



Speech by

Mr D. BRISKEY

MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND

Hansard 17 September 1998

**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL
APPROPRIATION BILL**

Mr BRISKEY (Cleveland—ALP) (5.46 p.m.): Mr Speaker—

Ms Bligh: It is a hard act to follow.

Mr BRISKEY: It certainly is. I ask the honourable member for Callide to go back to his office and read his copy of the Budget papers. I would then expect him to come back into this place and apologise for misleading the House.

Mr Hamill: It is just a shame our literacy and numeracy initiatives weren't around when he was at school.

Mr BRISKEY: It is a shame. They are around now, and that is a great benefit for the people of Queensland. I hope that the honourable member for Callide will go back and read the Budget papers more carefully.

The Beattie Government was elected just four months ago on a commitment to job security and job creation. We are committed to getting Queensland working again. This Budget begins the task of reducing the State's unemployment rate to 5% within five years. This target is a major challenge but one we believe to be extremely important. I am personally proud of this goal to reduce unemployment to 5% within five years. It is something that only a Labor Government would aspire to. It commits this Government to not just reducing unemployment, but reducing it dramatically.

Every decision of the Beattie Labor Government will be made in the light of our commitment to reduce unemployment to 5% within five years. With the current unemployment level at 8.8%, we cannot afford to delay the implementation of our employment programs. That is why we believed it absolutely necessary to bring down this Budget—so that funds could be directed without delay to the most important issue confronting our State: unemployment.

The 1998-99 Budget is an employment Budget, a jobs Budget. It lays the foundation for the creation of more jobs and greater job security in the future. It is encouraging to see that, as a result of the measures taken in this Budget, the unemployment rate is forecast to trend downward over the year to be 8.5% in the June quarter of 1999. At the centre of this Budget is the Government's \$283m over four years Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative. This initiative will create 24,500 jobs over the next four years. Through this program the most disadvantaged in the labour market—the young unemployed—will be given hands-on experience and a chance to enter the work force, in many cases perhaps for the first time.

The Government's package to drive down unemployment consists of—

Firstly, a subsidy program to provide an extra 7,500 apprenticeships and traineeships in industries where there are skills shortages or in regions with poor employment prospects. A \$2,000 cash bonus will be offered to employers or group training schemes which employ additional apprentices in skill shortage areas such as tourism, building and construction, and metals and engineering industries.

Secondly, a public sector traineeship and apprenticeship initiative creating 6,000 trainee and 500 apprentice positions throughout all State Government departments and agencies, and local government.

Thirdly, implementation of the Government's community jobs plan to break the unemployment cycle for 9,000 long-term unemployed people by providing jobs for three to six months on public works and environmental projects.

Fourthly, strict enforcement of the 10% training rule on Government public works projects to provide 900 additional apprenticeships in the building and construction industry.

Fifthly, expanding the Housing Industry Trade Training Program to create 600 new building and construction industry apprenticeships.

Sixthly, granting \$1.3m a year to fund a start-up allowance of up to \$300 for apprentices and trainees requiring specialised equipment for their industry, such as tools or protective equipment.

In addition to the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiatives, a \$5.4m industry training fund for the building and construction industry is to be established to employ an estimated 800 to 1,000 additional apprentices a year, helping to ease skills shortages in the industry.

This Government is about providing real training opportunities through apprenticeships which equip Queenslanders with the skills needed to compete in the global economy. This goal is a part of the Government's employment strategy and a central part of this Budget. This Budget provides \$56m or a 10.8% increase in expenditure for vocational education and training bringing total spending, including TAFE capital works and user charging, to \$572m. Included in this additional TAFE capital works spending is an additional \$8m for the Bayside campus of the Moreton Institute of TAFE at Alexandra Hills. This funding is long overdue. It had been allocated by the previous Labor Government but then scrapped by the coalition. Robbing Redland Shire youth of this important education funding was one of the many examples of the short-sighted and petty approach members opposite brought to Government.

As a local member, I fought hard to get the Bayside TAFE campus back on the Capital Works Program after it was axed by the coalition and I am delighted that \$700,000 is allocated in this Budget to begin the construction of \$8m worth of state-of-the-art education and training facilities in the Redland Shire. This funding means better education and training facilities for Redland youth while also enabling the creation of local jobs and provision of on-the-job training in the highly important building and construction industry. This funding demonstrates the Government's commitment to job growth and training for the future.

The 1998-99 Budget includes a \$4.8 billion Capital Works Program to build State assets and underwrite employment growth. As the Treasurer pointed out on Tuesday, it is important that during a period of global economic instability Governments take the initiative and introduce programs that will stimulate demand and also provide a strong foundation for future economic growth.

The Capital Works Program in Labor's 1998-99 Budget will provide more than 65,000 jobs, including 17,800 new jobs and ongoing employment for another 47,800 workers. The Capital Works Program provides communities with essential infrastructure while also enabling the creation of jobs and the provision of on-the-job training in the highly important building and construction industry. The 1998-99 Capital Works Program represents an increase of 26.3% on 1997-98. Major spending programs include: \$1,039.8m for roads, creating 4,729 jobs across Queensland; \$830.9m for the mines, energy and electricity industry; \$732.1m for the Queensland Rail network; \$608.7m for hospitals and other health works; \$299m for new police, justice and correctional facilities; and \$222.1m for Queensland schools.

