great tourism going on around Ipswich the centre of town still makes Ipswich look like a city that has the seat out of its pants. The Ipswich City Square development is extremely run down and for 100 years we have turned our back on and polluted the Bremer River. That is why this year's budget is extremely important. Through the Regional Centres Program—and I note that the Minister for Local Government is in the chamber, and I very much thank her for her efforts—this budget delivers \$3 million to revegetate and redevelop the riverbanks in the CBD of Ipswich between the town road bridge and the rail bridge—that is, on the border of my electorate and the electorate of the member for Ipswich West. At the moment the river is a bit muddy, the banks are kind of ugly and one would not take anyone there. But with this project we will develop boardwalks along the river and an amphitheatre and the river will become a place where people go. That is going to be a huge cultural change in Ipswich.

Through the \$3 million that has come from the Regional Centres Program we will also upgrade the mall in the centre of town. I have quite stridently at times suggested that the Singaporean owner of the Ipswich City Square should either spend some money redeveloping his shopping centre or he should sell it to someone who will. Sadly, that is not happening. But with this money from the state budget it is very fair to say that the state government and the Ipswich City Council are doing all in their power to redevelop to put some energy and capital into the Ipswich CBD. That will make a huge difference to the centre of our town and it will make a huge difference to the impression that tourists get when they come to Ipswich.

Since I was elected I have spoken numerous times about the potential of the Bremer River. Again, I think sometimes people have thought that that muddy creek was a strange thing to be talking about as something that had tourism potential. But a lot of things have been happening around the river. Since I was elected the EPA and the council have done some tremendous work to do an environmental audit of the river to establish where the pollutants are coming from and to really crack down on those people who are polluting our river.

Some community groups have sprung up. There is one in Meryl Street at Booval and another in Tiger Street at West Ipswich. Community groups are revegetating their sections of the river. Boral Hancock, the old Hancock sawmill in Ipswich, has just announced a project whereby it will revegetate and develop walking tracks along its substantial part of the riverbank quite close to the CBD. Together with River Heart, we will start to see a serious service focus on the Bremer River.

In time, I think that we can have walking tracks from Basin Pocket to Leichhardt. People will be able to walk all the way through the central suburbs of town along the Bremer River. We will become a river city. This budget money delivers the first substantial commitment to that cause. We will start to see it happen. That will make a tremendous difference to how people feel about Ipswich and to the impression that tourists get when they come and visit our city. This funding is important for Ipswich and it is important for the strategy of economic diversification that we have been developing over some time and that is now very much coming together.

The third element of the economic strategy for Ipswich is that we have needed a new manufacturing base. As I said earlier, our manufacturing and traditional industries were on the slide in Ipswich. We have gone from tens of thousands of people employed in mining and manufacturing to very few. It is important for Ipswich that we continue to be a manufacturing city. It is important for our economy. It is important for employment. But it is also important because that is where our soul is. We are a manufacturing city. It is important in trying to keep that sense of self and keep that sense of community that we keep making things in Ipswich. That is what we are doing.

The Department of State Development, under Minister Tom Barton, has made a real commitment to the Ipswich area in recent years. There has been some very good strategic planning for the western corridor. The department has contributed to the development of private

industrial estates such as that which Jeff Cooper is creating in Don Livingstone's electorate at Tivoli, Bremer Business Park and the Swanbank Enterprise Park in which CS Energy, a government owned corporation, is absolutely central.

For some years we have been talking about new manufacturing coming to Ipswich. Now it is actually happening. Just a couple of months ago Caprol—that is the old Alcan—announced that it would be building an aluminium extrusion facility in the Bremer Business Park. That will bring between 200 and 300 permanent jobs. While some residents have expressed environmental concerns, the EPA and council have place a wide range of environmental conditions on it. I am very confident that, with good monitoring, there is no need for serious environmental concerns in the community. There will be between 200 and 300 jobs created.

What does that mean? As I said in relation to tourism, we have been talking about this for a while and now it is really seriously happening. There is a very good chance that there will soon be a big paper mill developed at the Swanbank Enterprise Park. We can see the seeds of new, clean manufacturing industries coming to Ipswich. This budget very much delivers on that strategy. It means that the government is contributing to the positive outlook that is very much starting in Ipswich.

I will now talk about some of the important social policy aspects of the budget. One thing that Labor governments do that sets us worlds apart from our conservative opponents is that we fundamentally believe in equality of opportunity. We fundamentally believe that everyone, regardless of where one comes from or how much money one has, should have access to excellent, quality health care.

Mr English: A fair go.

Ms NOLAN: Indeed, a fair go. We believe that everyone, regardless of how much money one has, should have access to a good education system. That is what sets us a world apart from our conservative opponents. Right now the Howard government is setting up a two-tier health system through the demolition of Medicare.

Ms Nelson-Carr: That only the privileged can access.

Ms NOLAN: As the member for Mundingburra says, it is setting up a system with a higher tier for the privileged who can pay their private health insurance and then get their rebate and then the second-rate system for everybody else. That is absolutely anathema to the Labor Party, and so it should be.

Over many years the Howard government has done exactly the same thing in education. We have seen the abominable rort in recent years of increases in funding to the most elite private schools at the expense of funding to state schools. Now we are seeing that two-tier approach very heavily pushed through the Brendan Nelson reforms to higher education.

This budget swims very strongly against that tide. There is an 11 per cent increase across the state in funding for health. That is being delivered in Ipswich with an \$847,000 increase in recurrent funding to the West Moreton health district and \$950,000 for new capital equipment.

The budget also delivers very strongly in the area of education. I was extremely pleased to see that there is \$100,000 for special education at Bremer State High School and \$10,000 for the unit at the Ipswich Central School. There is also significant capital works money for Blair State School, Ipswich Central State School and Bundamba State Primary School, as well as for the long-awaited re-roofing at Bremer State High School. This means that we are putting money into state education. We are putting in more teachers. We are creating healthier environments in which kids can learn.

The other element of the budget is that there is a 16 per cent increase in funding for disability services. The opposition whinges and moans consistently about there not being enough money for country racing or for its offices, but we never hear its members talking about the desperate need in the area of disability services. One of the biggest things that can change one's life is if one has a child with a disability. That can happen to any of us. When one has a child with a disability one's life is turned upside down. Certainly until the Goss government, one got very little support from the state government. As a result, many families are torn apart because the strain is too much for them bear.

The families of people with disabilities whom I deal with in Ipswich are probably the most wonderful group of people I encounter. There are some people for whom that strain is too much. The majority of people who manage to hold it together are open minded, tolerant, generous and kind, and they very much deserve our support. This budget delivers that support with a 16 per

cent increase in funding across-the-board. In Ipswich \$680,000 has been allocated for the Way of the Future program, which is the development of innovative housing specifically for people with a disability.

One of the final points I want to make is that there is also a significant increase in child protection through the Department of Families. This was the No. 1 priority of last year's budget, but again there is a significant increase in funding in this year's budget. That includes in Ipswich \$356,000 for foster carers and relatives supporting children. These people again very much need our support. I am very satisfied to see significant funds flowing through for child protection.

This is a budget that delivers on priorities. It delivers on the ongoing strategy of economic diversification that means Ipswich is a stand-alone city that maintains its industries, that maintains its pride and that has not gone down the path it could so easily have gone down of merely becoming a satellite city to Brisbane. This budget delivers on the strategy which means that Ipswich still has its soul. It also delivers on the Labor Party still having its soul. It provides equitable opportunity to health and education, and it provides services to the people who most need it—that is, people with disabilities—and child protection.

I have been disappointed with the response to this budget from the opposition. For a few years now it has come in here and told us that it wants more money—for rural relief, country racing, for the opposition office—but it has no way of getting it. In the whole time I have been here, the opposition has not supported one single revenue measure. It has been happy to say that it is really quite supportive of our spending in social policy areas like disability. It is happy to come along for the ride. But it is completely unable to tell us how it would fund the massive increases in spending that it promises to people who it thinks are too stupid to know any different.

Mr English: Spend it like drunken sailors.

Ms NOLAN: They would if they had a chance. They treat people like fools by telling them that they will deliver these services but, at the same time, not supporting any revenue measures. Will they sack public servants and privatise industry? What will they do? Queenslanders are not stupid enough to believe that we can spend more money in the bush and we can prop up things like country racing but we will not find the money anywhere to do it. The 'limp balloon' brochure put out as their budget analysis is a classic example of that. They tried to compare the so-called halcyon days of the Borbidge government with those of the Beattie government. But that is a bit of an economically dodgy task to engage in. That 'limp balloon' brochure they have, for example, compared forecasts from year to year rather than actual outcomes in terms of areas like job creation. This stuff is an insult to the intelligence of Queenslanders.

The opposition might think it can put this over people and get away with it, but it is sadly mistaken. The people of Queensland are not quite as stupid as the opposition would like them to be. This is a good budget, a sound budget—a budget with soul and a budget that is economically extremely responsible. I commend it to the House.

Mr HORAN (Toowoomba South—NPA) (11.42 a.m.): Firstly, I wish to address some financial aspects of this budget, some matters to do with my shadow portfolios and, finally, some local issues. However, I must comment on the contribution of the previous member, who philosophised on the aspirations of the Labor Party. However, the facts of life are that it is the coalition that delivers, it is the Labor Party that talks and philosophises.

When we came to government in 1996 we inherited the worst waiting lists in Australia, but in two short years we turned them into the best. In addition, we set targets for high percentage rates of participation in breast screening and immunisation and put in place a Capital Works Program, because the Capital Works Program promised by the Labor Party was underfunded to the extent of some 50 per cent. Those are pretty hollow words from the member for Ipswich. We can say lots of things but, if we do not act, no-one has any faith or confidence in us whatsoever.

This budget has delivered for the third time in a row a deficit for the financial year that we are about to conclude and is predicting again a surplus for the next financial year. For the past three years we have had a surplus predicted each and every year of around \$25 million. We got an \$858 million deficit in 2000-01, an \$894 million deficit in 2001-02 and a \$350 million deficit this financial year. Once the final accounts come in towards the end of the year there is no doubt that that \$350 million will be largely increased. That is what has happened every other financial year. The figures in the budget have borne little relation to the actual deficit figure when the final accounts come in around November of this year.

We can expect that \$350 million to be far worse. That is what happened in the two previous financial years. Members should bear in mind also that last year on top of the \$894 million deficit

in the government departmental accounts there was also a \$1.1 billion loss suffered by the government owned corporations. It will be interesting to see what the final result is for government owned corporations relating to this financial year and how much it will add to the overall combined general deficit.

The one thing that everybody should be deeply concerned about is that, once again, a large part of the income for this budget is based upon a 7.5 per cent return by the QIC. That is a 7.5 per cent return on the \$14-odd billion invested on behalf of superannuation for public servants in Queensland. Every one per cent shortfall of that target means almost \$150 million is lost. There is a \$153 million surplus predicted for next financial year. We have only to miss the 7.5 per cent return estimated in this budget by one per cent and we have wiped out that surplus.

Last financial year the return was minus five per cent. This year it was minus three per cent. The Treasurer has predicted 7.5 per cent for the next financial year—a turnaround of some 10.5 per cent. We would all like to see it reach 7.5 per cent, particularly for those people who are retired and relying on superannuation funds and returns on investments to give them a return, and to ensure that our state had adequate funds and did not run into another deficit. The chances of that happening on the basis of the way the financial figures have been for the last two or three financial years are extremely doubtful. The Treasurer said—and I agree with him—that this is hard to predict. If we could predict what it was going to be, we could probably make a fortune. But to continue to predict 7.5 per cent when we have had minus three per cent this year, minus five per cent the year before and the world economies are not—particularly the American economy, which drives much of the world—changing at the rate that would indicate anywhere near 7.5 per cent is quite foolish. It is foolish to be basing the budget on that.

At the very least this budget should have had a big warning note to indicate that that has been the long-term prediction and that it is highly unlikely that we would achieve that 7.5 per cent, so that the public could be well aware, and be given a bit more accountability and honesty in this budget. The \$153 million surplus predicted for the next financial year is dependent very heavily upon the plus 7.5 per cent return for the investments of the state.

Once again, three times in a row now, we see a deficit—\$350 million this year. Every year there is another excuse. But any government, if we are running it like a business, would allow for the fact that there will be difficulties in some aspects of our revenue—in this case the investment revenue. We would certainly be trying to trim the sails so that we could deliver a budget that was in surplus or a budget that was close to being balanced. But, no, we do not see that again. All the time we hear the excuses about the reduction in investment rates and how that has affected this budget.

No-one from the other side talks about the windfall in stamp duty on land sales, with huge increases in land sale valuations throughout the state and the increase in the price of sales. That has delivered an enormous amount—hundreds of millions of dollars—to this state government. What about the extra money in payroll tax for the widening of the payroll tax net? What about all of the extra money through land tax through getting rid of the 15 per cent discount on land tax? This coming financial year the GST windfall will start to come to this government. Because of the arrangements and adjustments made because of some of the taxes that Queensland did not have, it has taken some time to flow through, but as of this forthcoming financial year the GST windfall comes through to this state government. Despite that, we have seen three massive deficits in a row and that has to ring alarm bells everywhere.

We have seen \$1.1 billion extra taken in state government taxes since the end of 1998-99. We all know the never-ending litany of extra charges and fees such as the ambulance tax that has to be charged because this government is not able to fund the Ambulance Service, like previous governments have been able to do, because it is broke. We have seen the new tick inspection charges, the fruit and vegetable inspection charges, the new court charges, the \$40 fee that is slapped on people if they are one day late with their drivers licences and so forth. Despite all of these windfalls the government has delivered another massive deficit. \$350 million, \$894 million and \$858 million are three massive deficits in a row, particularly when people look at last year's \$1.1 billion of losses suffered by the government owned corporations.

One of the tragedies of this budget is that Queensland continues to have the worst unemployment figures in mainland Australia. I think that this budget does not show any real approach towards reducing that budget deficit. We often hear Minister Foley talk about his schemes in this House to help people train and so forth. That is well and good, but what we need is a real across the board whole-of-government approach towards investment, towards infrastructure, towards developing industries and manufacturing industries, towards value adding,

towards putting in place water storage schemes, all the sorts of things that can deliver us more export opportunities and bring in outside money. Outside money stimulates the economy and provides the opportunity for work for people.

If we are serious about providing employment, if we are serious about improving our standards from being the worst in Australia in unemployment to being at least average or above average, then this budget should have across all departments a real philosophical and financial direction towards creating exports, towards creating extra money coming into the state and, in return, allowing small business to employ more people. I think that is one of the real sadnesses of this budget; that it is not addressing this problem of unemployment.

We hear people on the other side talk about how the unemployment levels were nine per cent during the coalition government. That is what we inherited from the previous government. We were not the worst in Australia and a state like Queensland should be able to do better. We have wonderful opportunities with exports and tourism to be able to provide young people with work. If we do have a bigger population increase because people are coming to our state, it means that our state is being invigorated by a bigger population which means more construction of homes. It means more superannuants coming into this state and bringing their investments and their incomes into this state. That is the sort of thing that makes the place grow and creates jobs.

If people are in a town where the population is stagnant then they are in a town where things are going backwards and there is not the work opportunities. But if people are in a place where there is a big increase in the population they are the sorts of places where there are jobs. So there is no reason whatsoever for Queensland to have the worst unemployment in Australia. We should have the best employment figures in the land, not the worst. This budget does nothing. It does not have any drive or direction towards creating jobs.

I want to talk about some matters to do with my portfolio, but I will just mention that I heard one of the previous speakers ask how ministers would fund some of these issues that we have raised. I suggest they look at the 180 people who have been put into the propaganda unit of the Premier's department. He uses the nice little name Community Engagement Division, but it is nothing other than a propaganda unit. We see evidence of that every day in this place with the glossy brochures that are put before us and the millions of dollars that this government spends on brochures and public relations stunts and undertaking all sorts of things that are aimed at getting the government votes without having a true and genuine direction towards creating jobs and creating work.

What has happened to racing in Queensland is an absolute tragedy. I had the opportunity yesterday to have some leave from parliament to attend the Lockyer Race Club's annual Gatton Cup. A massive crowd was in attendance. Without exception those people are absolutely disgusted at what this government has done to racing in Queensland. We have seen almost 200 race meetings cut out. I heard the previous member speaking, the member for Ipswich, who seems to have a chip on the shoulder and a hatred of country racing. She mentioned country racing time and time again. She does not seem to want anything good to happen to country racing. Little does she know that country racing provides the grass roots for the industry, provides the flow on of horses and trainers and jockeys and people interested and involved in racing to the regional cities like Toowoomba and Ipswich or Townsville or on to the capital city. If the grass roots of racing is taken away then the entire sport is reduced.

Have a look at the recent yearling sales and see the lack of demand there where people no longer have any confidence in buying horses. There are 200 fewer race meetings so there are that many fewer horses needed. That means jobs for people, particularly young people, on breeding farms, on transport, on irrigation equipment, on production of hay and fodder. These are young people who get work as stable hands and strappers and so forth and who work in the various related areas of totalisators and catering and so forth at race meetings. Almost 200 race meetings have been cut out of country Queensland. Many of them are in north Queensland but it is right across the board in all the different regions of racing.

We hear excuses like, 'Oh, well, you've got to have TAB coverage. You've got to increase that so that you can shift TAB coverage from tracks like Gatton to other places.' I agree with some of the TAB coverage that has been given to north Queensland, but not wiping out of all the TAB coverage that has been taken out of the south-eastern Queensland tracks. The TAB bets on races in Darwin where they are lucky to get 30 horses at some race meetings and three or four runners in a race. They bet on particular races in north Queensland where there is no Sky

Channel coverage, so all of the excuses that we hear about the Sky Channel and TAB just do not wash.

I can tell members that the feeling of people who move around these race tracks—whether they are in the city, in the regions or in the country—is that they are disgusted with what this government has done with racing. It certainly will hit the government hard at the ballot box next year.

We have already put forward our proposal. We believe that racing, being the third biggest industry in the state employing 55,000 people, should have some financial support from the government. This government walks away from racing and provides nothing towards prize money, relying entirely on the returns that come under the agreement from UNiTAB. When people look at the funds and support that goes into industries like tourism and other industries of the state then surely racing, employing 55,000 people and employing opportunities all over the state for employment and economic development and social life, deserves some form of support.

Almost \$10 million goes to the Indy carnival on the weekend on the basis of its tourism opportunities, but here is racing, the third biggest business in the state, and it gets virtually nothing from this government other than some \$2 million a year towards capital works to do with safety on the racetracks.

It is not only in country racing where we are seeing these cutbacks. The National Party has already promised \$10 million that would include \$4 million quarantined for country racing and the balance to improve the prize money in city and regional racing so that we can boost this great industry. It is not only that, it is harness racing. The Downs Harness Racing Club in Toowoomba went to court and fought against the decision which removed it from the Harness Racing Circuit. It won that case and now has had its racing dates taken away. It is an absolutely ridiculous decision because if there is not harness racing in strong regional centres like Toowoomba, which is handy to where a large number of trainers and breeders live, then the sport will be driven down and it will wither on the vine. We are starting to see that already.

Some of the amateur or practice meetings that they run at Marburg are probably more successful than the professional meetings that are run at Albion Park in terms of numbers, enthusiasm, volunteers and the people who come along to help the harness racing sport. There is a huge number of people involved in harness racing in the Lockyer and the Darling Downs, and they have nothing to cater for them in the form of Downs Harness Racing at Toowoomba. I certainly hope that the racing minister can bring some pressure to bear and can bring some commonsense into the situation and let the Harness Racing Club at Toowoomba race at least some 26 times a year.

We are seeing the same with greyhound racing. There are cutbacks to greyhound tracks and there are fewer and fewer venues available. Once that is done there are fewer people involved in the sport, fewer people exposed to the sport, less marketing, fewer volunteers, fewer committees and fewer sponsors, and bit by bit the sport withers on the vine.

In the area of State Development, we see a cut of some \$20 million in the budget. I have spoken previously about there being no direction regarding exports and lifting Queensland from the worst unemployment figures to at least above average, and we can see that in the State Development part of the budget. There is a lack of drive to increase this state's exports and address the whole issue of unemployment.

In the few minutes I have remaining, I want to comment about some issues concerning Toowoomba and some institutions and clubs which have obtained some funding from this budget. It is good to see the provision of some \$1.25 million to West Creek. Not only will that look after the environment of that creek and eventually the Murray-Darling, being part of the headwaters of the Murray-Darling system; it will also provide a wonderful opportunity for recreation. The work that has already been carried out in the initial catchment areas of West Creek is marvellous.

Some \$1.75 million will see the Department of State Development purchase ground in Charlton, which is well regarded, provision of a private facility which Wagners want to put in place at Westbrook, the Australian Inland Rail Expressway, the second range crossing and the recycled water project to Toowoomba. All of those things will make our city and district jump ahead.

I am grateful for the \$5.5 million for stage 2 of the police station. I have fought for that police station for years and years. That development was delayed for a couple of years because there was opportunity for a major investment in the middle of the CBD. I appreciate the help the Minister for Public Works gave at that particular time.

Sporting clubs such as the Toowoomba Turf Club have received assistance for a training track which will be built from the provision of \$2 million per year. South Toowoomba Bowls Club will receive shade and seating. Gold Park Sports Club has received \$75,000 of \$140,000 for facilities. Gold Park is a great place. The headquarters of the Rangers Rugby Club and Darling Downs Rugby Union headquarters are based there. It also hosts junior Rugby Union, amateur Rugby League and Australian Rules. It is a great example of making a good use of a facility.

All clubs of the Toowoomba Hockey Association play in the one venue. That association has produced so many champions and representatives in Olympic Games in both men's and women's hockey—some 85,000. The Toowoomba and District Showjumping Club, which has done great things at the Toowoomba showground, providing young people in particular with showjumping facilities and cross-country showjumping, receives some facilities towards its clubhouse. It has done an enormous amount of work over a period of time.

Time expired.

Ms KEECH (Albert—ALP) (12.02 p.m.): After listening to the member for Toowoomba South, I am happy to rise to give some balance and some truth to the 2003 budget.

Mrs Carryn Sullivan: Put some commonsense back into the argument.

Ms KEECH: Absolutely. The Beattie Labor government's 2003 budget is aimed directly at improving the quality of life of those working families who make up the majority of the constituents of Albert whom I have the honour to represent.

Despite the protests of the member for Toowoomba South and his National Party mates, I am proud that the budget delivered by the Treasurer, the Hon. Terry Mackenroth, is a true Labor budget—a budget which focuses on the big picture for Queensland families. It focuses on the need to deliver services and infrastructure, the need for job creation and the need to keep taxes low. It focuses on the Labor principle that puts our party streets ahead of those on the opposite side of this chamber: the belief in a fair go for all, not just a privileged few. But the fact is that working families are under incredible pressure from a federal government that is grossly out of touch with the lives of ordinary Australians.

Under John Howard financial pressures are increasing, yet the conservatives are simply not interested in paying their share of our essential services like health, housing, transport and education. Labor, on the other hand, has a long and proud history of standing up for the people who need us the most. In the 2003 Queensland budget it is this tradition that the Beattie government is proud to carry on. Every two weeks I take my mobile office on the road visiting different communities in Albert.

Mr Shine: You too?

Ms KEECH: Yes. I am sure the member for Toowoomba North does the same. There is one constant that my constituents bring up time and time again, and that is how much tax they are being slugged on a daily basis. If Queensland families feel like they are paying more tax than ever before, it is because they are. It is a fact that the Howard government is the highest taxing government in Australian history. In contrast, the latest ABS data shows that the Queensland government's per capita tax collections are \$476 less than the average for the rest of Australia.

So instead of whingeing, the members of the National Party should in fact be thanking the Treasurer and the Beattie government for again delivering a budget which provides much-needed quality services. The Nationals should be thanking us for our support instead of turning a blind eye to the federal government's mean and measly budget which it brought down recently.

With respect to jobs, the Beattie Labor government is at full steam ahead in its vision to build a job ready work force with relevant, up-to-date skills. I am delighted that the south coast region will receive around \$6 million to create an estimated 1,160 jobs through the government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative.

Since the Beattie government came to power in 1998, an additional 200,000 jobs have been created in Queensland. That is 200,000 families whose lives have been changed. Unemployment has continued to fall during this year, even with our strong population growth, to the lowest levels since 1990. Albert is home to one of the Gold Coast's most exciting and innovative job training partnerships at the hugely successful Coomera Marine Precinct. The Beattie government has strongly supported this development, and I welcome a further \$550,000 for the purchase and development of a further lot of land at the precinct. Through partnerships with the Riviera Group boat manufacturer and Gold Coast TAFE, 43 high school students are being assisted and trained to enter the marine industry.

Mrs Croft: It is a fantastic partnership.

Ms KEECH: It is; it is wonderful. I am very proud of it. The success of Riviera's school based apprenticeship and trainee program highlights the significant steps that the Beattie government is already taking to ensure that all young people are engaged in learning or earning. I am pleased to say that Queensland is leading Australia in implementation of school based apprenticeships and traineeships, with more than 60 per cent of the national total in training. I am proud of the role that the Albert electorate is playing in this success.

As a registered teacher who has taught students from high school to postgraduate university levels in Australia, Asia and the Pacific, I am delighted that education continues to remain at the very core of the Beattie government's vision for a better Queensland. As a mother, I know how important education is in making a difference to a person's life. Every time I attend the morning assemblies of one of Albert's 19 schools and look out into a sea of bright and shining faces full of potential and hope, I am so grateful that, unlike John Howard, the Beattie government recognises that education should never be considered as simply an expense. It should in fact always be considered as an investment in the future.

I, like other parents in Albert, fully recognise that education and training is the only key to unlocking the potential of those boys and girls whom I see on assemblies. One such place where this is certainly true is Upper Coomera State College, Albert's newest primary to year 12 school. The college opened from primary school to year 8 this year, with an enrolment of nearly 900 students. The college is led with enthusiasm and passion by its director, Lee Callum, and its principals, Keith Warwick and Leanne Nixon, and supported by great teachers and support staff as well as a hardworking parents and citizens association. I particularly welcome and thank the Treasurer and the Minister for Education for the \$1.7 million for stage 2 of Upper Coomera State College, which will provide a building for years 10 and 11.

Given that Albert is located in one of the fastest growing areas in the state and Australia, it is not surprising that so much of Albert's share of the budget has been focused on education. I would like to mention some of those achievements now. Windaroo Valley State High School gained \$820,000 for two relocatables and additional toilets and Ormeau State School gained \$280,000 for two space relocatables. I was particularly pleased and thrilled to see that primary schools in the Albert electorate for the first time have received funding under the Triple R maintenance program. The schools of Mount Warren Park, Ormeau, Pimpama and Windaroo will soon have a repainting program.

I am also particularly pleased to see that the Beenleigh Special School has received \$50,000 to replace its existing roofing and \$10,000 for classroom hire costs.

Mrs Carryn Sullivan: They would be very grateful for your hard work.

Ms KEECH: Yes, they would be very grateful, because I lobbied the Department of Education long and hard for this money. I thank particularly the parliamentary secretary, Jo-Ann Miller, for visiting the Beenleigh Special School and meeting with the Principal, Burt Beekhuizen, and the Chair of Council, Mike D'arcy. The parents and friends of the Beenleigh Special School and all the teachers and support staff do an absolutely fantastic job.

I have 19 schools in my electorate. I would like to place on the public record my admiration, gratitude and respect for all school staff and parents and citizens associations, who together work so hard with one goal in mind: to give our children, who are the future of our great state, the opportunity to achieve their potential, to be challenged to learn new skills and to be job ready when they leave our schools. I know that the parents of the five non-state schools in Albert will welcome their share of the \$303 million of state funding that the Treasurer announced in the budget.

This budget has also delivered on police and community safety. I give my sincere thanks to all the hardworking and dedicated police officers and support staff at the Beenleigh, Coomera and Jimboomba police stations for their tireless work in making the suburbs and rural areas of Albert so much safer. Recently in parliament the Police Minister, Tony McGrady, released the ABS recorded crime statistics for 2002. Those figures confirmed that Queensland is now experiencing its lowest levels of unlawful entry, homicide, armed robbery, unarmed robbery and motor vehicle theft in a decade. Under the Beattie Labor government the rate of crime in Queensland has reduced significantly. The effects of this reduction have flowed on to the residents of Albert, thanks in no small part to the efforts of all of the police officers, the volunteers in policing, the neighbourhood watches and the two police community consultative committees that operate in Albert.

Although at the last election the Beattie government committed to an increase in police numbers on the Gold Coast of 69 officers from February 2004, I am pleased to announce that that figure will be exceeded, with a total of 80 additional officers to be appointed by that time. I give my congratulations to the Treasurer, the Police Minister and the seven Labor Gold Coast members who worked tirelessly to ensure that the Gold Coast receives these extra police resources. I give congratulations to the magnificent seven.

With respect to community and urban renewal, the transformation taking place in Eagleby through the Beattie government's \$10 million community and urban renewal programs is no doubt one of the greatest in all of Queensland. I place on the record my sincere thanks to the Minister for Housing, the Hon. Robert Schwarten, who recently visited Eagleby, for his tireless work in making Eagleby a better place, for the funding through the budget of \$1.8 million for new projects and for the upgrade of 120 Department of Housing homes. There are a whole range of renewal projects under way in Eagleby, and every one of them speaks volumes for the energy and enthusiasm of the residents of the twin rivers suburb. I am proud of the progress being made in Eagleby and even prouder still to represent Eagleby in this state.

I could spend an hour telling honourable members of the highlights of the projects, but I would like to focus on just two projects that the community, the respective state government departments and the Gold Coast City Council are working on at present. One of those involves an early intervention program to prevent child abuse and is in partnership with St Vincent de Paul. It is called the Child and Family Program and has been funded through the state government to the tune of \$328,000. The other program, which was opened by the honourable Minister Schwarten recently, is the Eagleby youth space, which received funding of \$315,000.

Mr Schwarten interjected.

Ms KEECH: I know that the minister, who is present in the chamber, certainly enjoyed his visit to Eagleby, as we enjoyed welcoming him to Eagleby. This youth space is a first in Queensland, because it is the first time that a centre has been designed by young people for young people. I know that already the youth of Eagleby are actively involved in its management. I would like to congratulate Councillor Ray Hackwood of the Gold Coast City Council on his participation in this community renewal project. In fact, I have been so impressed by the work of Councillor Ray Hackwood that I intend to nominate him and the council for the recently announced excellence in local government awards in the category of excellence in state-local government partnership projects.

I certainly look forward to working with the council and Councillor Ray Hackwood in the recently announced \$1.4 million Regional Centres Program, which the honourable the Treasurer announced in the budget. This funding will give the Logan rivers parkland an incredible advantage in attracting families and young people to the area. It is something that is much needed. I congratulate Ray Hackwood on his work in achieving this magnificent result for the Gold Coast.

Budgets are about choices and about putting money where it is most needed. That has always been the Labor way and it always will be. There is no denying that Labor has always been a party for the battlers. But as this budget proves, we are above all else a party for families. I am confident that the families of Albert will be very pleased with this strong, community-building and jobs-focused budget. This budget delivers on core Beattie government promises and reaffirms both my commitment and Peter Beattie's commitment to the people of Albert. It delivers significant funding for schools, police, roads, transport, families, disability services, emergency services, health and so much more. In particular, the Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth, should be congratulated on delivering a budget that is framed strongly around economic growth in such a tight fiscal environment. But members should not take my word for that. In an article in the *Courier-Mail* of 4 June, Paul Syret stated—

Queensland's financial house is indeed in excellent order.

He goes on to remind readers—

Queensland's balance sheet is the strongest in the land, no contest.

There is indeed no contest that the 2003 budget is one that Albert residents and all other Queenslanders can warmly welcome. Therefore, I commend it to the House.

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (12.16 p.m.): It is a great pleasure to rise to speak in support of the bills before the House and indeed to compliment this Labor government and this cabinet on the state budget. The residents of the Greenslopes electorate will share in the benefits

of the Beattie government's sixth state budget. It is a very good budget in that it builds on the great achievements that have been made already over the past five budgets and, indeed, on the great achievements of previous Labor governments dating from 1989. That indeed was a time of great change for the Greenslopes electorate, after 32 years of the conservative parties being in power in that electorate.

This is a strong, balanced budget. The centrepiece is a boost to public health care funding, welfare services and education, which will be seen very clearly on the ground in the way in which this budget will affect the schools in my electorate. This budget provides funds for real assistance to individuals and families and for resources that will enhance the quality of life of our communities.

My electorate will receive \$300,000 to replace the toilet block at Marshall Road State School. I am very pleased that when I was at the Marshall Road State School for assembly this morning I was able to announce that funding. I must say also that I announced the winners of that school's poetry competition to commemorate Queensland Day. Their poems were just fantastic. I compliment all of those children for their great effort this morning at Marshall Road State School. I know that that new toilet block will be very much welcomed at that school. I compliment the parents and school community for assisting me and backing me in lobbying for funding for that addition.

There is also funding to repaint school buildings under the Triple R program. This includes \$59,000 for the Coorparoo Secondary College, \$61,000 for the Coorparoo State School and \$52,000 for the Holland Park State School, and Seville Road State School receives \$32,000. In addition to this, I should also note that funding has been given to two of my border schools. Whites Hill State College will receive \$22,000 under the same scheme and the Camp Hill State School will receive \$27,000 under that scheme for repainting. Those school communities are very appreciative of this funding. Under this budget there is also \$20,000 to upgrade the special education unit at Cavendish Road State High School. I commend that school community for the efforts it is currently making. I am assisting it in its efforts to establish an independent living centre for students from that school which may also be used by other school communities. There is also \$82,000 for local road and drainage works.

Other highlights in relation to the Greenslopes electorate are \$5 million for road noise barrier works—these encompass a number of other electorates—and \$1.12 million to continue the intersection improvements and installation of traffic management devices on the South East Freeway. Again, that work covers a number of electorates and is estimated at \$4.12 million.

The third stage of the Coorparoo State School's master plan to prepare that school for the future amounts to \$2.35 million and includes a three-storey teaching block, an amenities block, staff parking and associated works. There is also \$145,000 for the music block as a result of carryover funding from stage 2 of the project, which is already under way. It is tremendous to see that work going on at Coorparoo State School. It is one of the oldest schools in Brisbane. At the end of this process we will be able to proudly boast that more than half of the school classrooms are brand new and there is a new pool and music block. There is also \$3.412 million for book stocks in public libraries in Brisbane, and my constituents who use the local libraries will be very appreciative of this.

On a wider basis, there is \$5.75 million in additional funding for the Princess Alexandra and Mater hospitals' service district to enhance health services such as oncology, intensive care and home based care. There is \$142 million for tactical crime squads to target known crime hot spots, with a strong emphasise on investigating property crime and drug offences. The tactical crime squad was established in South Brisbane with a strength of 14 officers in April 2003. I know through my Neighbourhood Watch communities just how much those new squads are appreciated. Neighbourhood Watch groups are briefed regularly on the operation of those squads. Today's police work, as I understand it, is very much about finding those hot spots, because they are the epicentre of crime—that is, when a new group moves into an area. Police try to get to those people quickly to ensure that they are not operating in illegal activities. That is very welcome. I wish those officers well in that great work. Some \$390,000 has also been allocated for the 14-officer tactical crime squad at Oxley to target those hot spots and investigate property crime and drug offences.

The greater Brisbane region will receive around \$26.4 million to create an estimated 4,230 jobs through the state government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative during 2003-04. We know that this is the best form of social welfare we can have to drive our employment rate forward and to create jobs for people. It is the best form of welfare for families. I commend the

government for keeping its eye on this issue, which is the main gain for the wider welfare of our society. This builds on the funding already allocated to the Greenslopes electorate under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative. Approximately \$2.3 million was allocated between October 1998 and March 2003. This has resulted in 304 jobs being created in Greenslopes. I am very pleased to see that this budget will deliver a healthy cash surplus, maintaining Queensland's AAA credit rating and increased funding to services and capital works.

I am very pleased to be able to say this, because Queensland is very proud of the history of financial integrity we have maintained. Queensland is a state that did not fall into some of the financial traps that other states fell into, particularly through the 1980s. Queenslanders are very aware—the people in my electorate in particular are aware—of the sound financial foundations in this state. Without needing to elaborate any further, they are also very conscious of the fact that this government has maintained that tradition in Queensland very well and built upon it by doing the right things. That is the reason we can deliver services in electorates like Greenslopes.

This budget indeed builds on great achievements in the Greenslopes electorate over recent years. I want to elaborate on those, particularly in relation to education. I am very proud to be able to claim that the Greenslopes electorate has not seen this level of funding for education in generations. I am very proud and very pleased to make that claim, because that is exactly what has happened through the various programs that have been driven through the electorate, particularly the Secondary Schools Renewal Program that has been in place in recent years.

We have seen \$3 million for the Secondary Schools Renewal Program at the Coorparoo Secondary College, \$802,000 towards a swimming pool at the Coorparoo State School and \$523,000 towards the new music block. Some \$5.3 million has been put in place for site redevelopment of the Cavendish Road High School. That is now basically completed and includes the new biosciences area. Some \$700,000 has been provided for school refurbishment and conversion at the Holland Park High School and \$428,000 for the construction of a new C block at Marshall Road State School after a fire. Whites Hill State College received \$700,000 for upgrade of that school under the Secondary Schools Renewal Program and has also seen the establishment of a P-12 campus.

Outside school hours care has also received a great boost in the Greenslopes electorate. It incorporates such schools as Coorparoo State School, Marshall Road State School, Mount Carmel, Whites Hill State School, St Joachim's and Holland Park State School. I was very pleased when I opened the St Joachim's school fete last Sunday to be given a tour of the after school hours care facility to see how that money has been so well spent. I can certainly assure the government that it has been well spent, and seeing the very proud carers and parents at that school when they saw that facility was very satisfying to me.

Camp Hill State School also received \$200,000 for a special education unit. Holland Park State School received \$150,000 for a resource centre. About \$343,000 has been allocated to Mount Carmel school to construct a library and provide extra learning areas. There is \$33,000 for Wellers Hill State School for a new assembly hall under the capital subsidy scheme. There is \$48,000 for Seville Road State School for a car park and \$386,000 for IT computer grants, and there are many other specific and individual contributions to many of these local schools. I am very proud of them and we just keep building on them.

Education in the Greenslopes electorate has done very well. However, I must say that I will continue to remind ministers that the schools within Greenslopes are old schools. They are some of the oldest schools in Brisbane. While we have built on this foundation, we need to continue to roll out these programs and ensure that these schools continue to be upgraded. The older teaching blocks, pathways and other facilities need to continue to be upgraded. I will continue to be a strong advocate for my school communities to build on this foundation of continuing to improve our facilities.

One other area of this budget announced by the Treasurer that is very important to the Greenslopes electorate is land tax. I am referring to the fact that a bracket creep situation has developed in Queensland where more and more ordinary land-holders and investors have been impacted upon by land tax who have never experienced it before. The government has recognised that rising land values will have a significant impact upon some 11,000 new taxpayers expected in the 2003-04 year under existing tax provisions.

In order to provide a measure of land tax relief, particularly to those with lower land tax holdings, the Treasurer announced that the statutory deduction for residents will be increased from \$200,000 to \$220,000. The minimum tax payable by taxpayers will be increased from \$100

to \$350. This will ensure that the tax liability for those persons liable to pay land tax is less than \$350. The exemption threshold for companies, trustees and absentees will be increased from \$150,000 to \$170,000, with the consequential extension of the phasing in rebate. This is a very important move. It certainly recognises the concerns of many residents alarmed at the increases in levels of valuation in the suburbs in the Greenslopes electorate.

I must also compliment the efforts of the Brisbane City Council under new Lord Mayor Alderman Tim Quinn in recognising community concern in the council budget this week by taking measures to reduce the impact on rates of these valuation increases. This is a very fine budget. This is a budget which delivers to communities in a concrete way services that are important areas for electorates such as mine—health, education and security for our local residents. I commend this bill to the House.

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (12.32 p.m.): Never has so much been spent to achieve so little. This funny money budget—the tale of a typical Labor budget—means that there has been an increase in taxes, an increase in costs, but the delivery of decreased outcomes. As a simple example, in the last year of the coalition government there were 9,000 more surgical operations performed in public hospitals on public patients than under this government in its last reporting year. There were 9,000 more operations performed on public patients.

How do they do it? As far as this Labor government goes, it has increased the taxes that it is taking out of Queenslanders's pockets by 30 per cent and yet it is delivering fewer services in those areas of greatest need. That is 'Mackonomics'. We have seen successive deficits, despite the fact that there has been record taxation revenue. We have seen a government whose priorities are the less important things such as the Premier's self-image and the Community Engagement Division. He will spend \$20 million on his own profile while we will see fewer operations performed in our public hospitals. That is on the public record. They are the facts and figures from the Department of Health. That is my concern.

There has been a lot said by members that this is a record Health budget and that the seven per cent increase in health spending is in keeping with the inflation in health costs. There is another story which has not been outlined in the budget papers—that is, the clawback. Those are figures that have not been included. In other words, the government gives with one hand but with the other hand it will claw back the unpaid, unfunded wage rises that have been awarded and that the hardworking staff in Queensland Health deserve. They have not been fully funded by the government.

We know that under clawback some \$40 million in unfunded wage rises and expenses have been delivered out of savings from Queensland Health. Where is that going to come from? It is going to come from hospitals throughout Queensland. Another true indication of this Labor government is that the real budgets delivered at the district health level will not be finalised for another six months. Perhaps I am being a little cynical and suspicious, but I think we will be well and truly on an election campaign trail or have even seen an election campaign by that time—that is, before the real budgets are delivered at the district health level; the real budgets that will be delivered to the hospitals. This government is not telling us what the extra money is for; it is not revealing the real budgets for district health. We know that about \$40 million alone in unfunded wage increases has to come out of the rural and regional hospitals of this state.

On top of that, we understand that at least another \$30 million has been clawed back through that shared services arrangement. Those opposite talk about a record Health budget. What about a record clawback from Treasury—the second line that is not included in the budget papers! The budget papers mention that the shared service agreement details have not been finalised. They will not report on them until next year, yet they are supposed to be in operation from July of this year. How convenient!

I want to give a very simple idea about some of the interesting and peculiar ways that Queensland Health has been covering up the debt that this government has been accumulating against health services. We already know from the budget papers that the Tablelands will get \$1 million extra in order to upgrade the Atherton Hospital. What they do not clearly say in the budget papers is that they have to pay that back. It is not a one-off capital grant that goes to that health district. It has already been admitted that that has to be paid back.

How many other times has the capital works budget for Queensland Health and other portfolios not really been what we see? What we see is not what we get. People are being asked to pay it back. The internal debt of Queensland Health is one of the greatest inhibitors to quality

outcomes delivered for patients in this state. That is the other figure that we do not see in the budget papers.

We know that the Royal Brisbane Hospital has something like a \$19 million debt. How much is that going to cost patients? What we see is not what we get in these budget papers. Repaying that debt as they are required to do in Queensland Health means that what the government says they are going to give to the Royal Brisbane Hospital is not what they are going to get.

What about regional hospitals? We know that Cairns Base Hospital has a \$7 million budget overrun. Any talk of increased funding for Cairns has to be balanced against the fact that they have a multimillion-dollar debt that they are expected to pay back. Where will the real increase in service be? Where will the real increases in net clinical staff numbers in those areas be? Where will the matching of growth and not just the paying back of debt be?

The real story with Queensland Health is that it is not even treading water; it is doing backstroke. In real terms, when we take growth into account and take away the debt repayments within these major district budgets and take into account the clawback for the unfunded wage rises, we realise that there is nowhere near a seven per cent increase in real terms in the Queensland Health budget. The \$170 million extra in state funds—we are not talking about the Commonwealth funds that make up \$300 million—for Queensland Health will well and truly be eroded by the clawback provisions to Treasury—Treasury asking for its pound of flesh to pay for the wage increases that have not been funded. It will also be well and truly eroded by the existing debt that has accumulated that those districts are being expected to pay back.

Then there is the mystery amount as to the shared services arrangement. That is not being reported in these budget papers, but we do know that is a substantial figure, reported to be about \$30 million. What does this actually mean? As I said before, it means fewer surgical operations in the last year when the coalition was in government. With respect to emergency departments, despite some very nice announcements about additional funding, which is very similar to the so-called additional funding last year to be spread around Queensland for emergency departments, we still have a record blow-out in emergency wait times. This is one of the most critical areas of care—people knowing that when they are in an acutely urgent situation they can receive timely care, people knowing that when they are in a painful situation they can receive relief for their pain.

With respect to wait times for emergency treatment, despite the fact that the government said it was addressing this area, wait times for category 2 patients—emergency patients, not GP-type patients—blew out last year. Nearly 30 per cent of emergency patients in category 2 were not seen within the required time frame of 10 minutes. Nearly half of the urgent patients, or category 3—55 per cent—were not seen within the required time of 30 minutes. Nearly a third of semiurgent patients were not seen within the required time frame of one hour. The reasons for the blow-out in emergency time frames are a lot more complex than just blaming it on the bulkbilling issue. In those high urgency areas that require treatment within 10 to 30 minutes there has been a substantial blow-out in long waits. That is extremely serious, because that is putting unfair pressure on staff and it is most unfair on people trying to get access to timely care. There are issues to do with the funding of the hospitals so that the access block issues which see people waiting absurdly long periods are dealt with.

I turn now to dental health. Of all the areas of children's health, this is where there has been the most significant failure of this government. In 2002-03 Queensland Health treated 21,000 fewer children than in the year before. I will repeat that for the benefit of honourable members opposite, who have been very silent on this issue. They treated 21,000 fewer children for completed oral health care than in the year before.

Interestingly, school dental health was not part of the Commonwealth pilot program that they keep bleating about that was finished a few years ago. School oral health care programs have been on a stand-alone basis, yet what we see here is that 21,000 fewer children have been treated than in the year before. In 2001-02, 341,000 children were treated by the school dentist. This year it was just 320,000, which is well below Queensland Health's target of between 330,000 and 350,000.

Next year Queensland Health aims to do between 310,000 and 320,000, so the Beattie government is actually happy to do even less again. Of course, adults fared much worse, with only 115,000 receiving general dental treatment compared to 130,000 the year before. In 2002-03 only 235,000 emergency patients were treated. That is 15,000 fewer than the year before. Dental health must be quarantined. We have given a commitment that we will quarantine oral health dollars. Oral health dollars must be quarantined. The Health Minister has refused to reveal

the actual spending in dental health throughout the various districts because it is not quarantined; it gets siphoned off into other activities.

The other area of major concern has been cancer treatment. I welcome the announcement of some of the funding in cancer treatment but reiterate my concern that there still has not been enough done to address issues of retention. That is coming from those who work in that area. I have talked to radiation therapists and other staff who are critical to delivering these services. There is now a 15-week wait for radiation therapy in Townsville. There has been up to an eight-week wait in south-east Queensland. The government heeded my advice and said, 'You've got to get people in urgently, even if you have to purchase treatment off private providers.' That is obviously only a short-term solution to a long-term problem that has been looming for some time. We are yet to see a real radiation package that addresses this not only in the short term but also in the medium to long term. To date the packages that have been put forward fail to do that. That is coming from those who work in that area. We want to retain those we have and train more but address the issues to do with making sure that we do not lose any more. It should never have reached this point.

I want to address issues to do with Nambour Hospital on the Sunshine Coast. I have raised previously the problems with backlogs in eye appointments and surgery. The government was able several months ago to come up with half a million dollars for the Gold Coast because it recognised that it had a problem. That is welcome and great, but on the Sunshine Coast when they print the outpatient appointment lists for VMOs and specialists at Nambour Hospital they do not even mention eye appointments. Clearly, there has been a shutdown in real access to adequate eye services on the Sunshine Coast. This has been going on for a few years. It worsened under the industrial dispute last year. It has been a significant issue that this Health Minister refuses to address. We have people going blind waiting up to five or six years now to receive cataract eye surgery on the Sunshine Coast. We can get better treatment on Thursday Island. Patients in our rural and regional areas—and this is great—can get flown down for services that are not available in areas where there should be easy access. There is no reason why we cannot attract people to those areas, unless there is a lack of will on the part of the government. That is the problem.

I notice there has been a lot of silence from the Health Minister about the issue of equitable access to health care throughout this state. Equitable access and looking at the difference in health outcomes for people throughout the state is a major issue that we in the coalition are concerned about and believe needs to be addressed. We have significant differences in rural areas and regional Queensland, even the Sunshine Coast, which is only an hour away from Brisbane, in people being able to access basic levels of care.

I wish to address some other infrastructure needs that are of concern in my electorate. Obviously, some of the health issues we will be able to pursue further during the estimates process. On the Sunshine Coast road infrastructure is one of the major issues. But under this government there has been a fall-off in the pace as to the amount of infrastructure funding that has been available in the budgets year after year. Now we see a situation where there is \$200 million less being spent on roads than during the time of the coalition government. That is of major concern in growth areas. A number of major arterial roads—two-lane roads—are well and truly over their capacity. The Sunshine Motorway is a classic example.

I welcome the fact that we have about \$4 million, while not included in the budget papers, committed to the duplication of the first section of the Sunshine Motorway. That is needed. This is where the highest death rate is. It is carrying about 10,000 vehicles a day more than it is capable of carrying. However, the rest of the motorway needs that urgent upgrade brought forward, as well as interchanges north and south of the river.

In terms of Maroochy road and the missing link, during my time here we have seen about \$30 million spent on the upgrade of Maroochy road. The missing link is a section which goes under floodwaters and is now subject to heavy traffic congestion and desperately needs to be upgraded. This is where the capital works funding needs to be spent. Putting cars into the capital works budget of the government does not really make us terribly happy when we know there needs to be real capital works infrastructure spending. Growth areas like the Sunshine Coast are being duded by a lack of real attention to what is a job creating infrastructure.

I turn now to policing. The police need proper operational budgets. We want the men and women in blue out on our streets, but they need to be funded to operate at all times of the day or night with rosters that reflect the real needs in the community.

Once again we know that there has not been a full funding of some of the increases in wages. Those costs are going to have to be absorbed by an already very, very strapped service. That impacts on areas such as ours where we have a growing population as well as a huge transient population with the tourist industry.

Water quality and the environment is something that we are also waiting to see significant assistance on in this area. In addition to water police, the main people who look after the waterways are in fact boating and fisheries officers who are tasked with implementing the transport regulations. There is going to be almost a doubling of the number of vessels in our waterways in the south-east of Queensland in the next 15 years. Unless we have real people out there on the waterways implementing those regulations—not people sitting in offices—those rules as well as the water quality will be truly under threat.

I have raised with the Transport Minister the problem with Mooloolaba Harbour. There is an \$80 million seafood industry operating out of Mooloolaba Harbour and there is currently a sandbar which is impeding access across the harbour mouth. The government's response to date has been, 'Well, there's an emergency buoy there and people see it. They can find their way around it. It is a natural event. It will go away.' It has not gone away. It has meant that almost daily people are coming aground there with their boats. It is a dangerous situation where we are seeing recreational users and a multimillion-dollar industry saying that they have a problem and may go elsewhere. This should be a 24 hour, seven day a week, 12 month of the year access point without the danger of people being unable to see the emergency buoy because of the white water that is rolling across the mouth of that harbour. It is extremely dangerous. I have asked the Transport Minister to receive a deputation on that issue and I will be pursuing that further because we are concerned. It is a safety issue, but it is also an issue for all those industries that make up a significant job creating body on the Sunshine Coast.

We are still awaiting funding for CAMCOS and future rail upgrades to take it to a point where rail transport can go faster than 50 kilometres per hour. We would love the tilt trains to go at full speed but they do not because we have an 1880s railway alignment.

I know that my time is running out. There are a lot of other issues I would like to touch on. I will say that I welcome the \$1.5 million for the Maroochydore CBD upgrade and, while I do not think it is mentioned in the budget papers, the \$900,000 grant towards our Fishermans Road sporting complex will be very well utilised and is being matched by the council. That is a positive which we welcome and has been in addition to a number of other sporting facilities.

Time expired.

Mr WILSON (Ferry Grove—ALP) (12.52 p.m.): I congratulate the Premier and the Treasurer on this fantastic sixth Beattie Labor government state budget. It gives me great pleasure today to tell members about how local residents living in the Ferry Grove electorate will share in the benefits of this budget.

This is a strong, balanced budget and the centrepiece is a boost to public health care funding and to welfare 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. This is a great traditional Labor budget.

Labor Premier T. J. Ryan, who led Queensland about 80 years ago, was one of the greatest Premiers of this state. Labor Prime Minister Ben Chifley, whose federal Labor Government rebuilt Australia after World War II, was one of the greatest Prime Ministers of Australia. Each was a leader without peer in their time, and I believe even now. Their place in history was secured by the years of widespread public support for the programs they initiated. The values and principles of equality of opportunity, fairness and equity, compassion and tolerance which marked their leadership are also found in this budget.

Locally the Beattie Labor government has allocated \$3.3 million to commence the duplication of the Samford subarterial road from two to four lanes between Ferry Way, Ferry Hills and Cobalt Street, Keperra, at a total project cost of approximately \$11.8 million; \$3.49 million for the establishment of a community health centre in the north-west Brisbane area; and \$1.26 million for four new classrooms and a toilet block at Patricks Road State School, Ferry Hills. There is also \$230,000 for local road and drainage works and \$600,000 to upgrade 15 public housing dwellings.

Other Beattie Labor government initiatives in the Ferry Grove electorate and surrounding suburbs include—

- \$1.95 million to complete construction of a climbing lane on Samford Road between Wahminda Park and Upper Camp Mountain Road;
- \$50,000 for mine shaft repairs and capping as well as environmental works in Pine Rivers Shire;
- \$34,320 to install change rooms at the Samford and District Rugby League Football Club;
- additional car parking spaces at the Ferny Grove Railway Station, something that I have been campaigning about for some time;
- \$23,000 to install lighting and benches and construct a kicking wall at the Westside Sports Club;
- approximately \$8,000 to repaint school buildings at Ferny Grove State School; and
- \$3,000 to begin renovations totalling \$122,000 at Bellbird Grove in the Brisbane Forest Park.

Bearing in mind the time, I seek to leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Greater Brisbane region 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 Ferny Grove electorate under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle, where approximately \$2.3 million has been allocated between October 1998 and March 2003. This has resulted in 399 jobs being created for Ferny Grove.

The Beattie Government has increased police numbers in the Metropolitan North Police Region by an extra 154 officers since coming to office (1998). This is part of our election commitment to increase police numbers by about 300 extra officers each year until 2005. All Queensland communities, including the electorate of Ferny Grove, will continue to benefit from this program.

Other initiatives in the Greater Brisbane Region also include:

- an estimated \$16.83 million allocation to help create 1,928 entry-level jobs in crucial, skills-shortage industries and the public sector through a range of apprenticeship and traineeship programs
- an estimated \$9.6 million to provide jobs for 2,298 long-term unemployed people, and people at risk of long-term unemployment through a range of community employment programs
- \$1.177 million for continued development of information and communication technology infrastructure to enable training delivery that meets current industry standards
- Integration of Brisbane and North Point Institute of TAFE means more efficient and effective VET delivery for the Brisbane North Region. The savings achieved will realise an additional 1400 student places over a 3 year period. (\$0.6 million)
- Training and resource development for emerging training priorities that respond to identified community and industry needs (\$0.3 million)
- Additional funding (\$4.16 million) to manage demand for cancer treatment services in Royal Brisbane and Royal Childrens Hospital Health Service Districts
- Additional funding (\$1.8 million) to manage demand on cardiac services in the Prince Charles Hospital Health Services District
- Additional funding (\$1.7 million) to manage demand on intensive care units in Royal Brisbane, Royal Children's, and Prince Charles Hospital Health Service Districts
- Additional funding (\$0.55 million) to manage demand on emergency departments in Royal Brisbane and Royal Children's Hospital Health Service Districts
- Additional funding (\$0.222 million) to provide new community mental health positions commencing in 2003-04 to manage increase in demands on mental health services in the Royal Brisbane and Prince Charles Hospital Health Services Districts
- Additional funding (\$0.1 million) to realign and expand renal dialysis services for hospital, in-patient and home based care in Royal Children's Hospital Health Service District
- Responsive and planned maintenance (\$45.443 million) to public rental dwellings (includes repainting)
- Refurbishment of dwelling interiors ie kitchens, bathrooms, etc and provision of security screens (\$23.026 million)
- \$0.331 funding provided to the Regional Tourist Organisation for destination-based marketing.

Having addressed the budget benefits locally and in Brisbane, I want to briefly outline some of the key State-wide features:

- an increase in 2003-04 of \$300 million (7%) bringing the increase in spending on health over four years to over \$2.6 billion (1.6 billion contributed by the State)
- 636 additional classroom teachers. This will bring the total number of new teachers appointed since 1998 to around 3,000.

- an extra \$338 million over four years on the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative to help the unemployed get jobs
- Disability Services funding will grow to \$385 in 2003-04, an increase of 16.3% over last year's Budget
- 528 million for housing assistance programs, representing an increase of 11% over last year
- 300 extra police as part of the plan to have 9,100 officers by 2005 (up from around 7000 in 1998). The Police budget increased 6% to over \$1 billion for the first time ever.
- an extra 110 ambulance officers
- \$5.3 million on capital works such as roads, dams and bridges. This is an increase of \$400 million or 8%—62% to be spent in regional and rural Queensland.

The Budget provides for a net operating surplus of \$153 million. Queensland retains the top triple A credit rating by the international credit rating agencies and is in a sound financial position.

The Queensland economy is estimated to grow 4% this year, 1 percentage point faster than growth forecast for the rest of Australia.

Employment growth this year was an estimated 3.25%, 1 percentage point faster than growth in the rest of Australia.

This means we have created an additional 55,000 jobs in 2002-03, 12,000 more than forecast, and a total of 200,000 since June 1998.

Unemployment has continued to fall during the year, even with our strong population growth. At 7% it is at its lowest level since 1990. The hard work to bring it even lower will continue. Employment is forecast to increase by 2.25%. Business investment is forecast to increase by around 9.5%

While there are significant local benefits in the Budget, it is important that work continue on a wide front to improve services and facilities for my local community. This I will do. For example, I will continue my strong lobbying for additional car parking (both interim and long term) at the Ferny Grove railway station; improved access to public transport for people in Samford Valley and the Hills District; additional capacity and assistance at various schools, particularly in the high growth areas. I am also dedicated to extending the very worthwhile Neighbourhood Watch Programs to more areas of the electorate.

This Budget is a great Labor Budget. It focuses on services to the broad population, and much needed assistance to many of those in need. At the same time, the State's finances are being carefully managed to protect the long-term wellbeing of the whole State.

I think Premier T. J. Ryan and Prime Minister Ben Chifley would be proud of this Labor Budget.

I commend the bill to the House.

Mrs CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (12.54 p.m.): The opposition has done nothing over the past two days but whinge and whine about this budget. I guess that is to be expected, but what is also expected is that the opposition will take this opportunity to present their alternative vision for Queensland, but it has failed to do this. The Smart State vision has set a cracking pace for Queensland and this budget reflects the government's commitment to providing opportunities for all Queenslanders, services to all regions and improved lifestyles for all communities. And nowhere has fared better from this vision and this budget than the Gold Coast. It is this budget outcome that my fellow Labor Gold Coast colleagues and I have worked towards.

Years of coalition neglect in the areas of housing, disability services and policing, education and training and health on the Gold Coast has meant that huge holes in underfunding needed to be repaired. The legacy left by previous coalition members and successive governments was appalling. These areas are high priorities for the Beattie government and this budget delivers record spending in all of the above portfolios and more.

In view of time constraints, I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Health

My electorate of Broadwater has a high proportion of older residents; in fact just under 50% of my electorate is over the age of 55.

These are people who have been under pressure from the Federal Government's assault on public health. It's disturbing to note that in the two Federal electorates that cross my electorate, Moncrieff and Fadden, since December 2000 there has been a dramatic fall in bulk-billing while at the same time patient contributions have risen.

In the Moncrieff and Fadden electorates the rate of bulk-billing has fallen by 12.5% and 14.2% respectively, while at the same time the average patient contribution has risen by 15% and 12.3%.

In light of this neglect of our health system at the federal level, it is heartening to see that the Beattie State Government is giving health the priority it deserves.

In this year's budget there is a record \$4.6 billion for health—a 6.9% or \$300 million increase on last year.

The Gold Coast Health District in particular is set to benefit from a range of initiatives.

Gold Coast Hospital receives a boost

To begin with, \$1.256 million has been allocated to complete the refurbishment of Gold Coast Hospital's mental health unit, and four new clinical staff will be employed as part of the \$8.4 million State Budget boost for mental health.

Health services to be improved

The Budget will also provide an additional \$2.47 million to help the Gold Coast Health Service District manage the increasing demand for specialist services in the coast's rapidly expanding community.

Specific allocations have been made to specialties which have been under particular pressure including:

- \$1 million for cancer care services
- \$800,000 for renal services
- \$500,000 for intensive care and
- \$172,000 for emergency services.

Medical equipment spending

In addition, the district will receive replacement medical equipment valued at approximately \$1.31 million which includes—

- an operating theatre microscope valued at \$200,000;
- a retinal camera for outpatients valued at \$80,000;
- haemodialysis and peritoneal dialysis units worth \$82,000; and
- X-ray equipment valued at over \$260,000 for the Gold Coast Hospital.

The Robina Hospital will also receive a range of perioperative equipment valued at over \$16,000.

This is part of the Health Technology Capital Program which state-wide will spend \$52.9 million in 2003-04.

Safer and more supportive communities

Policing issues are very important to my constituents, and I am sure they will welcome the news that the policing budget in Queensland has now broken the \$1 billion mark.

The sixth successive record police budget boosts funding by \$84 million or 9.2 per cent in 2003/04 taking the operational budget to \$1.001 billion.

Capital expenditure is also boosted by \$5.3 million or 5.6 per cent to \$99.4 million.

On the Gold Coast this Government has repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to increasing police numbers.

This budget includes funding to provide an additional 46 police officers in the Gold Coast District, making a total of 80 new police over three years.

There is also \$234,000 for the Logan/Gold Coast Tactical Crime Squad to target known crime hotspots with an emphasis on property crime and drug offences—the squad was expanded in April to two separate squads of 14 officers.

The Southport Police Station services the sections of my electorate south of Brisbane Road, and this budget includes \$100,000 of the station's \$2 million refurbishment.

Housing and Home Assist boost

The Home Assist/Secure Scheme is a tremendous help to a number of my constituents, helping elderly people to remain safe and comfortable in their own homes longer.

So the announcement of \$345,000 to fund the scheme locally will be a great relief to them.

There is also good news elsewhere in the Housing announcements.

Last year the Golden Gate Caravan Park at Biggera Waters announced to residents that the site was being redeveloped and they would all have to relocate.

Together with the Department of Housing and the Department of Families I did whatever I could to help residents through this traumatic time.

During the course of events I saw just how vital it is to have a well-coordinated, rapid response to these sorts of events.

So it is great to see that funding to coordinate emergency responses to people displaced by caravan park and boarding house closures has been allocated in the State Budget.

\$9.8 million will also be expended under the Department of Housing's Crisis Accommodation Program to further improve and extend services for homeless people.

On the Gold Coast there is a severe shortage of affordable housing which is putting the squeeze on young families and our elderly residents.

This Budget proves 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 housing assistance budget has risen a further 11.3 per cent this year, reaching an all time high of \$528 million—an injection of \$53 million additional funds on last year's budget.

This means the annual housing budget has been lifted from \$330 million under the former state Coalition government to \$528 million this year—almost \$200 million extra.

Other homelessness initiatives include \$10.5 million to assist 2,900 households with transitional accommodation through the head lease of more than 1,600 properties under the Community Rent Scheme.

Skills and innovation for a smart state

The 2003-04 state budget delivers for the priority areas of Employment, Training and Education.

The Gold Coast will receive \$6 million to create an estimated 1,160 jobs through the government's Breaking the unemployment Cycle initiative during 2003/04.

This builds on the funding already allocated to the Broadwater electorate under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle, where approximately \$1.4 million has been allocated between October 1998 and March 2003. This has resulted in 399 jobs being created for Broadwater.

While big picture projects are always the focus of attention, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the quiet achievers at the Labrador Primary School.

Mr Doug King and his staff work very hard to provide a great learning environment for all students. I visit the school as often as I can and I am delighted that this budget has delivered \$29,000 for the repainting of school buildings.

I know that staff, students and their parents and the wider school community take great pride in the presentation of the school and this announcement will be warmly welcomed.

And I am pleased to see Helensvale High School has been allocated \$260,000 for additional toilets.

Roads funding kicks of priority projects

The Broadwater electorate has over the years experienced huge growth with many new developments taking place at the northern end. It is always a challenge for governments to keep up with such private enterprise and rapid growth.

I have lobbied for funding for two road projects for which construction will begin this year.

Oxley Drive duplication

\$3.7 million has been allocated to the duplication project of Oxley Drive from two lanes to four, between Columbus Ave and Lae Drive. The total cost of the works will be \$10 million.

Extensive public consultation has taken place to keep residents and stakeholders well informed about the project proposals.

I know that residents who live down Hansford Road, Brady Drive, along Oxley Drive and surrounds are looking forward to the duplication providing relief to the daily traffic congestion on this road.

Frank Street improvements

With all the grandstanding and politicking that has been exercised by the area's local councillors with regard to Frank Street, they have failed to acknowledge that this is the first time that any government has got on with the job of addressing residents' concerns about this road.

The Broad/Frank Street intersection will be upgraded to a four-way signalised intersection and the \$800,000 allocated to that project in this budget will ensure that happens as soon as practicable.

The ground work has been done to the planning of the design with extensive public consultation occurring through mail-outs and public displays.

I would like to thank the Main Roads officers for their assistance with both these projects and I look forward to working with them again, now the funding has been allocated.

I will continue to work with the Department, the Minister and the Member for Southport on finding solutions to the congestion and safety concerns raised by residents regarding Frank Street.

From speaking regularly with residents I am aware of a number of road issues in my electorate that have residents very concerned. What I find interesting is that some of the roads that residents have identified are in fact roads that council has the control of.

It is fast becoming apparent that councillors are not concentrating on addressing the issues that clearly lie within their responsibility. Instead their time is continually being spent grandstanding on state matters and the grassroots council matters are being ignored.

This budget also provides huge amounts for local roads and drainage grants and I encourage the councillors to actively identify areas for attention and put their cases forward.

Gold Coast a big winner

Mr Speaker, like last year, the Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth, has delivered once again for the good people of the Gold Coast.

Other budget highlights include:

- \$64.39 million to complete the \$102.25 million Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre
- \$10.8 million for planning to start construction on the joint Commonwealth Government funded Tugun bypass on the Pacific Highway
- \$10.8 million to help stage the Lexmark Indy 300
- \$221,000 for the Gold Coast Tourism Bureau to undertake destination-based marketing so the region's appeal is enhanced, with an additional \$528,931 being provided to the bureau for business events promotion to coincide with the opening of the Gold Coast Convention Centre.
- \$1.632 million for bookstocks in public libraries

And the list does go on.

I will be happy to assist residents should they have any specific questions in relation to this budget.

Before closing I wish to congratulate the Treasurer for what is a real core Labor budget that delivers for all Queenslanders, making our state a great state, a smart state to live in.

I commend the bill to the House.

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (12.57 p.m.): I rise today with a view to reporting to my electorate of Toowoomba North with respect to the contents of the 2003 Queensland state budget. To me this budget can be properly described as being both a Labor budget and also a responsible budget, for the reasons I shall outline.

General impact

This budget is a caring document in that it seeks to address the concerns of the most needy in our society and hence is a Labor budget. In this regard I make special reference to the fact that there has been a significant increase in the Health budget by an amount of \$300 million per year, a \$200 million increase in the Disability Services budget and an increase in the Housing portfolio for public housing expenditure of 11 per cent.

On the other hand, the budget is a responsible one and one that is conscious of the need for the provision of public infrastructure in areas outside Brisbane. In fact, 62.5 per cent of the proposed capital works expenditure in the forthcoming financial year of \$5.27 billion will be spent outside the Brisbane area. I note in today's *Chronicle* Mr Noel Millers of Commerce Queensland, Toowoomba, stated—

This is encouraging for our regional members.

This amount of \$5.27 billion represents an expenditure eight per cent higher than what was spent last year and is reflective of an amount of \$600 per head of the Queensland population, far exceeding the amount spent per head of population in any other state. Western Australia is the closest to Queensland, where an amount of less than \$500 per head of population is spent.

Notwithstanding that very significant infrastructure spending, the Treasurer has managed to bring in this budget showing a modest actual deficit of \$350 million whilst at the same time committing the state government to expenditure on the Smart State strategy, not introducing any new taxes, and in fact increasing the exemptions for the threshold with respect to land tax. It is no wonder that the budget has been well received by business in general and in particular the Property Council and has a AAA rating.

Local highlights

I would like to make particular mention of the allocation of an amount of \$6.07 million for the financing of stage 2 of the new police complex in Toowoomba. Stage 1, at the cost of about \$12 million, has already been completed, representing a new police station and watch-house. Stage 2 is currently under construction. This will be followed by stage 3, being the restoration of the old police station.

I commend the government for the advance of an amount of \$1.25 million pursuant to the Regional Centres Program to the Toowoomba City Council for the beautification and rehabilitation of the West Creek corridor.

I also acknowledge the amount of \$7.2 million which will be expended by the Department of Housing in the Toowoomba region. Maintenance of public housing is essential to many people in the Toowoomba North electorate and I commend the government for this very significant commitment, particularly at a time when the federal government has been miserable in the cutting of its contribution to this sector.

With respect to education, might I highlight the amount of about \$800,000 being additional funding to Highfields State School, representing the recognition by the government of the expanding needs of the Highfields district and the provision for an additional \$1.4 million for renal services at the Toowoomba Base Hospital.

I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

I would like to deal with the Budget in some particularity for the benefit of constituents in my electorate on a portfolio by portfolio basis commencing with:

Arts

I am very pleased to see an amount of \$572,000 to be spent on the Cobb & Co Museum in Toowoomba in addition to funds given in previous years. This is an outstanding tourist attraction and a major Toowoomba educative institution, ably led by Deborah Trantor.

The honourable Matt Foley, in this portfolio, has also ensured the ongoing contribution for book stock for the Toowoomba Public Library in the sum of \$382,000. We have seen significant expenditure from the Arts Department in and around Toowoomba over the last two years, again in the expansion of the Cobb & Co Museum, but also with respect to the funds necessary for the saving of the Jondaryan Woolshed.

Department of Employment and Training

Significant funds will again be spent in and around the electorate of Toowoomba North, pursuant to the Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative. This will comprise some \$5.6 million to create an estimated 800 jobs in the Darling Downs and West Moreton regions. Likewise an amount of \$4.5 million will be allocated to create 458 entry-level jobs in crucial, skills-shortage industries and the public sector, through a range of apprenticeship and traineeship programs.

I am particularly pleased to see the ongoing commitment of the Government to improving the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE situated at Bridge Street, Toowoomba.

An amount of \$2,980,000 is to be spent in consolidation of the Bridge Street site, including the construction of facilities for arts, social/community services and automotive training, and with respect to the development of information and communication technology infrastructure, enabling the delivery of training that meets current industry standards, the sum of \$807,000 will be spent. Finally, with respect to this department, an amount of \$1,071,000 is to be spent in the region to provide jobs for 347 long-term unemployed people and people at risk of long-term unemployment through a range of community employment programs.

The Government is to be congratulated for achieving an unemployment rate of 7% which is the lowest in 13 years in Queensland.

Might I also mention that Toowoomba will share in the state-wide budget with respect to the strategy to meet the direct and indirect training and skills development requirement that will enable the successful undertaking of the significant light metal projects in Central Queensland, and it is estimated that our region's share of expenditure in this regard will be \$270,000.

Department of Innovation and Information Technology

It was fantastic that last year the Government agreed to the commitment to fund the Centre of Excellence for Fibre Composites at the University of Southern Queensland. Recently I had the privilege to attend the turning of the first sod with respect to this visionary project and only this week attended the ceremony of the USQ handing over a cheque for \$4.5 million which was allocated in the year 2002-2003. I am pleased to see that a further \$3 million will be paid in the coming financial year.

Major facilities

I am very pleased to see that the Government is contributing a further \$300,000 to upgrade the existing sport and recreation complex incorporating an indoor sports hall, a kiosk and additional amenities at Highfields for the Crows Nest Shire Council on top of an amount of \$500,000 contributed last year. As well as this I note that an amount of \$8000 will be paid to the Toowoomba Bowls Club for a shade structure and \$64,000 will be paid to install lighting in support of the hockey complex in Toowoomba. I was very pleased recently to open the Club House for Toowoomba Cricket and City Rugby at Heritage Oval where an amount of \$50,000 was contributed by the Government; the refurbished athletic oval "Stadium Toowoomba" which works were carried out by a grant of \$2.5 million from the Government; also to have confirmed earlier this year an amount of \$1 million for basketball courts to be erected at St Mary's College.

Department of Local Government

I know that the Toowoomba City Council is very appreciative, not only of the \$1.25 million received with respect to the Regional Centres program, but also for the amount of \$165,000 to assist in construction of roads and drainage and \$69,000 to provide capital works for infrastructure with respect to the Toowoomba Airport, as is the Crows Nest Shire Council for assistance towards the cost of capital works for roads and drainage in the shire. I know that the Toowoomba City Council is keen to see agreement reached between all parties, including the Federal Government, with respect to the Watella Water Project. And I know that the State Government is most supportive of this.

Department of Primary Industries

I am very pleased that this Department has a major operation in the electorate of Toowoomba North along with the Department of Natural Resources. It was therefore pleasing to note that an amount of \$400,000 is to be used to develop diagnostic tests for identification of furusium and techniques for management of the disease that are environmentally sound with respect to supporting the cotton industry.

This industry is vital to the economic prosperity of the Darling Downs. Also the DPI will spend \$580,000 in 2002-03 for the Eastern Farming Systems Project to manage production and environmental sustainability solutions.

Department of Public Works

This Department carries out significant, often unsung work in and around Toowoomba in terms of the maintenance of the State Government's infrastructure like schools, hospitals, etc. This financial year an amount of \$1.2 million has been put aside to finance fit-out of office accommodation of state government buildings in my electorate. This is on top of expenditure to be spent in other electorates in and around Toowoomba.

Education

The electorate of Toowoomba North has benefited greatly by expenditure by this Department in the last couple of years. Last year the most significant expenditure was with respect to the contribution to the set-up of the new Mary McKillop Catholic School at Highfields.

This year, Highfields again has featured prominently with respect to the grant of over \$800,000 to extend the resource centre, additional toilets and classrooms at the Highfields State School.

This is a recognition by the State Government of the importance of this fast expanding area in the Toowoomba North electorate and I am very grateful to the Minister for Education for this consideration. Other schools to receive assistance so far as repainting and repair work is concerned totalling \$200,000 are:-

Rockville State School, Toowoomba East State School, Toowoomba State High School and the Toowoomba West Special School.

Health

I am looking forward to the opening of the Toowoomba Hospice whose running expenses will be substantially assisted from normal budgetary expenses of the normal running costs associated with the facilities at the Toowoomba Health Service District. An amount of \$100,000 has been granted for set-up costs and ongoing funding will be in the order of \$300,000 per year.

Additional funding this year has been allocated in the sum of

- \$2,099,000 to the Toowoomba Hospital for the provision of a cost-efficient energy system;
- \$1.4 million for additional funding to realign and expand renal dialysis service for the hospital;
- \$440,000 for additional funding to manage demand for cancer treatment services in the district, \$190,000 being additional funding to manage demand on the emergency department in the Toowoomba Health Service District which is particularly needed, bearing in mind the greater usage of emergency service departments having regard to the shortage of general practitioners; and
- \$100,000 being additional funding to manage demands on the intensive care units at the Toowoomba Health Service.

I am also pleased to see that there will be an expenditure of over \$400,000 to provide mental health services in the region.

Public housing

Public housing features very significantly in expenditure in Toowoomba and in our region. For example, new public housing construction will occur with an expenditure of \$1.647 million in the Toowoomba North electorate alone, representing the construction of 10 units of accommodation. Likewise in the Toowoomba North electorate alone, an amount of \$1 million will be spent on renewal of approximately 38 existing public rental houses. And in the electorate an amount of \$108,000 will be made available for private housing assistance.

Main Roads

I was very pleased to see completed the extensive works at the intersection of the New England Highway and Cawdor Road, Highfields. Likewise the much-needed improvements at the intersection of Ruthven and Bridge Streets are nearing completion, funded by the State Government. I note that in this year's budget an amount of about \$1 million has again been allocated for the Highfields area for completion of improvements to the Mt Kynock-Highfields section of the roadway.

Natural Resources and Mines

I note that in the Budget there is provision for a significant sum of \$1.828 million pursuant to expenditure on the National Action Plan on Salinity and Water Quality for the Toowoomba North Electorate associated with Gowrie Creek. This is very welcome expenditure and recognises the Government's commitment to the environment.

The department is also spending an amount of \$250,000 in the Toowoomba North electorate with respect to extra fit-out of the Tor Street office.

Queensland Police Service

I have mentioned the work being done at the Toowoomba Police Headquarters and this financial year an amount of \$5.51 million will be spent on Stage 2 of the Toowoomba Police Station complex, and a further \$421,000 completing the final stages of Stage 1 and, very importantly, in terms of effective policing, an amount of \$142,000 with respect to the establishment of the Tactical Crime Squad which has an emphasis on solving property crime and drug-related crimes.

A further sum of \$100,000 is being spent this coming financial year commencing Stage 3 of the Police Station renewal program.

I would like to mention at this point an important provision in the Budget for that of community conferencing under the Minister for Families portfolio. This aims to bring together those most affected by offences committed by young people and has proved very successful in trials throughout Queensland. I know that the people of Toowoomba North will come to know this form of crime solution to be very effective.

Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading

I was very pleased to see an amount of \$286,000 allocated to the Toowoomba Turf club to offset costs of maintaining training facilities. Racing is a vital industry to Toowoomba's economy and the expenditure of this sum demonstrates the Government's recognition of its importance.

Likewise the government has allocated an amount of \$221,000 to the Toowoomba and Golden West Regional Tourist Association for funding to enable that organisation to carry out its marketing. Tourism, particularly as it relates to the growing wine industry, is also of vital importance to us.

Department of State Development

The Department runs a very effective office in Toowoomba servicing existing and new industries which will focus on assisting employment growth. I note that under this Department's budget, a further sum of \$1.7 million will be spent with respect to the proposed Charlton Wellcamp development. This is in addition to a similar amount spent last year with respect to the planning and acquisition of properties for that future industrial and transport site for Toowoomba.

Department of Energy

I note that a very substantial sum of \$8.58 million is being allocated by Energex to upgrade the electricity supply, including \$6.3 million to rebuild the sub-station and reinforce distribution equipment at Postman's Ridge. This sub-station is the chief supplier of electricity to Highfields. This, together with the substantial works to be carried out by

Ergon at Highfields, including a 33kv line and an 11kv line, should go a long way to solving the persistent outages which have occurred.

Department of Disability Services

I am most pleased that Disability Services Queensland has received an increase in funding of an additional \$200 million per year. This is an area where government spending has been lacking over decades and it is high time that persons with disabilities and their carers and families should be assisted more substantially.

An important area of government expenditure is via the Gambling Community Benefit Fund and in the June Round 2003, I would list the following grant details affecting Toowoomba North and Toowoomba generally as follows:

- Darling Downs Model Railway Club Inc—for equipment/ furnishings—\$7,500;
- Friends of the Escarpment Parks (Toowoomba) Inc.—equipment/furnishings—\$3,375
- Mater Dei School Parents & Friends Association—outdoor equipment/landscaping—\$30,000;
- St Vincent's Community Services—Community Nursing Service Toowoomba—equipment/furnishings—\$26,779;
- Help a Friend Club Inc—upgrades to facilities—\$30,000;
- Milne Bay Military Museum Inc—Install air conditioning in museum—\$25,000;
- Queensland Netball Association, Darling Downs Branch—purchase laptop and office equipment—\$5000;
- Salvation Army (Qld) Property Trust—Horton Village—computers, bathroom upgrade, sporting equipment—\$17,362;
- Swim Factory Flyers Swimming Club—purchase learn to swim equipment 0 \$3,500;
- Toowoomba and Region Environment Council Inc—purchase photocopier and digital camera—\$8,000;
- Toowoomba Table Tennis Inc—re-level building, restore roof, insulation—\$29,308.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, it has been an absolute privilege to have represented the people of Toowoomba North over the last two and a half years. I have been most gratified that the government has listened to the needs of our community and has been open to my lobbying.

I believe that it has been beneficial for my electorate and the Toowoomba region generally to have had a member in the State Labor Government and I am particularly pleased that such projects as the new Police Station, the new Catholic School at Highfields, the \$3 million refurbishment of the Toowoomba High School, the \$800,000 advance in this budget to the Highfields State School, the 300 job Suncorp-Metway call centre, the \$10 million Fibre Composite Centre of Excellence, the \$1 million grant to the St Mary's College for basketball courts, the \$2.5 million grant for the refurbishment of the Athletic Oval, the \$500,000 grant for the indoor sports complex adjacent to the Highfields Cultural Centre, the continuing support for the Charlton Wellcamp industrial complex and transport hub, as well as increasing significant numbers of public service providers, such as nurses, police and teachers are evidence of this effectiveness.

My challenge, if I am re-elected, is to press for ongoing infrastructure needs to be met, but also to ensure that major projects such as the Quarry Gardens, the Toowoomba Range Crossing and the Charlton Wellcamp Industrial Estate are brought to fruition.

I believe that a continuing presence in the State Government will be necessary to ensure that these things come to pass.

It has been a privilege to have represented the people of Toowoomba North and it is a privilege to be a part of the Beattie Labor Government.

Sitting suspended from 1.00 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

Hon. K. R. LINGARD (Beaudesert—NPA) (2.30 p.m.): The opposition acknowledges the significant increase in funding for people with disabilities. We all have to acknowledge the changing concept of how we deal with disabilities in our society, and I have always accepted the comment that a society can be judged by the way it treats people who have disabilities.

In 1997-98 the coalition was able to say that it increased the funding significantly over the previous six years of the Goss government. Whilst I note the Treasurer's statement that this government increased funding significantly in 1998 in comparison with previous years, I do not think that is something to skite about. This is something which will continually change, and more and more money will have to be provided to assist people with disabilities. What we have to accept is that we have an agreement with the federal government that in the area of disabilities they look after advocacy groups and employment and the state looks after care and accommodation.

Some \$200 million over four years is only a very small amount for service organisations to enable them to maintain viability. It is essential that funding and legislative reform create an environment in which service delivery is not constantly in crisis. Even now some parents are still driven to the point of taking their young people with disabilities to a care centre and being so desperate that unfortunately they do not pick them up in the afternoon and these people are now left to the care of the state. That is how desperate some people have become. It has happened over a long period. I must admit that it happened when I was Minister for Families. Some families

and parents find themselves in a desperate situation and are driven to do that. We accept the 53 additional staff, which is an increase of about 2.5 per cent.

There is a very large increase in capital works to \$19 million, but I would point out to the government that only \$3.8 million was spent this year of the \$7.7 million budgeted. I think it was cruel of the government in 2001 to tell the people at Basil Stafford that it would be upgrading that centre when even now that centre has not been upgraded. As I say, there are still some families who are desperate enough to take their children to a place of care during the daytime and not pick them up in the afternoon.

In the area of Families, I note that there have been no new funds, only Future Directions funding that has already been announced. A four-year program commenced last year. There is not one new staff member, despite the minister predicting a continuing trend of an eight per cent increase in notifications in estimates hearings last year. I note that the figures released so far predict an increase of about six per cent. There have been no significant capital works. Cleveland Youth Centre will receive \$3.8 million and there is \$1.5 million for neighbourhood centres, but there are no significant capital works, and there is only \$7 million for IT, property management and minor works, and nothing for the new office in the south-west as was originally rumoured.

The Beattie government prides itself, supposedly, on the additional money it has committed to child protection, but increases in funding have not kept pace with increased notification rates and have not resulted in better outcomes for children. In 2001-02, notifications—reports of suspected harm to children—rose by more than 20 per cent. In the same period front-line staff increased by only six per cent. Based on figures for the first two quarters of this financial year, notifications to the Department of Families are continuing to rise at an alarming rate—by at least six per cent.

In December last year the minister was forced to admit that more than one in four Families officers were temporary or relief staff. The minister has made a great deal of the 90 additional Families positions which have been created, but only about one-third of those positions could really be described as front line and very few are involved in investigating notifications. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare figures show that Queensland has an unacceptable rate of investigations that are not finalised long after they should be. The summary was that the system is still failing children.

In the area of Sport, I note that there has been a decrease in the overall budget. There has been a \$2.6 million decrease in investment in sport and recreation infrastructure in Queensland. I note the government's attitude towards Lang Park. Whilst we hear the euphoria of Suncorp Stadium—

Mr Shine: You'll be there.

Mr LINGARD: Yes, I will be there. I have said that.

Mr Mackenroth: He has always said that; we have to give him that.

Mr LINGARD: I have always said that. At least I made a reputation running around bodies at Lang Park, not digging them up.

Mr Mackenroth interjected.

Mr LINGARD: Not like the Treasurer's mate Gibbsey! I note that this will be an issue which will come back and bite this government. I note the government's attitude towards the Public Works Committee. Someone threatened me not to say anything more about the Public Works Committee because last time I did I was referred to the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee. But, once again, this government has refused to allow the Public Works Committee to investigate any of the details of Lang Park.

Certainly I note that the PAC has not investigated any part of the funding towards Suncorp Stadium. Whether the Treasurer admits it is \$280 million or \$235 million, I have noted the Minister for Public Works' attitude that he is the builder and the Treasurer is the owner. I note the Premier's comments the other day in thanking Mr Maguire for all the money that has come in to Suncorp Stadium. I do not think anyone going to drink at Maguire's pubs will see a sign above the poker machines saying that the Premier has thanked them for all the money they have given to Lang Park.

Sooner or later this government will have to admit where the money—\$235 million—has come from to pay for the stadium. Somewhere along the line this government will have to admit who is paying the interest on that \$235 million, because this money, which has come either from borrowings of QIC or from consolidated revenue, will not last. I would say the interest rate is

probably five per cent. Five per cent of \$235 million is just short of \$12 million. So that debt has to increase by \$12 million, and there is no way that the poker machine levy at this stage will pay off \$12 million. It will take a long time to come out even.

Mr Mackenroth: The loan is a loan over 20 years, and the money that would come through that levy will pay that loan off over 20 years and we will actually have an excess of money.

Mr LINGARD: That is an explanation which the minister has already given but, as I have just said, five per cent of \$235 million is just short of \$12 million, and there is no way in the world the government got more than \$12 million in the first year. It has already admitted that. It was probably about \$5 million or \$6 million. So the debt is increasing. Regardless, it will be a long time, and certainly it will not be paid out before the Treasurer leaves parliament. Someone will have to pick it up at the end, regardless of what he has done.

Money is certainly coming from somewhere—borrowings on which the Treasurer has paid out the whole debt. There is no doubt that sooner or later price variations will come to the fore as they started to this morning. Regardless of whether the Treasurer wants to answer these questions or the Minister for Housing wants to answer them, someone has to answer for what is happening with those price variations. If it is the case that the joint venture has to pay out some great price variations of \$20 million to \$40 million, who will pay for them? If the government does not pay for them, what favours will be given to this joint venture group in the future? Slowly that will come out.

I also mention that Sport and Recreation Queensland failed to meet its target number of QAS athletes and those training and residing in regional Queensland. The government underperformed on this measure by over 30 per cent. The number of athletes training and residing in regional Queensland was down on the target figure by 100 athletes. I would have thought that, with his interest in sport, this is something that the Treasurer should be able to achieve.

When we look at how successful the Broncos have been with their training programs—admittedly, it has cost them money—we see that this is certainly an avenue that many sports would like to explore if they had the financial ability of Rugby League, so that they could select young people and train them under their programs. The Broncos are lucky. The Lions are lucky. But many other sports do not have that ability. I think sooner or later the government has to pick up many of those sports and put much money into them. Unfortunately, unless a person is both the Minister for Sport and Treasurer—

Mr Reeves: Prior to 1989, nothing had been spent on sport—absolutely nothing.

Mr LINGARD: I agree, but it is no use in 10 years time saying that prior to 2003 we did not do anything for athletics or we did not do anything for swimming—those sports that are not as financially well off as Rugby League and Aussie Rules. What will happen with the lease arrangements for teams such as the Lions and the Broncos in the future? There is no doubt that the Lions pay a very high price for the Gabba. They are locked in to the Gabba. There is nowhere else that they can use. But it is a matter of whether the Lions are going well enough—winning enough games and playing as many home games as they would like—in order to be able to continue to pay off their debt to the cricket ground. Similarly, whilst the Broncos continue to win and get plenty of home games they will be able to pay off their debt. But when they are not winning—and the Broncos cannot win every time; some other team has to win—and crowd numbers decrease, how will they be able to continue to pay these very high costs?

It was disappointing for me to pick up Wednesday's *Beautesert Times* and see on the front page massive headlines about what is happening to the hospital system in Beautesert. People have talked about money going into Queensland Health, but the front-page article in the *Beautesert Times* was about a lady, who stated—

When I was 28 weeks, I went and saw a midwife at Beautesert and she said it (the maternity ward) would be open by the time I was due.

This magnificent hospital was built during 1997-98 by the coalition government. Since that time, it has been a political football. The article states—

She said she wanted to have the baby at Beautesert so she did not have to worry about travelling a great distance when she was in labour.

...

Thirty-six weeks into her pregnancy she was told by her general practitioner to organise having the baby at Logan Hospital because he was not confident Beautesert Hospital's maternity ward would be open in time.

Open in time! It has been closed for two years! At one stage, 400 babies every year were born at the Beaudesert Hospital. That hospital's maternity section was massive. The whole lot was taken down and a brand new hospital was built. The article continues—

'All along they said I could come back to Beaudesert for post natal care' ...

Six hours after the baby was born—

this lady—

was preparing herself to be transferred to Beaudesert.

'All I was waiting for was to be discharged' ...

She called her husband when she was discharged and said she was ready to be driven to Beaudesert Hospital.

'One of the midwives range Beaudesert to get clearance, then she came in and said the head doctor said he didn't have enough midwives.'

The nurse told—

the lady—

the two Beaudesert midwives were training at Logan over the weekend.

The article states further—

'People like us would like to know why we are being fed this misinformation which only comes back to haunt the hospital.

...

'Where are the people making the decisions that keep sabotaging the local women and restricting them from giving birth at Beaudesert Hospital?'

...

'We were there when it happened, when it (Beaudesert Hospital's maternity ward) closed down for three weeks and now it's been over two years.

'I don't think it (the reopening of the maternity ward at Beaudesert) will ever happen. I think it's a lost cause.'

This is a brand new, 40-bed hospital at which the surgical and maternity wards continue to be closed, at which we find that people attending outpatients are told to see their private doctor and at which some accident victims are airlifted to Southport, Logan or other Brisbane hospitals. Others are taken there by ambulance, when the Beaudesert Hospital has a landing pad for helicopters.

The mother of a child with a suspected broken foot was told that she would have to drive her child to Southport because there was no X-ray service at the Beaudesert Hospital on the weekends. A child with a temperature but in a stable condition was sent from the Beaudesert Hospital to the Mater Hospital for treatment because the Beaudesert Hospital was not able to perform the necessary tests. Quite obviously, that is not good enough for a brand new hospital built in 1997-98. It has been a political football that, obviously, has not been funded adequately by the government.

I also want to mention SunWater and the fact that it is a government body. Once again, we see what happens when these government bodies are allowed to make their own bureaucratic decisions. Anyone who has seen the Maroon Dam and Moogerah Dam would know that in the 1970s both of those dams were built, as people were told, for agricultural viability. The boards who ran those dams allowed only approximately 60 per cent of water to be allocated. The other 40 per cent was kept in storage so that in times of drought, obviously, there would be adequate water in those dams. If these dams run dry, it takes a long time for water to flow back into them. So it is not as though when they are emptied they fill up again quickly. They have very poor catchment areas.

But of course SunWater, being told by this government that it has to make as much money as possible and return as much of a dividend as possible, allocates all of the water out of the dam every year. As well as allocating all of the water out of the dam—I will not say 100 per cent, because someone referred to this the other day—it allocates all other water from tributaries and creeks either above or below the dam. So really, there is an allocation of more than 100 per cent. In a year such as this year, obviously all of the water is used and no water is retained for agricultural purposes.

When it comes to the crunch, the groups that are able to maintain their water use are the industries—Davis Gelatine, which this government forced on the Beaudesert shire and A.J. Bush, which this government forced on the Beaudesert shire—and urban development. Of course, the people who miss out are the agricultural people. That is completely unfair. All of the people around the Christmas Creek and Running Creek areas were afraid that they would be put on a

total water ban once the weir at Round Mountain reached below 15 megalitres a day. There are eight to 10 users on Running Creek and some 42 license holders on Christmas Creek. There are 60 dairies along the Logan River and its tributaries, not to mention the beef cattle properties and the horse studs.

The farmers are worried that taking water from Christmas and Running creeks is not the solution. When the weather gets bad, there will not be any water to use. The water will never make it to the river. There are moves afoot to suspend water extraction at low levels. Farmers say that they should not be expected to supply their water at this level. They ask: what will happen to the value of their properties? Who wants to buy a dry farm? Will the lack of water be reflected in the Valuer-General's valuation of their farms?

The whole situation has come from the dam being overcommitted. Water has been allocated which at present is not there. The water in the creek and the tributary is not there in the dam and, surely, should not be allocated. There is no management of water by SunWater and no understanding of the system used by the farmers. Farmers do not just use the water because it is allocated to them; they use it when necessary because of drought and because new crops are planted in anticipation of a good season nine months down the track.

Obviously, when the dam was built in 1974 it was meant for the use of farmers, with a small portion of the water to be allocated for urban use. Now its priority is urban use, with the farmers playing second fiddle. The Beaudesert shire's allocation is 5,500 megalitres a year. Obviously, if the government continues its policy with SunWater the farmers will be put out of business and the local economy will die. An outcome is urgent. Winter crops should have been planted in April in order to be ready to feed in November. Time has already passed by. Farmers cannot plant crops worth thousands of dollars unless there is an assurance that the water will be available in the growing season should it be needed.

If members want a good feed of crayfish, they should go out to Joy's at Moogerah Dam. There are magnificent parks and magnificent cafes out there. However, the capacity of Moogerah Dam is down to two per cent. The rest of the Boonah shire has green grass, but there is no water at Moogerah Dam. I think that pumping must stop at 1.6 per cent, because obviously the pipes cannot get the water out of the bottom of the dam.

The trouble is that all these licences and large allocations are still being charged against the farmer. At present we allow the biggest power station in the area to take more and more water. Swanbank still takes water out of the Moogerah Dam. At present it is not taking water from there because it is coming from Wivenhoe. That has forced the farmers into a situation—that is, they do not want SunWater at Moogerah Dam because SunWater is the biggest charger in terms of water prices. Farmers know that if Swanbank is permanently taken away from that dam they will have to pay a large price for water at a time when their agricultural industries are not viable. We keep increasing the relative cost of water in the middle of the drought—the worst drought in living memory—and charging farmers for water that does not exist. Moogerah has rarely been full since 1976. The last time was in the early 1990s and for most of the last 27 years it has been in a severely depleted state. Still users are told that they must pay for their allocations and must pay for ongoing maintenance. They are still paying up to \$8,000 per year but have not received any water since 2001. If the government is continually going to say that it is up to SunWater, it is leaving it in the hands of the bureaucrats and it is not good.

Hon. J. FOURAS (Ashgrove—ALP) (2.50 p.m.): I am pleased to take part in the 2003 budget debate. I congratulate the Treasurer on producing a budget that is both fiscally and socially responsible. It is a Labor budget that we on this side of the House endorse with pride. In his budget reply, the Opposition Leader lampooned the budget as one of ballooning taxes, ballooning deficits and ballooning unemployment. Members opposite have also made great play with accusations that the Treasurer has propped up his budget by raiding government owned corporations.

With regard to state taxes, whilst arguing that they were too high, the only cut promised by the Opposition Leader, who claims the mantra of a man of positive politics, is to sack 170 public servants to pay for relief to the business sector from multiple ambulance levy contributions at a cost of \$23 million. It is my view that people who support a fair go will willingly pay a tax that is hypothecated, that is earmarked, for a special specific. Moreover, responsible citizens also accept the need to pay taxes for services as long as the money raised is well spent. An example of outrageous extravagance is our PM, the battlers' friend, who brazenly can spend \$45,000 for four days in Italy and \$120,000 over a period of less than four years for wine. At a time when the downturn in world equity markets has crippled recent earnings, it is an outstanding achievement

by Treasurer Mackenroth to have markedly improved service levels in education, health and family services as well as funding infrastructure and Smart State initiatives.

Members opposite presided over governments that have had an abysmal record in human service delivery. I am proud of this Labor budget which, while levels of service delivery were under 80 per cent of the Australian norm in 1980, has now brought this level to 98 per cent today. It is a fantastic achievement. If state taxes, the lowest in Australia by nearly \$400 per capita, were too high, what services would the alternative government of this state cut? Would the opposition want the government to cut the additional \$13.1 million into renal dialysis services across the state. Demand for renal dialysis services in Queensland has grown by an average of 8.2 per cent each year over the last five years. The public health system is having to treat an extra 57 dialysis dependent patients each year.

The additional funding will help to meet that demand in line with a good practice model of care, particularly by increasing the level of home dialysis. Expanding access to home dialysis will also allow patients greater independence and greater quality of life. The Queensland Renal Association, which is based in my electorate, was granted over \$28,000 for a project to develop volunteer peer support by the Gambling Community Benefit Fund. I want to congratulate it for the great service it provides. This grant will enhance its programs. Does the opposition also want to cut the extra \$13 million additional funding for cancer treatments? It has not told us where it is going to find these savings from. Does the opposition want to cut the great \$50 million a year Triple R program whereby our schools' maintenance is enhanced and through which four schools in my electorate received some \$322,000 in this budget?

The ballooning taxes argument does not stand up to any reasonable scrutiny. For example, a \$400,000 principal place of residence reaps the Victorian government \$22,138. In New South Wales the state would collect \$14,928 on the same transaction but only \$9,717 in Queensland. Payroll tax in Queensland is 4.7 per cent, 1.25 per cent below the level in New South Wales and Western Australia and 0.6 per cent below Victoria. When the opposition criticises the additional \$1.1 billion in taxes, it does not comprehend that this has not been the result of an increase in tax rates; it has been a result of just an increased number of people paying these taxes.

Let us now look at the opposition's shock horror rhetoric of ballooning deficits. If the opposition was in government it would need to find savings of \$350 million to bring this budget into surplus. Apart from sacking 170 public servants, as I said earlier, no other saving has been announced. However, let us put this deficit into perspective. Queensland's operating deficit of \$350 million would have been a surplus of almost \$600 million if Queensland had arranged its superannuation finances like other states. Let us look at the recently announced \$2.5 billion surplus in the recent Costello federal budget. Recently, an independent actuarial review showed that the Commonwealth had undervalued its superannuation liabilities by \$5 billion. On this basis, the Costello budget has a deficit of \$2.5 billion rather than a surplus of \$2.5 billion. Unlike Queensland's fully funded Public Service super scheme, the Commonwealth superannuation liability will reach \$91.5 billion during 2003-04. Since the Howard government came to power in 1996, its unfunded liabilities for its public sector superannuation scheme have climbed by more than \$22 billion. How is this debt to workers of the Public Service going to be funded when the baby boomers retire in the next decade or so? Members opposite talk about our deficit, but never mention what is happening on the federal scene.

Whilst members opposite criticise the Beattie government as one of ballooning taxes, it is silent about the Howard government, the highest taxing government in the history of Australia. This has resulted in families paying about \$5,000 more per year in income tax than they were when the Howard government came to office. That is increases in taxes. With regard to unemployment, the graph presented in the House yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition with those beautiful pretty balloons falsely showed that in 1996-97 approximately 45,000 jobs were created by the Borbidge government when in fact the figure was only 22,300. That is another example of reckless behaviour by the Leader of the Opposition who lays claim to the mantra of positive politics.

The budget projects that 37,000 jobs will be created this year—a figure criticised by the Opposition Leader. I think it is good. I would like to see many more jobs created than that, but unfortunately politics is the art of the possible. Who would not want to see more jobs created? However, any criticism by those opposite who, in their last stint occupying the Treasury benches closed down employment training programs, will be seen for what it is: hollow rhetoric.

As a person who presided over a Skillshare project for about 10 years prior to its abolition by the Howard government, I fully comprehend the advantages of such programs for the long-term

unemployed. Under the conservatives in both the state and federal spheres, the plight of the long-term unemployed is totally ignored. The only excitement emanating from the conservatives is the need to cut the minimum wage and to toughen social security benefits. It is an amazing piece of logic from the conservatives that the rich need the carrot of tax cuts as an incentive for higher endeavours whilst the poor need more and more stick to get them off their backsides. Such a social policy verges on the obscene, but it is classic conservative policy in this country.

In the past year a disability service centre in my electorate of Ashgrove, Unicare Ashgrove, benefited by having its new centre upgraded by a grant under the Community Jobs Plan. Thirteen long-term unemployed were employed for six months on this most worthwhile project. The outcome? A wonderful centre. A great community asset was enhanced as well as the majority of the 13 participants getting work or undertaking further training. Those opposite talk about rock painting. They talk about meaningless training.

In relation to the provision of services to the disabled, I can tell members that I am proud of the priority given in this budget to disability funding. I would like to remind those opposite of their broken promises given during the Borbidge government's two-year stint in office, from 1996 to 1998. When applications were sought for the promised additional funding during 1996-97, disability agencies applied for \$37.6 million. The outcome was that less than \$2 million was funded. The year after—after that abysmal failure—they did not even seek a funding round. The member for Beaudesert earlier stood and talked about concerns for disability funding. I point out that those opposite promised funding but they never delivered. We on this side are showing the compassion and the care needed to attempt to ensure we fund our disability services. This underlines a total lack of compassion and understanding of the needs in this area by the coalition.

I return to the issue of unemployment. While it is true that states such as Victoria have a rate of unemployment of 5.75 per cent compared to Queensland's seven per cent, if participation rates were to be taken into consideration Queensland would compare more than favourably with the rest of Australia.

The opposition has alleged that the Treasurer propped up his budget by raiding government owned corporations. This is utter nonsense. The \$631.7 million forecast in revenue from the state commercial entities represents a decline of 27.7 per cent on the previous year. Let us look at a GOC such as Powerlink. It contributed \$103 million this financial year and will contribute about \$180 million next financial year because it is given an amount of money that it can charge by the ACCC. The result is that we are benefiting from owning that asset.

The Liberals in South Australia privatised their electricity industry with horrendous outcomes. It may surprise members opposite to know that South Australia's power distribution was bought by Powerlink. So we own it. The Queensland taxpayers now are greatly benefiting from the fact that we own a resource that should never have been privatised. Powerlink is by far the most efficient electricity distributor in Australia. Anybody seeking to privatise such a productive asset would have to be an economic illiterate.

Suncorp was sold. What has happened to that? Of course, the money the former coalition government got was used to prop up one or two Borbidge budgets, but where are the dividends that would be coming into our budget now? That is what happens when governments privatise those assets, but members opposite do not realise that. If Suncorp had not been sold we would now be receiving a couple of hundred million dollars a year in our budget, but it is gone. Here today, gone tomorrow. Unfortunately, the privatisation agenda of those opposite is driven by an ideology that gives more credit to market forces than such a concept deserves. Queensland is indeed fortunate to have efficient GOCs which properly return healthy economic dividends to their shareholders, the Queensland public. It is incomprehensible that the opposition can level any criticism about those dividends coming into the budget.

The Leader of the Opposition concluded his budget reply by saying—

Labor says higher taxes. Labor says more deficits. Labor says higher unemployment. I say there has to be another way.

What a simplistic analysis, as I indicated in my speech. The Leader of the Opposition was plainly wrong, wrong, wrong. I commend this budget to the House. I am pleased to support it.

Hon. J. C. SPENCE (Mount Gravatt—ALP) (Minister for Families and Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Minister for Disability Services and Minister for Seniors) (3.02 p.m.): This year's state budget delivered one of the most significant human services budgets on record and has provided some terrific results for the people living in the Mount Gravatt

electorate and the greater Brisbane region. The 26,380 constituents on the electoral roll in my electorate and their children will benefit not only from Labor's commitment to key areas such as health, disability, unemployment and housing but also from funding to local projects and services.

I am proud to see this year's budget delivering an investment in the future of my electorate. Schools in the local area are the big winners, and this means an investment in the future of our community and benefits for families and children. I applaud the allocation of \$1.8 million in the state budget for the new facilities at MacGregor State Primary School. I was recently taken on a tour by Principal Steve Tharenou to inspect some of the older classrooms. I was able to see some of the classrooms which are in need of replacement.

Mr Fouras: Steve is a good friend of mine.

Ms SPENCE: He is a good friend of Mr Fouras's and a very good principal.

This funding will breathe new life into the school and acknowledges that some of the classrooms, which have done a terrific job for many years, are now past their use-by date and the 1,200 students deserve better facilities. Initial plans are that the funds will go towards a two-storey classroom block, and I know that Education Queensland will work with the school to decide the most appropriate design. This really is exciting news for the school community, teachers and students. I know that they all join me in looking forward to the development and construction of these new facilities.

Of course, this year's budget has delivered other wins for my local schools. Some examples include the \$395,000 allocated for the repainting of school buildings at MacGregor State High School, MacGregor State School and Warrigal Road State School, for reticulation works at Sunnybank State High School and for both repainting and reticulation works at Mount Gravatt State High School and Upper Mount Gravatt State School. Education Queensland has also allocated \$381,000 for phase 3 of MacGregor State High School's secondary school renewal and \$51,000 for phase 2 of Sunnybank State High School's secondary school renewal.

Last year I attended the opening of \$3.3 million worth of new and upgraded facilities at Sunnybank State High School. Principal Vicki Farwell and her team put a great deal of time and effort into planning the upgrade. The facilities include new science labs, art facilities, an upgraded resource centre and refurbished sports courts and classrooms. They were funded under the Beattie government's Secondary Schools Renewal Program, which was established in 1999 to revamp Queensland's older high schools.

Mr Deputy Speaker, in the interests of time I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

These funds show a commitment to providing the best education to students in the Smart State.

In another highlight, \$280,000 has been provided for two additional classrooms at Warrigal Road State School.

I know that Principal Jeff Munce and his staff welcomed their inclusion on the list to share in funds for the Triple R program so this funding is an added bonus.

Both my sons attended this school and I know of the great quality of education being provided there.

\$21,000 has been allocated to upgrade the Special Education Unit at MacGregor State School and as the Minister for Disability Services and the local Member of Parliament, I am pleased to see money going to this area.

Being a former teacher, and with eight State primary schools, four State high schools, two special schools and six private schools in my electorate, the continued improvement and a continued investment in schools is close to my heart.

Mr Speaker, in the time allotted to me today, I don't have time to talk about all of these schools but I am proud of every single state and private school in my electorate.

I am a frequent visitor to all of these schools and know only too well the hard work put in by all the principals and staff to ensure how young people receive a quality education.

This year's budget result was particularly pleasing and I am happy to see this money investing in the future of some of the youngest members of our community.

I am also pleased to report that schools are not the only winners and funding from this budget will assist other educational facilities in my electorate.

The 2003-04 budget allocated \$831,000 to continue the development of information and communication technology infrastructure at the Moreton Institute of TAFE based at Mount Gravatt East.

In addition, \$1.122 million has been provided for redevelopment and the establishment of a Fashion Centre of Excellence at Moreton Institute of TAFE Mount Gravatt East

This funding will no doubt contribute to the continued development of Queensland as the Smart State.

Mr Speaker, other groups have of course benefited from this year's budget and the reputation of this area as a sporting precinct has been boosted by funding to ANZ and funding to a local Bowls Club.

I have welcomed the allocation of \$10.5 million to redevelop ANZ stadium into the new headquarters for the Queensland Academy of Sport.

This funding, and I thank the Treasurer and Minister for Sport, Terry Mackenroth for his foresight, will secure the future of one of our greatest sporting assets.

Now that the Broncos have moved back to Suncorp Stadium this is a good opportunity to give QAS athletes a first class administration facility at one of the premier athletic venues in this State.

The money will be spent on a fit out of the Western stand to accommodate new offices, locker rooms, conference rooms, exercise areas, and gymnasiums for the athletes and staff.

This will involve offices and equipment for sport psychologists, nutritionists, coaches, doctors and sports scientists.

This premier facility will become home to some of the State's top athletes, ranging from athletics, rugby league and rugby union through to cricket, netball and volleyball and it will become home to staff including coaches and sports scientists.

This will mean benefits for the local community through increased patronage and it will mean schools will have easy access to any benefits this move will involve.

I understand the move is expected to take place early next year and I will certainly be welcoming the QAS to South Brisbane and my electorate.

Part of the redevelopment will also include \$549,000 to establish a Centre of Excellence for Applied Sport Science Research at a total cost of \$2.584 million.

Mr Speaker, another great sporting win which will boost local sporting assets—but perhaps not on such a grand scale—has been the allocation of \$295,350 for the Mount Gravatt Bowls Club, located at Upper Mount Gravatt.

This funding, which was provided under Sport and Recreation Queensland's Major Facilities Program, will cover the costs of installing a shade structure, lighting and a synthetic green.

I supported the bowls club's funding application and I congratulate them on their successful result.

This grant will go straight into a project that a lot of people can use and enjoy.

I know people such as Colin Colebrook and Brian Martin and members of the Club have put a lot of effort into this project over the last six months.

What this project means is that the club will have a green that can be used regardless of the weather conditions and regardless of whether it is day or night.

There is currently no all weather bowls facility in Brisbane's southern suburbs so these improvements will make the Mount Gravatt Bowls Club a real asset in the local area.

It is also hoped that the improved facilities will also mean increased patronage from bowlers and the wider community.

The funds for the Mount Gravatt Bowls Club were part of \$9 million provided in the State Budget for the Major Facilities Program.

One of the Beattie Government's priorities is to make this State a more active state and this funding is one practical way we can help fulfil this objective.

The 2003-04 State Budget also included benefits for essential services such as Housing.

The Home Assist Secure Scheme in my electorate will benefit from additional statewide funding of \$1 million provided in the State Budget.

Minister for Public Works and Housing Robert Schwarten, had allocated \$10.8 million for the statewide Home Assist Secure Scheme in the Department of Housing's budget.

In my local area, \$285,000 has been allocated to the good people at the Mount Gravatt District Community Support to deliver Home Assist Secure services. This service is based on Logan Road at Upper Mount Gravatt.

Mr Speaker, as many in the House would know, Home Assist Secure is very popular.

I'm proud to recall that it's a Labor government initiative.

It provides information and advice 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 important benefits is that it allows elderly people to stay in their own homes longer.

The Housing budget also includes \$411,000 through the Community Housing Program to complete the construction of two four-bed new houses for people with special needs.

A further \$19,000 has been allocated for the Kyabra Community Association to lease properties to provide crisis accommodation for homeless or people at risk of homelessness.

The Association provides a lot of vital services to local families and to people in need and I thank them for their efforts.

Of course Mr Speaker, these are trying times and the Queensland Government is battling against declining financial resources from the Commonwealth Government, so I am grateful for an investment in the Mount Gravatt electorate.

Housing is a basic right and I am proud that this Government is committed to ensuring improved access to safe, secure, appropriate and affordable housing for those who need it.

On the emergency services front, the 2003-04 budget included \$50,000 to look at the planning and design of a new Mount Gravatt Fire Station.

I will keep a keen eye on the development of this project and hope it will bring benefits to the workers at the station and the wider community.

Mr Speaker, this year's budget also delivers on the basics for Mount Gravatt.

The State Government has provided \$1.12 million to continue \$4.12 million at-grade intersection improvements and installation of traffic management devices (associated with the South East Transit project) on the South East Freeway.

\$128,000 has also been provided for local road and drainage works.

Residents will also benefit from \$195,000 to promote safe walking and pedalling and \$450,000 which will go towards Safe School Travel initiatives.

Members of the Mount Gravatt electorate will also share in the benefits of projects for the Greater Brisbane region.

This includes \$3.412 million for book stocks in public libraries in Brisbane. This will mean more resources and information for members of the Mount Gravatt electorate.

With Health a centrepiece of this year's budget, I welcome the \$5.753 million in additional funding for the Princess Alexandra and Mater Hospital Health Service Districts.

This funding will go towards enhancing health services such as cancer treatment services, renal dialysis services and in-patient and home based care.

I also welcome continued funding of \$142,000 for the Tactical Crime Squad to target known crime hotspots with an emphasis on investigating property crime and drug offences. The Tactical Crime Squad in South Brisbane was established with a strength of 14 officers in April last year.

Mr Speaker, the Greater Brisbane Region will receive around \$26.4 million create more than 4,000 jobs through the Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle in the next financial year.

Nearly \$1 million has been allocated from October 1998 to March this year, in the Mount Gravatt electorate, under the Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative, resulting in about 157 jobs being created.

I know the Mount Gravatt Training Centre has been successful in receiving a number of these grants and under the guidance of CEO Chris McNamara and co-ordinator Peter Conlon, they have been performing some great work at local schools and community groups.

Participants of course also benefit through training across areas such as landscaping, horticulture, workplace relations, occupational health and safety and job search and readiness skills.

Mr Speaker, I joined the Labor Party because I believed it was important to make a contribution—to make a change to the way our community lives.

I believe in the principles of social justice, a fair go, of the need to work towards a fairer and better society. I believe this year's budget has delivered on those principles.

I am pleased that in my portfolios we were able to deliver a \$290.5 million over four years for disability services, provide the second instalment of \$42 million for the Department of Families and increase the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy by nearly 9 percent to continue significant policy and strategic reforms.

Mr Speaker, I congratulate the Treasurer Terry Mackenroth on delivering a budget which has delivered a healthy cash surplus, maintained Queensland's AAA credit rating, and increased funding to services and capital works, but most importantly, will help those who need it most.

The constituents of the Mount Gravatt electorate can certainly look to sharing in the benefits of the 2003-04 budget.

Mr HOPPER (Darling Downs—NPA) (3.05 p.m.): In rising to speak to the budget I wish to talk about a few things that have been allocated to the Darling Downs of which I am very appreciative. In Dalby, \$567,000 has been put towards an aged care facility, with \$11,700,000 still to come. There are funds of \$930,000 for an upgrade of the road from Yarraman to Toowoomba, \$1.5 million for land acquisition for the Charlton development, \$200,000 for the Charlton industrial estate and \$100,000 for the Dalby airport.

For the last two and a half years I have sought to get two police liaison officers for the Dalby district, and this week in parliament we again asked the Police Minister for that. On many occasions I have asked the Police Minister if he could possibly help in that area. I will continue to lobby for these police liaison officers for Dalby.

Rural and regional Queensland has been very badly short-changed by this Beattie government budget. This is on top of the third deficit in a row by this Beattie Labor government. It has taken away essential services from rural and regional areas because of its complete financial mismanagement. If the Beattie Labor government ran a small business the way it runs this state, with three massive deficits in a row amounting to over \$2 billion, it would be broke and out the back door.

Who has to pay for the financial mismanagement of Queensland taxpayers' finances? It is the mums and dads of this great state who are just trying to get ahead. They are the ones who have to pay. It is the mums and dads who are being horrifically taxed. This Beattie Labor government is forcing them to pay for its financial mess. This Beattie Labor government—yes, the

same government which has sent the state broke—is going to increase taxes to fix up its mess. Yes, this is the same mess that the Labor government created.

Since the Beattie Labor government came into power it has slugged Queenslanders with \$1.1 billion in extra tax revenue. To put it simply, every man, woman and child will pay \$1,480 in state taxes this year. That is an extra \$149 on top of last year's budget. That is a disgrace and a true reflection on how bad the Beattie Labor government is at handling its finances. It has no problem spending money on multi-million dollar art galleries and footbridges, but it cannot balance the books and it has cut essential services.

I turn now to the portfolios. I will deal firstly with the one I have shadow responsibility for—Public Works and Housing. The very portfolio that is supposed to be about building things is the cornerstone of the government's phantom money accounting practices, which see the capital budget artificially inflated by measures including counting all the Q-Fleet vehicles as capital. Never before have we seen such dodgy accounting practices as the sudden inclusion of \$152 million worth of Public Service vehicles in the capital works budget.

In our household budget vehicles fall on the liability side of the budget books. Given that one minister recently admitted that repairs and write-offs cost more than \$5 million a year, it is very difficult to argue that vehicles are a capital asset. Capital works are supposed to be about building and providing infrastructure for the state, not consumables for departmental operations.

Reclassifying vehicles as capital has another interesting implication. The charter of social and fiscal responsibility limits government borrowings to borrowings for the purposes of capital investment. The rationale of this, of course, is that we should only ever borrow for an investment that will provide a return. This makes good economic commonsense. Over their useful lives, vehicles cost money; they do not return it. I hope the government's motivation for reclassifying vehicles as capital was not to enable it to put them on the already maxed out credit card. Paying interest to purchase something that depreciates or has high relative running costs is hardly a good investment.

Another area where this government is not building the state is public housing. When the coalition was last in government we built 899 new public houses. In this year's housing budget there is provision for 306. That is less than one-third. Instead of appropriately managing and enhancing public housing, this government is pushing the responsibility out to the communities and councils. Almost 30,000 Queensland families or individuals, most commonly seniors, are waiting for public housing. Yet at the end of April there were more than 1,000 vacant public houses. The minister advises that most of these empty houses are vacant/untenable, meaning that they are awaiting repairs or renovations—repairs and renovations that move very slowly while 30,000 eligible Queenslanders wait for help.

Before anyone points to community renewals, let us examine exactly what has happened. At the 2001 election the Labor Party promised to invest \$12.3 million every year for three years—a total of \$36.9 million. In the first year it allocated \$3.82 million. Last year the allocation was \$4.7 million—getting a bit better—and this year's budget provides \$7.3 million. The investment in community renewal over three years adds up to hardly more than was promised for one year. This is a shortfall of \$21.1 million on what Labor promised in its own election costings.

I am concerned that the Housing MPS makes no mention of additional resources to assist the potential 3,000 people in Brisbane alone who could be made homeless as soon as the end of this month when boarding houses are required to meet fire regulations. I appreciate that the minister would share responsibility for this issue with the Minister for Disability Services, as many of the people who will be affected have high support needs. But I am very worried that the extent of Housing's plans for closure responses is to refer people to existing services. When New South Wales went through a similar process, the specific funding for closure responses was in excess of \$50 million.

Since this government came to power it has slashed 670 staff out of the DPI—670 staff who provided front-line services to our primary producers. What makes this worse is that this government will cut another 13 this year. The department's staffing levels have been cut by one-fifth.

Mr Lawlor: Will you put them all back on?

Mr HOPPER: We will put them back on. We will rebuild Queensland when we win government. We will rebuild those DPI positions that have been taken from our rural industries. The DPI is regarded as a great institution in rural Queensland. It is where primary producers and experts in the field of agriculture, research and development come together and work towards a

more profitable and sustainable agriculture sector. But this government is determined to destroy it. It is ripping staff out of this great institution. The DPI has faced ongoing cuts while the number of public servants has mushroomed and the Premier's Department has almost doubled in size.

This government has used the Fire Ant Eradication Program to disguise the extent of job cuts in the DPI. When we discount the fire ant program, we see that the number of staff in the DPI has been cut from 3,911 when the government came to power to 3,241 this financial year. That represents a cut of 670 staff, or 17.13 per cent, at a time when primary producers are struggling against drought, floods and a raft of diseases and pests. Recently, most of Queensland was in the grip of a major army worm plague, and the DPI was struggling to find the resources and expertise to get on top of it. Primary producers are being asked to bear a whole range of new taxes and charges under this government. I do not think it is fair that they should also be asked to accept a diminishing level of services.

What has the government done with respect to tick charges? The tick line was established a hundred years ago. We fought hard to keep ticks out of that clean country. Farmers now have to pay to have their cattle inspected and scratched before they can move them from one property to another. That tick line runs right through my electorate. Some of those farmers have land on each side of the line. They will shift cattle without getting them scratched. That will force the tick line further and further west, and 100 years of eradication will go by the board simply because they are trying to turn our DPI into a user-pays system and slug our hurting farmers once more.

I turn to the drought. This is another area where the Beattie government has continued to fail. This government says it put aside \$25 million for drought assistance and recovery. But again, it has reneged on its promise and will deliver nothing. This government has given a paltry \$2.4 million in drought assistance despite primary producers having to struggle through the worst drought in living memory. The federal government has injected \$40 million into Queensland. How disgraceful! The Beattie government cannot even inject the money needed to get our primary producers through the drought.

Let us look at natural resources. This government has managed to rip out \$8 million from essential DPI extension services to set up the tree police for its vegetation management and water use legislation, yet it has found only \$1.8 million in additional funding to manage and cap water sources from the Great Artesian Basin—work that has great benefits not only for primary producers but also for the environment. Basically, the Beattie government is more interested in setting up a tree police squad in a bid to demonise primary producers and rake in fines than it is in implementing an environmentally sustainable project like capping bores.

This budget leaves the Darling Downs region high and dry. The capital works budget has been reduced in key areas. The reductions include: Health down \$3 million, from \$13 million in 2002-03 to \$10 million this year; Education down \$1 million, from \$6.9 million to \$5.9 million; and Families down \$500,000 from \$1.19 million in 2002-03 to \$543,000. This government has been bragging about how families would really benefit from this budget, but funding for Families in the Darling Downs has declined. Meanwhile, Health funding has declined by \$3 million in the past year, and Education has been slashed by a million. They have been left with the crumbs out of a budget that lacks any real vision for the Darling Downs, and the Treasurer has continued to put Queensland in the red with a \$350 million operating deficit—the third in a row. Now people on the Darling Downs will have to pay that deficit through a raft of new taxes such as the ambulance tax.

This budget shows that the Queensland Labor government has become apathetic about good financial management. This government is broke and every Queenslanders must know that. Now every Queenslanders has to pay for it. That is right—pay for a Beattie Labor government that cannot manage finances. It cannot manage the job of keeping Queensland in the black and financially healthy. When it comes to economic management, we cannot trust this Labor government.

When we look back at the record high interest rates of the 1980s under Keating—the recession we had to have—it is little wonder people cannot trust the likes of Labor. When we look at the \$96 billion debt left by the last federal Labor government, it is little wonder the people do not trust Labor. Labor has a legacy of bad economic management and all Australians know that. It is a disgraceful legacy and one that Peter Beattie and Treasurer Terry Mackenroth have now stamped on Queensland.

The Beattie government is dismantling the standards of responsible fiscal management. This Beattie government legacy is crippling Queensland. The Treasurer has lost control of the purse strings. This budget will add to Labor's legacy of economic vandalism.

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (3.19 p.m.): Queensland is the Smart State. This Queensland state budget is continuing our government's push to ensure that we are the Smart State. People are the most precious resource we have, and the Beattie government recognises that fostering innovation and investing in their skills is critical to the future of our economy. That is why we are so committed to building Queensland as the Smart State. I am proud to outline how our government has placed a special focus on health, education and job creation in this state budget.

Health

Local Sunshine health services will receive—

- \$250,000 additional funding for cancer treatment services
- \$950,000 additional funding for renal dialysis services, which is part of an additional \$13.1 million to realign and expand renal dialysis services for hospital, inpatient and home based care
- \$100,000 additional funding for intensive care units
- \$191,000 additional funding for community mental health
- \$270,000 to remodel the mental health inpatient unit to include a high dependency unit to enable the unit to improve safety for staff and patients
- four new clinical staff for mental health services
- \$100,000 additional funding for emergency departments
- \$500,000 for the upgrade and relocation of the Nambour Hospital BreastScreen facility
- \$1 million to upgrade the allied health and birthing suite, completing the \$26 million redevelopment of Nambour Hospital
- \$200,000 for a mobile X-ray unit
- \$150,000 for a patient monitoring system
- \$150,000 for a central monitoring station at Nambour Hospital
- \$79,000 for the operating theatre
- \$25,000 towards the purchase of medical equipment for palliative care centres for Living Association Inc. Buderim
- \$525,000 to enhance services in the emergency department at Caloundra Hospital
- \$660,000 for rehabilitation services within the Sunshine Coast Health Service district, a major element of which will be the Caloundra day therapy unit.

We recognise that with an ageing population there is an increased demand on rehabilitation services in relation to conditions such as stroke or falls in older people. This will provide an extension to the inpatient rehabilitation services which have been relocated to the Caloundra Health Service from Nambour Hospital and lead to improved continuum of care for local residents requiring rehabilitation.

Across Queensland the Beattie government will continue to address waiting times for elective surgery with a \$10 million allocation in the 2003-04 state budget. This state budget has a record \$4.6 billion for health, which is an increase of 6.9 per cent, or \$300 million, on last year's budget. The extra funds will be used for increased and enhanced services for a growing and ageing population.

I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Education

The Beattie Labor Government will continue its push to be the Smart State. As part of that commitment I am very proud to announce that the State Government has committed:

- \$17.2 million to Stage 1 for a new Chancellor State College. This will serve students in the years 7 to 9 in its first year, 2004.
- \$1.7 million to Stage 1B which will see shared facilities at the Chancellor State College.

Our community appreciates the increases in funding towards school maintenance for Sunshine Coast schools that include:

- \$260,000 for additional facilities at the Buderim Mountain State School.

I must sincerely thank the parents and students, principal and staff who have been extremely patient, but diligent in helping me lobby for these necessary upgrades.

- \$126,000 to paint rooms, buildings etc at Bokarina State School, Buddina State School, Buderim Mountain State School and also roofing works at the Buderim Mountain State School.
- \$840 000 for a space general learning area at Talar Primary College.
- \$6,000 for the Italian school committee for library resources.

The pursuit of excellence in the classroom is a priority for the Beattie Labor Government.

State-wide 382 new teachers in 2002-03, including 158 new teachers as the third instalment in the government's commitment to employ 800 extra teachers over enrolment growth over four years, and 224 new teachers to keep pace with enrolment growth.

Quality teaching is central to the goals of a Smart State.

An increase of \$75.3 million has been provided for state school teacher salaries. Queensland teachers are amongst the highest paid in the country.

\$28 million over four years to train teachers in the use of Information, Communication Technology in teaching and learning.

\$2 million to enable Years 1-10 teachers to undertake development in assessment strategies.

\$3.2 million will be provided to support the conversion of casual administrative positions to permanent roles.

From early childhood through to adulthood we want to equip all Queenslanders with the knowledge and opportunity to compete and excel in a rapidly changing world.

Increased funding towards transport and roads

I am very pleased to have achieved:

- \$14.5 million to complete the construction of the Kawana arterial that will link the Sunshine Motorway to the Nicklin Way at Warana.
- \$4 million towards duplication of the Sunshine Motorway between Mooloolaba Road and Maroochydore Road.
- \$120,000 for parking areas near Bokarina Primary and Kawana Waters High School, that will service new community facilities at East Bank.

Police increases for the Sunshine Coast include:

- \$185,000 is committed to establish a Police Beat shop front in Buderim.
- \$185,000 is committed to establish a Police Beat shop front at Kawana.
- \$178,000 for a tactical crime squad that is based at Kawana Waters station for the Sunshine Coast area.

The Beattie Government has already provided an additional 105 funded police positions for the Sunshine Coast Police District since coming to office and our community will continue to benefit from this program to boost police.

I have lobbied strongly for an additional police presence for our area and I am delighted the government has listened to my representations on behalf of the community.

In fact, this announcement represents the culmination of a lot of hard work by residents throughout the community. I must thank all those residents who signed petitions and public who attended meetings.

The establishment of these Police Beat shopfronts is a proactive policing initiative designed to reduce demands and complement the work of existing services.

Police Beat shopfronts create an increased and highly visible police presence in the community, which acts as a deterrent to crime.

Employment & training means real jobs

The Sunshine Coast will receive around \$7.2 million to create over 1060 jobs through the Beattie Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative for the financial year 2003-2004. This includes an estimated \$4.4 million to help create nearly 510 entry level jobs in skill shortage areas in the public sector through apprenticeship and traineeship programs, and \$2.8 million to provide jobs for 550 long term unemployed people and those at risk of long term employment, through community and employment programs.

Sunshine Coast residents are very proud that our area is recognised as leading Queensland in school-based traineeships and apprenticeships and our State leads Australia.

We have committed \$100,000 to assist early stage companies to develop and grow via the Innovation Centre at the Sunshine Coast Technology Incubator at the Sunshine Coast University at Sippy Downs.

Jobs remain our Government's number one priority. Since coming to power the Beattie Government has created approximately 200,000 new jobs in Queensland—21.4 percent of all jobs created in Australia over that time.

Budget forecasts reveal the unemployment rate is set to remain the lowest figure in Queensland in thirteen years.

Sunshine Coast sporting and recreational facilities

- \$2 million over a four-year period for the development of a regional outdoor sporting stadium at Quad Park, Bokarina as it is the regional sports complex.
- \$71,676 to construct a multi sport indoor facility at the Maroochydore Rugby League grounds on Wisers Road.
- \$11,450 to install irrigation at Quad Park.
- \$9,754 to relocate and upgrade lighting at Quad Park, Sunshine Coast's regional sporting facility.
- \$9,509 for the Buderim Craft Cottage Assoc. Inc. for the purchase and upgrade of computer equipment.
- \$28,804 for Sunshine FM community radio towards the upgrade of broadcast and transmitting equipment.

A New City Heart

The development of a new city heart will create significant benefits for Maroochydore and in fact all Sunshine Coast residents. Our State Government will contribute \$1.5 million and I will be keen to see the development of a new city heart which will become a real focal point for the residents of our area. This new area will feature a City Square and a boardwalk linking Cottontree. In undertaking this project, the Maroochy City Heart will not only become more visually appealing to our local community but it will help create a sense of place which reflects the community and vitality of our great area.

The beauty about this funding is not only does it provide local government 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 locally.

Queensland Ambulance Service

The Queensland Ambulance Service Budget of \$276.25 million includes additional funding of \$6.27 million to enhance service delivery and to alleviate pressures on paramedic staff caused by Queensland's ageing and growing population.

The Budget provides funds for an additional 110 ambulance officers (25 fully qualified officers) and 86 new vehicles.

From 1 July 2003, Community Ambulance Cover will replace the QAS Subscription Scheme and provide all Queensland residents with ambulance cover anywhere in Australia.

Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service has been allocated \$37.5 million, which includes \$17.8 million to continue the seven-year urban and rural fire vehicle replacement and modernisation program, \$12.4 million for building refurbishment, upgrade and replacement of 16 stations and the construction of a special operations facility, plus \$7.4 million for communication and operational equipment.

Counter Disaster and Rescue Services

Counter Disaster and Rescue Services has been allocated \$5.6 million to complete the \$8 million funding program to replace the Queensland Rescue Squirrel helicopter, plus \$0.9 million additional funding for community helicopter providers based on the Sunshine Coast and similar regional rescue bases. An additional \$1 million has been provided to support State Emergency Service Volunteer Marine Rescue and Surf Life Saving.

A record \$607.6 million budget for Emergency Services makes a vital contribution to the safety and wellbeing of every community in Queensland.

This Budget continues the commitment of the Beattie Government to achieving safer and more supportive communities through the provision of world-class emergency and counter disaster services.

Positive environmental initiative:

- \$359,000 towards the Kawana Sewage Treatment Plant to improve the treatment of effluent.
- \$12,705 towards the Eric Joseph Foote Memorial Sanctuary Assoc. Inc. to upgrade the toilet block.

Queensland's progress towards a sustainable future has been boosted with the allocation of more than \$300 million to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the State Budget.

This Government has placed such a high priority on valuing the environment, and the Government continues to allocate substantial funding for the EPA's activities including relocating and setting up HMAS Brisbane for use as a diveable shipwreck, artificial reef and tourist attraction.

The EPA is also responsible for more than 11 million hectares of land and 52,000 square kilometres of marine parks, including five of Australia's 14 World Heritage Areas.

The EPA has finalised the appointment of 140 extra permanent rangers in the past two years and now employs almost 2,300 staff to carry out its broad range of responsibilities.

Major boost for Home and Community Care Services

Home and Community Care Services (HACC) in Queensland will be boosted by at least \$7.5 million.

The demand for HACC services is increasing in Queensland because of population growth and the increasing number of retirees settling in this state.

This has led to an increase in the number of people eligible for support and maintenance services. These services help prevent premature or inappropriate admission of people to residential care.

In 2002-03, Queensland had an eligible HACC population of more than 350,000 and that is expected to increase significantly every year.

The increased funding would target areas of identified need, in particular the basic support and maintenance services to assist people to live independently in the community.

Families

Families on the Sunshine Coast realise the Beattie government is a compassionate government and this State Budget gives heart to the community that I have the privilege to represent. The people on the Sunshine Coast want the best opportunities for themselves and their children. They need to feel safe in their homes and have better prospects for their future. This Budget continues towards achieving those goals.

Public housing

Becoming the Smart State means a better quality of life and opportunities for all Queenslanders.

The 2003 State Budget includes \$45 million to address homelessness in Queensland.

\$9.8 million will be expended under the Department of Housing's Crisis Accommodation Program to further improve and extend services for homeless people.

Australia was on the brink of a housing affordability crisis like we had not seen since the Great Depression.

Public housing waitlists are soaring, community housing organisations are turning people away and more people are ending up on our streets.

Yet the Federal Government continues to slash funding for the construction of more public housing.

The Federal government continues to waste billions of taxpayers' dollars on rental assistance which does not even deliver one additional house for the 167,000 Queenslanders battling to keep a roof over their heads in the private rental market.

The State Budget allocated a further \$12.5 million for the not-for-profit company to build and purchase additional housing.

This record budget delivers the following for Queensland:

- Disability Services—\$290.5 million increase over 4 years.
- Education—\$4.48 billion—A boost of 5.8, including 636 new teachers.
- Employment & Training—Record \$577.7 million for TAFE.
- Health—Record \$4.63 billion—increase of \$300 million.
- Police—More than \$1 billion—increase of \$84 million, including 300 additional police.

The Government is determined to work harder and smarter to improve the quality of life of people with a disability, their families and carers.

The new \$200 million over four years means:

- an extra \$62.5 million to increase services to young people and adults with a disability;
- an extra \$54.5 million to strengthen families and build community capacity; and
- an extra \$83 million over four years to improve viability, quality and accountability of services.

Conservative governments shamefully neglected Queenslanders with disabilities for many decades, and I am proud that our budget makes them a priority.

By 2006-07 state funding for disabilities will be almost 164 per cent greater than when we came to office—when it was \$125.1 million.

This Budget maintains our Government's sound economic record.

- Strong economic growth—economic growth at 4%.
- Jobs—unemployment rate of 7%—lowest figure in Queensland in thirteen years.

The positive and strong economic outlook contained in the 2003-2004 State Budget will be achieved by a combination of several factors, including good government, a committed workforce and a private sector in which our community has confidence.

This State Budget will provide direct and indirect incentives for private sector growth, we will continue to see new investment and importantly, for the private sector, more training and employment growth across the Sunshine Coast. These are very welcome initiatives. Positive incentives from the Beattie state government, a government that has worked hard to strengthen business and investment confidence, recognising, as it does, that the engine room for growth and job creation in our great state must obviously be the private sector.

This state government Budget is very good for the basics that my community demands and deserves.

As a competent, caring and compassionate government we must continue to address many of our society's problems, at the same time making sure we are continuing to give incentives to the private sector.

In 2003-04 the Budget reveals our economic growth rate is forecast to be 4 per cent compared to the Commonwealth figure of 3 and a half per cent.

To highlight the underlying strength of our fiscal performance if we took out the impacts of our fully funded superannuation scheme we would have had an operating surplus of close to \$600 million.

A recovery in investments to more long term average rates of return will deliver both cash and operating surpluses in 2003-04.

This financial year the State's total net worth had climbed to \$58.7 billion and was expected to exceed \$60 billion by 2003-04.

This State Budget will deliver a cash surplus, maintain Queensland's AAA credit rating, and still increase funding to services and capital works.

This Queensland Government Budget also contains a record \$738 million in concessions such as discounts, rebates and subsidies for disadvantaged families or individuals—a \$37 million increase from this financial year.

There are also tax exemptions and concessions, which mainly benefit business, of more than \$2.1 billion, up 6 per cent from last year.

Next financial year Queenslanders are forecast to pay \$1,480 per capita in state taxes compared with \$1,892 per capita for the average of the other states.

This means that taxpayers in other states will pay 28 per cent more than Queenslanders.

I am proud of this Budget because it builds on the economic strengths of our great State and offers improved opportunities for businesses and job seekers.

There are increases in funding and resources in key areas such as education and the environment and an additional 300 police, 636 teachers, and 110 ambulance officers.

The Beattie Government's focus on building on the State's traditional strengths and fostering new innovative industries had delivered consistently higher rates of economic growth than the rest of Australia.

I believe the Queensland Treasurer has produced a very credible budget which fully deserves my support on behalf of the Sunshine Coast community that I represent. In closing I must acknowledge the funding increase in this Budget for people with disabilities. People with intellectual disabilities cannot often articulate their gratitude. They don't ask much of us. They simply ask to be treated with dignity as human beings. Increased funding is another positive step along the way. People in our society with physical disabilities will also be appreciative of this much needed funding increase.

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Mr COPELAND (Cunningham—NPA) (3.22 p.m.): The Beattie Labor government's 2003-04 budget sees the delivery of a third straight deficit for the state of Queensland. After predicting to deliver a surplus for each of those three years we have seen budget deficits of \$858 million, \$894 million and now \$350 million. That figure would have been much, much worse had it not been for the raids the Treasurer has made on a huge number of government entities, along with some extremely questionable accounting practices and asset revaluations used to put a more favourable spin on a budgeting crisis.

This Beattie Labor government has increased its tax take enormously. This year it is predicted the government will take \$5.7 billion in state taxes—a massive \$1.1 billion more than when it came to office; a 20 per cent increase.

A number of members have referred to one particular statistic, and it is worth repeating. Each man, woman and child this year will pay \$1,480 in taxes—\$159 more than one year ago. The assumptions made by the Treasurer for the expected return on investments for the coming year are optimistic at best. After returning negative three per cent for the 2002-03 year, the Treasurer is now basing his budget on a 7.5 per cent return on its investments in 2003-04. For the fourth time the Treasurer is predicting a surplus, and we can be sure that for the fourth time we will again see a budget deficit.

Before making mention of my own electorate of Cunningham I will cover some points related to my shadow portfolio of education. More students are staying at school longer. In 1999, 71.8 per cent of Queensland state high school students finished school. In 2002, 76.5 per cent of students finished high school. This number has steadily increased during this time, and it continues to grow.

We have heard much from the minister regarding the full-time preparatory year trial. Some may ask why we need to trial this preparatory year given that every other state in Australia successfully runs one. The reality is that the government is too broke to fully implement a preparatory year immediately. The minister has revealed that only \$1 million was spent on capital works in preparation for the trials from 1 July 2002 until 30 April this year. Not a lot more is budgeted for this next financial year.

Given that a preparatory year will inevitably be implemented in Queensland, I am extremely concerned about the level of capital needed and whether this government has the foresight to plan ahead for this. Some \$6.8 million was budgeted in 2002-03 for land acquisition, yet only \$4.3 million was actually spent to the end of April this year. Of this amount, only \$3.7 million went towards land acquisition for new schools and only enough land for three new schools was purchased.

A compulsory preparatory year would represent one of the single most significant investments in education in Queensland. Implementation of that preparatory year is something we support, and I only hope that the Beattie government is aware of the extent of this investment and that planning is well advanced.

Similarly, the capital cost ramifications of raising the school leaving age are significant. The government must ensure that all students, no matter where they live in Queensland, have equity of access to the option of staying at school until year 11. This budget shows absolutely no resources being given to those 57 state schools that currently do not go beyond year 10 to enable them to expand to the extra year. This severely restricts the options for those young people in areas of the state that do not have access to year 11 and as a result of this budget still will not have access to that option. That is simply not equitable and it must be addressed by this government. There will also be ramifications for those schools that already have year 12—to cope

with the increased numbers of students staying beyond year 10, a factor that will also have to be addressed by this government.

Not only are more students completing 12 years of schooling; enrolments are also growing. In 1998 there were 23,955 students enrolled in year 12 in the Queensland state system. By 2002 this number had increased to 26,273. The same applies to primary school enrolments in the state system. In 1997 there were 266,189 primary school students enrolled in Queensland state schools. By 2001 this number had grown steadily to 280,852. This means that there are more students starting school and more students staying at school longer—an extra year of schooling with prep trials and the compulsory school leaving age lifted to completion of year 10 or 16 years—yet this budget features a very modest increase, just enough to cover employee expenses.

These factors dramatically affect the numbers of new teachers required, not only to reduce class sizes—a major concern to both parents and teachers—but also to meet enrolment growth. Minister Bligh and the Treasurer have made much in the media, both in pre-budget leaks and after the budget was delivered, about the increase in teacher numbers. But what is the reality with regard to teacher numbers? When the figure is put under just a bit of scrutiny it is found that the numbers do fall short of what the minister herself has promised.

The minister told parliament last week that her government intended to employ 636 teachers for the 2004 year: 327 to reduce class sizes and complete the election commitment of 800 additional teachers above growth over four years; 249 to meet enrolment growth; and 60 to help students with special needs—the second stage of a \$60 million four-year initiative for students with disabilities.

While 327 teachers is by far the largest allocation over the four-year program to deliver on the election commitment to have 800 new teachers above growth, it still leaves a shortfall of 33 teachers to make up the promised 800. Some 440 teachers have been provided to date—158 for the 2003 school year, 135 for the 2002 school year and 147 for the 2001 school year. The government has come up short on that election promise. The number of teachers involved in the preparatory year trials has been sneakily included to bring the figure up to 800.

With regards to teachers to cover enrolment growth, in question on notice No. 1776 dated November 2002, Minister Bligh said Education Queensland projected 173.9 additional teachers would be employed in 2004 for preschool and primary growth and 336.7 teachers for secondary growth, a total of 510.6. Yet this has been revised down to just 249 in this year's budget.

Do the minister and Education Queensland anticipate a mass exodus from the state system, or is the government reallocating new teacher numbers from covering growth figures to prop up the election commitment of new teacher allocations? An average of 350 to 400 teachers are allocated for growth each year. Last year the figure was 339.7, in 2000 it was 400.3 and in 1999 it was 474.7. This year's budget allocation of 249 new teachers to cover enrolment growth falls short both in covering real enrolment growth numbers and in keeping up with increases due to growth in previous years.

One of the other areas of concern for many parents and teachers is that of behaviour management, and yet there has been no increase in this budget for behaviour management specialists. Student suspensions and exclusions have increased by over 55 per cent over the last two years in Queensland schools while the number of behaviour management specialists continues to remain unchanged. In parliament I asked the minister when Education Queensland would increase the number of behaviour management specialists to cope with the increase of violence in schools. In answer to the question without notice I asked regarding behaviour management, the minister highlighted that her government was employing more teachers as part of an election commitment. The burden of managing the behaviour of students is falling again on classroom teachers who are already stretched.

In 1999 Education Queensland employed 300 behaviour management specialists, including teacher aides, youth and social workers, and psychologists located in teams across the state to work with schools to prevent and deal with violence. Despite a dramatic increase in student disciplinary absences, this budget shows that not a single extra behaviour management specialist has been employed since, nor will there be for 2004. There are significant challenges ahead for Education Queensland, and there are areas in this budget which will in fact exacerbate those challenges in the years ahead rather than alleviate them.

I would now like to turn to how my own electorate has fared in this budget. I am extremely pleased that some money has been allocated for a new administration block at the Drayton P-7

State School—an amount of \$500,000 including \$450,000 for capital works. I have been working very long and hard on this issue, in conjunction with the school community, especially with the school P&C, and it is a block that is long overdue. I have sat in the administration block in the principal's office. The floor is on such a slope that, if the desk is put one way, the pen rolls off the desk and if you sit the other way you get a crick in your neck from looking at a certain angle. There is absolutely no privacy for any discussions the principal might have with students, staff or parents. If the principal has wanted to have confidential talks, he has had to walk around the oval. That is a very valuable addition to the Drayton school and one I know the school community will welcome.

The Centre of Excellence in Engineered Fibre Composites based at USQ has received a further \$2.5 million, which was part of a previously announced package. It is recognition of the work that USQ is doing in this very specialised area in conjunction with Wagners, a private company which is doing—

Mr McNamara: Great work.

Mr COPELAND:—great work, as the member for Hervey Bay has said. This private business is working in cooperation with a university and academic facility to commercialise the results of research projects. It is great to see on-the-ground results of that research and collaboration. For members who would like to see it, the Brisbane River Walk that the Brisbane City Council is establishing on the New Farm side of the river has been completed in fibre composites.

Mr Shine: The Smart State.

Mr COPELAND: Yes, it is a very smart university and a very smart company that is making that work possible.

There is a continued funding of \$570,000 for the Clontarf deviation on the Millmerran-Inglewood Road—a road between those two towns that runs between the electorates of Southern Downs and my own electorate. On the issue of road funding, it is a real shame that statewide spending on roads has decreased by 25 per cent in the last four to five years. The road network in Queensland is in dire straits and will need a massive injection of funds not only to continue to develop roads but also to maintain the ones that are there.

Similarly, the amount of money provided to local government in TIDS funding is now only \$4 million compared with \$35 million five years ago. Roads are falling into disrepair. Local governments are unable to continue to maintain roads and there are even cases in my electorate where local governments have had to return what were single lane bitumen roads to gravel roads. That is a real shame and is something which will need real attention from this government and future governments. If we are to continue to provide infrastructure that allows this state to develop, we will need to ensure that sort of funding is available for such a basic thing as road maintenance, road development and road building.

There is other work in Toowoomba and the Darling Downs region generally which will affect residents of the Cunningham electorate. Most of these items have been announced in previous budgets and this is a continuation of that. For example, the continued research into the soil borne disease fusarium wilt. Fusarium wilt does have the potential to severely threaten the cotton industry and is one area that we need to continue research into. We hear a lot about big name diseases such as fire ants and pest incursions, but there are other diseases on which we must not take our eye off the ball. One of course is fusarium wilt, which has been around for some time, and research needs to continue. There has been some recent research on wheat streak mosaic virus, which is also a threat to that industry.

Some \$18.46 million of federal money will complete the duplication of the Gatton bypass. I know all of us who travel on that road regularly will be very pleased to see that particular road finished. It has been a black spot for some time. It has been a site of a lot of accidents, a lot of deaths, and was overdue for funding when the federal government provided it. It is good to see that that project will be completed this year.

There is \$4.72 million to complete planning and land acquisition for the Toowoomba bypass. That is another project that cannot happen quickly enough. We need to ensure that project does go ahead. The existing Toowoomba range crossing is one of the largest freight carrying roads certainly in this state and around the country, and the Toowoomba bypass needs to be built to make sure we take that freight out of the centre of one of the main streets in Toowoomba and onto a highway, which will both improve safety in the middle of Toowoomba and the efficiency of the transport task to Brisbane.

In conjunction with the development of projects like the Charlton industrial estate, of which \$1.7 million is provided in the budget for the purchase of land, and the Toowoomba bypass we will see a significant change in focus for the distribution task. I have no doubt at all that the warehousing which we see in some outer Brisbane suburbs will be relocated to the west of Toowoomba. Given the ease of access that will provide for motorists into Brisbane, I think that will be a worthwhile development both for Brisbane and for the Darling Downs.

There is \$5.5 million to complete the Toowoomba Police Station. As the member for Toowoomba South said earlier, a lot of members of parliament have worked on this project for a number of years and it is a continuation of the work that has begun. There is an upgrade of the DSQ Toowoomba area office and \$2.9 million for the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE for a new health and social services facility.

One development that I am concerned about is the upgrade of the Tor Street office of DNR in Toowoomba and the relocation of staff from the CBD DNR office in Toowoomba. That is a real concern for people who access the services of DNR in Toowoomba. It also signals a change in focus of service delivery not only for Toowoomba but also for those smaller towns surrounding it. I have a DNR office in Pittsworth and a DNR office in Millmerran. I have asked the minister on numerous occasions if he would guarantee the future of those two offices. Certainly Pittsworth is in real danger. The minister will not guarantee that DNR will retain a presence in Pittsworth. Similarly the people of Millmerran are very concerned that face-to-face contact with officers from the DNR will discontinue. I think that would be a very backward step.

The DNR officer in Millmerran provides an absolutely brilliant service—practical service, practical advice—to the people who are wanting it and who are wanting to do the right thing. He is a very hardworking and, I believe, overworked officer. If that coalface position is to be taken out of Millmerran, then it would be a backward step for DNR and for the work that DNR is trying to achieve.

A number of sporting clubs in my electorate have received funding through the Queensland Minor Facilities Program that I would just like to mention in passing. The Clifton Bowls Club will be constructing ancillary green-side shade structures and seating for players at its facility in Clifton. The Pittsworth Bowls Club will also replace their bowling green ditch boards and upgrade the lighting to their lawn bowls greens. The Pittsworth and District Amateur Swimming Club will be constructing gymnasium facilities to support local swimming. That club is a very successful swimming club and that is a great addition to that club.

The Millmerran and District Shooting Club will be upgrading safety walls and constructing safety mounds, shooting bays and a target area roof for the club. The Sporting Shooters Association of Australia, about which I have spoken previously in this parliament, is going to install an ancillary Olympic standard running target system to support target shooting at its headquarters in Millmerran. The Kearney's Springs Sports Reserve Management Association is going to install ancillary lighting to four touch football fields at Kearney's Springs. That is a major touch football facility in Toowoomba. The Toowoomba Netball Association is installing ancillary lighting to four netball courts at Nell E. Robinson Park and the Toowoomba Softball Association is constructing four ancillary dugouts and four shade structures.

Those grants to those sporting facilities from the Minor Facilities Program are very, very important. If we are going to ensure that people in our electorates have the sort of lifestyle that we want them to have, and we need to ensure that they have, then those amounts of money are incredibly important to continue to develop those facilities. It is very difficult for those sporting groups to raise money on their own. They raise a lot of money that they pour back into their facilities. Largely, volunteers do that work. But to be able to supplement that voluntarily raised money with some government money really means that we will get excellent facilities in our electorates.

This budget is really a mixed bag. As has been referred to, a lot of questions have been asked and those questions will remain unanswered until we see the actual figures at the end of the year. As I said at the outset, there has been some creative accounting; there have been some optimistic forecasts. There is no doubt at all that we will be looking down the barrel of a fourth budget deficit in Queensland.

Mr PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (3.42 p.m.): It gives me pleasure to rise to speak in support of the Beattie-Mackenroth budget. It is pleasing to see that the priorities of this government have been focused fairly and squarely on those people who need assistance. I know that \$200 million has been put into Families, where it is most needed—for those vulnerable people who need all

the help that they can get. I know that the Treasurer would probably like to make available \$500 million or \$800 million, but he squeezed the budget as much as he could to make funds available for those in most need.

I would like to address some of the initiatives in Health that will be coming our way. An enormous amount of pressure is being put on the Queensland health system because the federal government is pulling back funds and is not adequately funding health. It is attacking Medicare. It is making it so that people cannot go and see their doctor and be bulk-billed. It is not making that facility available to those in most need. The number of people who go to a doctor and are bulk-billed is reducing every day. More and more people are accessing the Queensland Health system. That is making it harder and harder for our health system to continue to operate efficiently.

As a direct result of the decrease in the number of doctors bulk-billing, the Queensland public health system is showing a dramatic increase in the number of people requiring treatment in our public hospitals. The impact on Queensland's public health system is as a consequence of the federal government's continued failure to address the growing decline in bulk-billing along with a serious shortage of GPs. In the past three years, there has been a rise of 14 per cent in the number of non-urgent and semiurgent cases presenting themselves to public hospital emergency departments. In this same period, bulk-billing GP consultations have declined by an average of three per cent a year. This has resulted in a cost of \$43 million to the Queensland public hospital system. This figure of \$43 million does not include the significant flow-on costs relating to diagnostics, imaging and pharmaceuticals. We know that they are the very expensive items in our hospital system and they are continuing to rise out of proportion with every other cost.

During this same period, the federal government has allowed the private health insurance companies to increase their premiums by twice the increase in the CPI. Queenslanders are missing out three times over: they pay taxes to make sure that doctors get paid when people visit them, they also pay when they go to the doctor, and most people these days are also in a health scheme and they still have to pay for the gap.

The federal government's failed health policies are placing a significant added burden on Queenslanders while at the same time it is failing to meet its obligations for fair funding of the Queensland public health system. Owing to the time, I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my speech in *Hansard*

Leave granted.

IR Achievements

Reforms in the Building & Construction Industry

The Beattie Government has announced significant reforms in the building and construction industry.

This was done as a result of the need to address the dangers associated within this industry.

At present approximately 80% of all workplace fatalities and injuries occur within the building and construction industry.

With the introduction of these new reforms, everyone involved in the building and construction industry will, for the first time, be bound by a single set of regulations which are designed to improve and maintain workplace health and safety.

Critical areas which include working at heights, excavations, common equipment and the protection of workers and the general public from falling objects are focused on in these reforms.

Improved Workplace Health & Safety

The Beattie Government has considerably enhanced the focus on health and safety in the workplace. This has been in keeping with the rapidly changing nature of work in Queensland which is towards greater casual, temporary and part-time employment.

Queenslanders are now working longer hours and there is also the development of new economy industries—industries which have only come into existence in the last few years.

In the past financial year, more than 8900 workplaces were audited and inspectors issued more than 7400 safety notices.

The Department of Industrial Relations has also carried out a record number of education programs for industry on workplace health and safety issues in the past 12 months.

The rate of reported injuries which require more than one week off work has now significantly reduced from 18.3 per thousand workers in 1998 to 15.4 in 2001.

Australia's First Workplace Harassment Strategy

This was the most significant step forward anywhere in Australia. It tackles the growing problem which costs Australian industry an estimated \$13 billion a year.

The Queensland Government's Report by the Workplace Bullying Taskforce was made public in May 2003.

Recommendations include powers for the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission to mediate serious disputes, legislative changes under the Industrial Relations Act, and a new advisory standard that defines workplace harassment and focuses on prevention and management of the behaviour.

A working party has been created to deal with the introduction of the key recommendation of the Taskforce.

Greater Pay Equity for Men & Women Workers

From May 1, 2003 the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission is required to ensure that both awards and agreements in the workplace provide for equal remuneration for men and women workers.

The Government has also given the Commission greater powers to set and review a minimum wage for all employees on an annual basis—for the first time providing protection of our lowest paid and most vulnerable workers.

Workers Compensation & Rehabilitation

This Government has always been committed to ensuring that there is balance and equity in the Queensland Workers Compensation Scheme.

In 2001 this government improved workers' compensation entitlements.

In 2002 we brought certainty to cross border compensation arrangements.

We have successively reduced premium rates and we have maintained the lowest average premium rate for Australian employers.

The Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Bill 2003 which was recently passed in this House places a strong emphasis on rehabilitation.

This is a vital component in any successful workers' compensation outcome, both for the worker and the employer.

Previously some rehabilitation practices were not in the best interests of workers. Concentration was placed on having the worker back in the workplace as soon as possible even if they were unproductive. Naturally this frequently resulted in the worker being subsequently dismissed because there was no work for them.

We have a responsibility to ensure that people who are injured at work through no fault of their own are properly rehabilitated and return to the workplace as productive employees.

Better Balancing Work & Family Commitments

Improvements to WorkCover

Extended Trading Hours Protecting Employee Wages

BULIMBA ELECTORATE:

\$1.75 million for additional classrooms at Norman Park State School;

\$67,000 to repaint school buildings at Cannon Hill State School and Seven Hills State School; and

\$25,000 to undertake a master plan for Norman Park State School.

In addition there is \$132,000 for local road and drainage works;

\$614,000 to replace the Balmoral Ambulance Station; and

\$4.95 million to establish a special operations unit and relocate the Balmoral Fire Station.

Other initiatives in Bulimba and surrounding suburbs include:

\$5 million for noise barrier works (Includes electorates of Bulimba, Greenslopes, South Brisbane, Waterford and Woodridge)

- \$472,000 to construct seven new public housing units
- \$63,000 to the Lutheran Church of Australia—Mary and Martha's Women's Refuge as part of the Crisis Accommodation Program.
- \$2.98 million for the establishment of the Murarrie Industrial Estate

Housing

The major source of funding for the supply of affordable housing in Queensland is through the Commonwealth State Housing Agreement.

The next Commonwealth State Housing Agreement is currently being negotiated.

For the first time the agreement being offered by the Commonwealth does provide indexation, but an efficiency dividend is still in place.

Funding from one year to the next will not keep pace with inflation.

While indexation is an improvement on previous agreements, it still means that more and more needy Queenslanders will not be assisted by the Department of Housing, while others who can ill-afford to do so will have a longer wait.

The decision by the Commonwealth to stop compensating housing authorities for the introduction of GST is of even more concern.

Previously the Department of Housing received almost \$20m a year since the introduction of GST to compensate for increased building costs and the costs of other services.

The Commonwealth has made it very clear that they are not interested in continuing these payments.

Queensland will receive approximately \$911 million over the next five years. However, when compared with the funding received in 2002/03, this will mean reductions of \$66.7m excluding the GST compensation and \$173.6m including GST compensation over the life of the agreement.

The biggest impact will be on those households which are in the most vulnerable position in our society.

We will see a longer waitlist and the average period of time that clients have to wait for housing will increase along with few new constructions taking place.

Applications for public housing in Queensland as at 30 April 2003 were 29,576 as opposed to 30 April 2001 which was 24,417.

The average allocation time has increased in this same period from 1.1 years to 1.5 years.

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN (Stafford—ALP) (3.46 p.m.): In rising to support the bills before the House, I want to thank the Treasurer and the Premier for giving to Queensland what it needs and what it deserves. How we as families and how we as a society devote our time, energy and money indicates our priorities. When this government will give to health, personal safety, housing, education, disability and community services the highest priority, it shows that this government is addressing the essential needs and the greatest needs of our community. The measure of any decent society is not how it treats its most favoured citizens; it is how it treats the citizens who are most in need. To that end, this budget is a success.

I would like to mention specifically some matters relating to health. The Prince Charles Hospital is the flagship for cardiac and thoracic services for northern New South Wales, Queensland and the south-west Pacific. More than \$3 million of extra funding has been allocated for defibrillators, intensive care ventilators, the EC machine and the CT scanner, which is essential, world-class equipment that will be used by Queenslanders throughout the state. Although I have the privilege of having the hospital based in my electorate, all members will have constituents who share in those facilities. There are specific cardiac, intensive care, cancer and renal services that are provided through the Royal Brisbane Hospital, the Royal Children's Hospital and the Prince Charles Hospital which my constituents and others can share.

As many of my colleagues have said, for the first time the Queensland Police Service budget has reached \$1 billion. I know that my constituents will benefit from the tactical crime squad that will be established on the north side of Brisbane. The Stafford electorate has one of the highest percentages of citizens aged over 60. The Australian Institute of Criminology has undertaken a number of studies which show that the fear of crime for the elderly is actually disproportionately higher than the actual crime rate. A fortress mentality develops because of scare tactics—sometimes a sort of a bidding war for law and order—and older persons become disproportionately scared within their own homes. I know that by tackling crime, housebreaking and drug offences this tactical crime squad will have a positive effect, particularly on the elderly people in my electorate.

I want to thank particularly the Minister for Housing for the \$5.86 million for the purchase of land, construction and development of 54 dwellings in the Stafford electorate. A number of these units are going to be seniors units. We have in the Stafford electorate a large number of elderly people in Department of Housing homes who wish to move to smaller housing units but who do not want to move out of the area. Those people want to stay in the Chermshire-Wavell Heights area where they have lived for many years and where their families have grown up and, in many cases, one of the partners has died.

Mr Lawlor interjected.

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: They are. I thank the member for Southport for his comment. For those people to stay in their local community where they know their local doctor, the local shops and local clubs means that we have to provide seniors units. I thank Minister Schwarten and the Treasurer for the provision of those units and for the upgrade to existing public housing stock. The community rent scheme acts as another form of public housing and the almost half a million dollars provided for that will be greatly received.

The Chermshire and District Senior Citizens Centre, or Burnie Brae as it is affectionately known, takes part in a number of joint projects with various government departments. Its Home Assist/Home Secure Program is an excellent service and the quarter of a million dollars being provided for that will be extremely well used. I had the privilege of being at a function this afternoon with members of the Kedron-Wavell Services Club. A gentleman who is a member of the Kedron-Wavell Services Board works with the CHATS program, which is a combined effort of Burnie Brae and the RSL sub-branch to provide care for veterans who are needing respite and needing rehabilitation. This funding will help them.

Every single one of us on the Labor side values the money being spent on education and all of us will share in the 636 extra classroom teachers across the state. I will express as a former teacher some disappointment in some comments coming from the Queensland Teachers Union in its lack of support for this budget. I know that the service industries—health, education and family services—are difficult areas to fund, but I think that a more realistic approach by the QTU would be the balance between fiscal responsibility and the needs to be addressed.

Judy Spence and her department and her predecessor, Anna Bligh, have done remarkable work in the area of family services. When I first came into parliament almost every family services issue that came to my electorate was a crisis situation. With the massive increases that the Beattie Labor government and previously the Goss government put into this area, we are now starting to manage this in a much more realistic way. I also am appreciative on behalf of the 251 people who have already gained jobs in Stafford in the first round of the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle funding, and I know that more people will participate through the \$26.4 million provided across Brisbane for the continuation of this funding initiative. Because Queenslanders pay about 28 per cent less tax compared to other states, we are better off but we do have a difficulty then in managing the services.

I congratulate the Treasurer in his financial management where we have retained our AAA rating and I have confidence that the Beattie Labor government will continue to provide the services that Queenslanders need while being financially responsible. I support the appropriation bills before the House.

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (3.52 p.m.), in reply: I would like to thank members for their contributions to the debate. They have highlighted the many positive aspects of this budget, a budget that delivers on the Smart State vision. The boost to health, disabilities, education and housing combined with funding for future Smart State initiatives clearly shows that we are delivering on that vision. However, in all the many positive comments on the budget, including from various members opposite, there are some grossly inaccurate comments from the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Liberal Party and the member for Moggill that warrant correction. Some of the key mistakes made by these speakers are repeated in the pamphlet issued yesterday—the so-called BP4, 'Balloon Paper No. 4'—which is typical of the coalition, because there are only three balloons. What we find in its balloons, like the opposition in general, is that they are full of hot air. I seek leave to incorporate the answers to the claims in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Taxation

Firstly, I would like to point to the fact that if we had a Coalition Government in power we would have had higher taxes than under a Beattie Government.

In the 2003-04 Budget, the Beattie Government has forecasts of State taxes equal to some 4.1% of State output.

Compare that to the last Borbidge Government, as Mr Springborg wants us to do, and you will find they raised taxes at the rate of 4.7% of State output in 1997-98.

You will also find growth in taxation revenue in the two years of the previous Coalition Government was \$500 million.

So, if the Beattie Government had decided to raise taxes at the rate the Coalition did, we would have another \$800 million in taxes in this Budget.

Operating Result

In terms of the Operating result I would like to begin by quoting from articles this week by the respected financial commentators, Alan Woods, in *The Australian*, and Alan Mitchell in *The Australian Financial Review*.

Firstly, Alan Wood, the economics editor of the *Australian* said in his article on Wednesday following the Budget,

"If Queensland treated super the same way most of the other states do then, instead of a \$350 million deficit it would be showing a \$587 million surplus this year"

"That is what you would expect with a booming state economy"

He went on to say

"Queensland still has a balance sheet that makes all the other states look sick, the lowest taxes and the fastest economic growth."

Alan Mitchell, Economics Editor of the *Australian Financial Review* agreed in his article where he commented that if Queensland had arranged its superannuation finances like other states we would have a surplus of almost \$600 million.

The *Financial Review* also quotes Standard & Poor's director Rick Shepherd saying the budget released on Tuesday would ensure the state retained its AAA credit rating and that "Queensland's balance sheet remains the strongest of the Australian states.....and "the Government's underlying finances are robust ..."

The Government has explained on many occasions that its underlying operating position is very strong, and that it has been investment returns that have generated the recent operating deficits. Respected financial commentators agree.

Opposition hot air about the State being broke is just that: Hot air. The more they say it the more it reflects either a lack of understanding or a blatant deceitfulness, and their inability to be trusted with the State's finances.

Investment Returns

This lack of understanding and inability to grasp the facts is no more evident than in the comments by the Leader of the Opposition on investment returns.

When letting out some hot air on investment returns he stated:

"Effectively, what we have is a Budget framed around economic assumptions—".

Well, I hate to be the one that tells the Member this, but all Budgets are framed using assumptions about the economy and State finances. It is what Budgets are all about.

The Government has been very clear in this Budget and in the previous Budget that investment returns are based on the actuarially-assessed long run average return of 7.5%. The best available advice has been considered in using this assumption.

Other State Governments frame their Budgets based on assumed long term rates or return.

I would ask Mr Springborg this: "What is the practical alternative to using the long run average return?" To do anything else but use the average rate of return assumption would be a folly.

We will continue to use the long-term investment return assumption provided to us by the State Actuary based on his assessment of the long-run history.

We also had the respected international asset management firm Mercer's look at our assumptions, and they told us "it is reasonable to assume that a long-term return of 7.5% per annum is achievable". I have already tabled that report.

And as recently as Wednesday this week, the Australian Financial Review reported that the Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia (ASFA) uses 7% as the long-term average return assumption for future investment returns.

This is essentially no different to Queensland, as the extra half a percent extra in our assumption reflects our reasonable expectation of the Queensland Investment Corporation's (QIC) gains from active management—as Mercer's also pointed out.

We are yet to hear from the Opposition Leader what he would actually do about this. I presume he would change the investment earnings assumption. I ask: "On what basis? On whose advice?"

As picked up by financial commentators in both the AFR and Australian, Queensland has a strong underlying surplus. They both agree Queensland's unique presentation of our investment returns has created the recent operating deficits. Nothing else.

To suggest that the Govt will need to quote "do something" to address this issue displays a total ignorance of this fundamental Budget issue for Qld.

Presumably, if in Government, the current Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Treasurer would wake up every morning and check what the Dow Jones did overnight. If the Dow Jones went down overnight, they would then ring Ministers and tell them to start firing public servants. Then if the Dow goes up the next night, they would ring the Ministers again and tell them to hire them back.

It needs to be understood that funds held and invested for superannuation and the earnings on these funds are not used by the Government to fund services.

In years where returns are greater than 7.5%, the higher than expected returns are held and drawn on in years where returns are below 7.5%. That is how the Actuary comes up with the long-term average: the better than expected average years provide the buffer to absorb the poor.

Therefore, the Government does not need to increase taxes and charges when investment returns are down and the accounts produce an overall operating deficit as a result.

Unemployment

Another gust of hot air to come from the Opposition Leader's pamphlet was the comparison of Queensland unemployment rate to that of Victoria and the rest of Australia—that have population and labour force growth rates nowhere near Queensland's rates.

Our population growth rate is currently 2_%—double that of the rest of Australia. Of course, that is going to have an impact on our capacity to further reduce unemployment from where it is now. We do not deny that. In fact, almost perversely for the Opposition, we welcome it because we know those extra people will eventually mean more demand, more workers & more jobs. It puts us in a better position to cope with the population ageing over the next 20 years or so.

I note that unemployment was one of the few areas where the Opposition Leader chose not to compare the present Government with the Borbidge Government. Because if he did, he would have had to tell the truth about the unemployment rate when the Coalition left office—it was 9%, and reached a peak of 9.5% in February 1997.

Under the Beattie Government it now is down to 7%, the lowest it has been in thirteen years. The Government's employment record is the best in the country. Since coming to Office in 1998, the Government has created 200,000 jobs.

Unemployment would have been higher under a Coalition Government because it would not have invested in skills development programs like Breaking the Unemployment Cycle that have delivered thousands of additional jobs for Queenslanders, nor would it have actively sought new industries like we have with our Smart State Strategy.

Job Creation Forecasts

The last Coalition hot air balloon I would like to address is the chart on job creation forecasts, which I burst this morning.

Members will be asking themselves, "Why, given it has been five years since the Coalition was in Government, would the Opposition want to compare the record based on forecasts—rather than actual outcomes?"

The reason is the Opposition Leader did not want us to focus on the actual results. Because when you do, his balloon is burst.

Take 1996-97. Actual jobs growth only was 22,300—not the forecast of 45,000 used by the Opposition Leader yesterday in Balloon Paper No 4. And they did not achieve their 1997-98 forecast of 50,000 either.

Last year, we exceeded our Budget jobs forecast by 12,000 in creating 55,000 jobs.

We have averaged around 40,000 jobs per year in our five years in Office—the Coalition managed only 35,000 per year. That's actual results; not forecasts.

Ambulance Levy Commitment

But if Members thought there was little else the Leader of the Opposition could get wrong yesterday then they should think again.

The Opposition Leader seemed to think that sacking 170 public servants will provide \$23 million to pay for only individual bills on the Ambulance Levy.

One would think that if you are going to offer up an initiative you would fully cost the proposal. Rather than \$23 million, sacking 170 public servants would at best get you \$13 million. And that is being generous. Perhaps the Opposition would first make all 170 public servants into Senior Executive Service officers and then sack them. They would still come up short.

Capital Works

Not satisfied with shooting down his own balloons, the Leader of the Opposition decided to fly into the issue of the capital works budget and what should and shouldn't be counted as capital works.

This produced another interesting statement:

"Capital works is about building things, not about buying things".

This statement is based on the belief that plant and equipment like cars, computers, turbines, transformers, trains, X-Ray machines or the like should not be counted as capital works. Again, it falls upon me to point out this is a ridiculous statement.

Yes, this year's Capital Statement does include the capital spending of the Department of Public Works' Commercialised Business Units like QBuild, QFleet, Project Services, Goprint, and Sales and Distribution Services.

They have always been included in the Government Finance Statistics (GFS) definition of purchases of capital and their inclusion provides consistency between that presentation and the Budget papers and gives a complete picture of capital works undertaken by public sector entities.

Again, comparing to the last Coalition Government, which Mr Springborg wants us to do, the purchase of plant and equipment, excluding QFleet vehicles, was included in their GFS Capital budget figures. Their documentation was never purely limited to bricks and mortar investment.

I would also point out that where capital purchases relate to plant and equipment, such as motor vehicles and computer equipment, these purchases are not included in the capital works employment generation numbers.

Furthermore, section 45 of the Financial Management Standard requires all agencies to set an amount not exceeding \$10,000 as the threshold for recognising non-current physical assets. In other words, any amount in excess of the threshold limit set by Q Fleet must be capitalised and any amount under that threshold must be expensed.

Given that most of the Government's cars would have individual capital purchase costs of over \$10,000 for each vehicle (and that Q-Fleet actually purchases such vehicles and does not lease them), it is appropriate to capitalise such costs and recognise them as an asset in the whole of Government financial statements.

The other side of that accounting treatment is that the capital cost of the vehicles is then depreciated over their useful lives and recognised as an expense in the whole of Government Operating Statement. So the treatment of the Q-Fleet vehicles on the balance sheet and in the capital works Budget actually will add to operating expenses. But that is the correct treatment and the right thing to do.

Road Funding

An important part of the capital works Budget relates to road funding.

As Mr Springborg suggests, we should first look at how the last Coalition Government performed.

And the first thing we should highlight is that the 1997-98 capital program included \$922.2M for roads—not the \$1.2 billion mentioned here yesterday. On the face of it, though, it still looks like a decent number.

However, the fact is that this number included road maintenance as capital expenditure. So in those days filling pot holes and line painting was counted as capital works.

I think road maintenance is vitally important work but I don't think it was what the Opposition had in mind when they were going on about capital works being about "building things". We certainly don't, and have excluded maintenance from our capital works figures now for some years.

If you exclude the \$226M for road maintenance, the 1997-98 capital program for roads was actually \$696M, not \$922M.

The 2003-04 Budget for roads capital is \$778M. Even if we remove \$44M in road capital grants to local government, it still leaves \$734M in capital works by the State on a basis comparable with the last Opposition capital works program.

That of course, though, is an increase on the 1997-98 program—not a 25% reduction as suggested by the Opposition Leader yesterday.

Asset Revaluations and Net Worth

A lot of hot air was generated on the issue of asset valuations and how this alone contributed to the improvement in Net Worth.

Regular revaluations of all land, buildings, infrastructure, heritage and cultural assets are required under Accounting Standard AAS 1041 Revaluation of Non-Current Assets and Queensland Treasury's Non-Current Asset Accounting Guidelines for the Queensland Public Sector. In this respect, it is wrong to be suggesting that the State should not be doing it.

We always have included revaluations of non-financial assets in our budgeted figures ever since we started accrual budgeting in 1999-2000. Contrary to the statement of the member for Moggill yesterday, we did not do this for the first time this year. This is not a change. It is what we have always done—and why?

A quick perusal of the State's audited AAS31 Whole-of-Government Accounting Reports shows you. The \$1.7 billion figure included in the 2002-03 Estimated Actual, or the figure included in the 2003-04 Budget, are by no means out of proportion with results in the past.

Revaluations included in the past AAS31 Reports are as follows:

- 1996-97: \$5.85 billion
- 1997-98: \$814 million
- 1998-99: \$1.048 billion
- 1999-2000: \$897 million
- 2000-01: \$2.09 billion
- 2001-02: \$2.377 billion

As we can see, the Borbidge Government presided over revaluations of \$6.6 billion, in just two years. So a \$1.7 billion provision looks pretty reasonable compared to that.

There is nothing new or mysterious about this happening and indeed as I said, departments are required to do so. I also should add to correct some misleading comments yesterday that Treasury somehow makes up these figures.

They are provided to Treasury by departments and agencies, and based on their own assessments of the likely movement in their asset bases over the budget period.

All revaluations of assets when finalised are signed off by the Auditor-General in completing his annual audit of Agency accounts and the Government's AAS31 Consolidated Report.

The largest revaluations in 2002-03 are, not surprisingly, given the size and nature of their asset bases, Main Roads (\$611 million) and Natural Resources & Mines (for Crown Land—\$555 million).

Depreciation

As I highlighted previously, if you have assets you need to record the economic cost of using those assets, or the depreciation expense.

And as disclosed quite clearly in the Budget Papers was a change in the depreciation expense for Main Roads and the department of Housing.

In simple terms what we have is a change to the rate of depreciation applied to our roads and public housing stock to a rate more consistent with that used by other States.

The change to these depreciation rates stems from considerable work over many months by the departments involved. What the Budget did was disclose the outcome of the work undertaken by those departments to better manage their expenses. They should be congratulated for doing that.

The Department of Main Roads has been reviewing the appropriateness of its depreciation methodology for roads and bridges since September 2001, and is moving to a methodology which takes into account the residual value of those assets. The Queensland Audit Office (QAO) was represented on the Working Party responsible for developing the revised methodology.

The change to Housing depreciation came from extensive work undertaken with the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and the Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in developing a model which accurately identifies maintenance and upgrade requirements of dwellings. Even after these changes, the rate of depreciation on Queensland's housing stock is still expected to be higher than those applying in other States.

Decisions regarding the depreciation of assets are made by the Accountable Officers of departments and ultimately signed off by the QAO.

Overall, Qld still depreciates its assets at a faster rate than other States, and this makes our expenses higher than they would otherwise be.

For example in the 2002-03 Budget Queensland's depreciation expenses were 3.37% of the value of our fiscal assets. Victoria's ratio was 2.45% and NSW 2.02%. In other words our, depreciation expense was 50% greater than Victoria and NSW in relative terms.

After the revision to the depreciation expense, Queensland's ratio will still be well above that of NSW and Victoria at 2.88%.

Public Service Staffing

Mr Speaker I would like to turn to the issue of public sector staffing raised by the Opposition in the Budget debate.

The Ministerial Portfolio Statements (MPS) contain information on total full time equivalents (FTEs) employed by departments (including commercialised business units, and in some instances statutory bodies), both for 2002-03 (estimated actual) and the 2003-04 Budget.

Based on information contained in the MPSs, FTEs will increase from an estimated actual of 159,287 in 2002-03 to an estimated 160,925 in 2003-04. This is an increase of 1,638 or 1.0%.

The significant staffing increases are expected in core service delivery areas. Together, Education, Police, Queensland Health and Emergency Services account for 1,436 of the 1,638 additional staff. This includes funding for an additional 636 teachers and approximately 300 police.

The fall in Department of Primary Industries FTEs from 3,217 to 3,168 reflects the wind down of activity under the South East Queensland Regional Hardwood Agreement and a reduction in the number of temporary staff required under the Fire Ant Eradication Program.

The fall in the Department of Innovation and Information Economy and Sport and Recreation Queensland's FTEs from 1,359 to 1,295 reflects the completion of fixed life initiatives such as Access Queensland and Electronic Service Delivery.

But one cannot expect to have the fastest growing economy in Australia and fastest growing population in the country without an increased demand for public services and the people required to deliver those services.

But as I pointed out earlier, the Opposition has a perverse approach to employment of public servants linked to the equity market.

Further, he and the Member for Moggill believe we should dispense with providing public servants to deliver essential public services and just build things or get the private sector to build them.

Indeed, the Leader of the Opposition would keep building hospitals so long as, in the words of the Member for Moggill, it keeps the private sector employed. No need to worry about funding and staffing them, like they did with Noosa and Robina hospitals.

So what the Opposition wants to do is to keep building hospitals but not staff them. That is worse than anything a Sir Humphrey could dream up.

Conclusion

Mr Speaker, I am proud of this Budget. As I said in closing the second reading speech, this Budget continues a long line of achievements for the Beattie Government. No amount of deceitfulness and misrepresentation from the Opposition can take that away.

In delivering this Budget the Beattie Government can point to a list of achievements:

- fully funding all the Government's commitments;
- education and training reforms for the future;
- funding for family services and particularly child protection;
- improved health services
- a better deal to people with disabilities; and
- a better quality of life for all Queenslanders.

Motion agreed to.

Reference to Estimates Committees

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, in accordance with the sessional orders adopted by the House on 30 April 2003, the Appropriation Bill and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill are referred to the estimates committees for consideration and report.

PETITIONS

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Honourable members, due to the extended recess that we are about to take, I now ask the Clerk to read the petitions lodged.

The following honourable members have lodged paper petitions for presentation—

Roundabout, Dawson Highway, Gladstone

Mrs Liz Cunningham from 49 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.

Scarborough Boat Harbour Precinct Breakwater

Mr Speaker from 2891 petitioners requesting the House to not approve any residential or multi-level development and halts the sale of the reclaimed Scarborough Boat Harbour Precinct Breakwater and that it protects the existing mangrove stand on the south western edge from any extensions proposed for that area and that the mangrove stand and adjoining reclaimed foreshore be protected and given to the people as enduring parkland.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (3.55 p.m.): I move—
That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 19 August 2003.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. A. M. BLIGH (South Brisbane—ALP) (Leader of the House) (3.55 p.m.): I move—
That the House do now adjourn.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 3.55 p.m.