Labor's Capital Works Program means better facilities and better services for local communities. For example, the Beattie Labor Government's first Budget provides \$23m of capital works spending in the Redland Shire. These funds will provide local communities in my electorate and the neighbouring Capalaba and Redlands electorates with job-creating programs that also build first-class facilities.

I am particularly delighted with the \$1.6m provided to construct new commerce, music, amenities and staff buildings at the new Victoria Point State High School. These new facilities will further enhance the excellent work being done by Dr McKennarney and his staff at the Victoria Point State High School. The new school buildings, plus the additional \$8m for the Bayside TAFE campus, demonstrate the Beattie Government's commitment to providing our students with the finest education and training available in the State.

Other new projects to receive money include over \$700,000 for replacement jetties at Lamb Island and Karragarra Island and \$305,000 for dredging Canaipa Passage and \$356,000

for roadside infrastructure in the Redlands. Ambulance services in my local area will also be boosted by over \$500,000 for new ambulance stations at Macleay Island and Redland Bay, and \$409,000 for the completion of Cleveland's replacement ambulance station. Funding is also provided in this Budget for the continuation of capital works funding for projects that were already under way. These include nearly \$15m for the Redland Hospital redevelopment, \$2m to complete Cleveland's new courthouse and \$2m to complete the new police station and watch-house in Cleveland. I look forward to attending a function in a couple of weeks' time to say goodbye to the old police station. It should have been demolished many years ago.

This Budget does more than just set in place the policies and programs to drive down unemployment. It is also a Budget that reflects the Beattie Labor Government's commitment to providing local communities with the resources needed to function effectively. The Government understands that unemployment creates hardship not only for unemployed people but also for their families, friends, and the wider community. The Beattie Labor Government is committed to working in partnership with the general community, groups and organisations and all levels of Government to help alleviate the social problems associated with unemployment by improving community facilities and putting people on the ground to service community needs.

Specific community initiatives in this Budget include: \$7.5m in 1998-99, and \$15m a year from 1999-2000, for a community renewal program in Waterford, Eagleby, Beenleigh, Leichhardt, Riverview, Garbutt, Manooora and Inala; \$5m in 1998-99, and \$35m over four years, to develop and upgrade community, sport and recreation facilities; and an additional \$1.6m in 1998-99 and in 1999-2000 for the rural communities infrastructure program to be known as the Rural Living Infrastructure Program to assist local governments to build or upgrade community, recreational and tourist facilities and to help create jobs in smaller communities.

Mr BRISKEY (Cleveland—ALP) (8.30 p.m.), continuing: Before the dinner adjournment I was outlining some of the areas where the first Beattie Labor Government's Budget is strengthening local communities within Queensland. Before I mention the rest of those matters, I want to advise the House that earlier this evening I was speaking about the Bayside campus of the Moreton Institute of TAFE. I understand that the current occupant of the chair, the member for Mansfield, is a past student of that college. I know that he believes, as I do, that it is an excellent institute of further education. I understand that the honourable member passed with flying colours.

I will continue outlining the initiatives that will strengthen local communities within our great State. These initiatives include: as part of the Education for All initiative, 127 additional teachers and other staff will be employed throughout the State to improve services and outcomes for students with disabilities and learning difficulties; 25 extra nurses per year for four years—100 in total—will be employed in secondary schools to advance drug and alcohol education; 30 staff will be employed under the Regional Communities Plan to help make Government policy more relevant to regions and facilitate opportunities for employment growth; the establishment of community-based juvenile justice centres for Ipswich, Logan City and Townsville employing more than 40 people; \$2.5m in grants for community development projects, including creating jobs in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; \$2.4m over three years to establish three work-based child-care centres in public sector work places, making it easier for families to balance work with family needs; and \$21.5m for planned expenditure on water and sewerage projects in 1998-99 under the \$150m Small Communities Assistance Plan.

The Beattie Government's strengthening of local community initiatives is further supported by the Government's commitment to Queenslanders with special needs. This Budget includes the largest financial commitment ever made in this State to disability services. This needs to be emphasised. We have honoured the promise made during the election campaign to deliver an additional \$30m a year as part of a \$137.8m funding package to address the high levels of unmet needs for disability services in our community.

The Beattie Labor Government's first Budget also includes significant benefits for elderly Queenslanders, many of whom live in my electorate. This Budget includes \$22.6m over four years in additional State funding to significantly enhance home help services. The Budget provides funding for free ambulance services for pensioners, Queensland Seniors Card holders and their dependants. This benefit will be available to an estimated 850,000 Queenslanders from 1 January 1999, which is also the start-up date for the 50% concession for pensioners and holders of Seniors Cards who travel on water taxis to North Stradbroke Island and other Moreton Bay islands. This concession will also be available for travel to Magnetic Island. This extension of the building better buses and ferries program applies to commuter ferries only and brings these services into line with concessions provided to seniors on other public transport services. This benefit will be warmly welcomed in my electorate.

The Beattie Labor Government has brought down an economically and socially responsible 1998-99 Budget in a time of global economic instability. The Queensland economy is not fireproofed against the economic turmoil that has engulfed our major trading partners in the region. This Budget, however, lays the foundation on which the Beattie Labor Government will build a strong, employed and socially caring Queensland.
