



Speech by

GEOFF WILSON

MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL

APPROPRIATION BILL

Mr WILSON (Ferry Grove—ALP) (12.33 p.m.): It is with great delight that I rise here today to address this House on a Ferry Grove-friendly Budget. That is the Budget that the Premier and the Treasurer have brought down. It is a friendly Budget to the electorate of the member for Mansfield, who spoke earlier, as it is to many other electorates throughout Queensland.

I wholeheartedly commend the Premier and the Treasurer for this excellent first Budget, which puts heart back into traditional Labor concerns such as job creation, job security, education, families and so on. What is particularly good about this Budget is that it starts to address the balance that there must be between our social responsibility to the community and our obligation to manage the Queensland economy with efficiency and productivity. This Budget addresses a number of the issues that I raised in my first speech in this place in July.

Mr Palaszczuk: It was a good speech.

Mr WILSON: Thank you, Minister. I addressed many issues in that first speech and thereby laid the foundation for the various items that I, as the member for Ferry Grove, intend to pursue over the three years of the first term of the Beattie Labor Government.

This Budget establishes a very stable foundation for the first term of this Beattie Labor Government and, I expect, for many terms to come. There will be 30,000 new jobs out of this Budget, and 47,800 existing jobs are further protected by the expenditure set out in this Budget. There is a total Capital Works Program of \$4.8 billion, and 24,500 apprenticeships and traineeships will be established through the Community Jobs Plan, amounting to \$283m.

As some honourable members here will know, my background is that of working for workers for the last 12 years, defending jobs and helping to generate new employment in various sectors of the Queensland and Australian economy. Jobs—job creation and job security—are at the centre of my concerns for Ferry Grove and for Queensland.

I will now address a number of matters particularly relevant to the electorate of Ferry Grove. First I speak about education. There are two high schools and 10 primary schools in my electorate. It is a growing electorate. New suburban areas are being developed. Growth is moving out into the Samford Valley. The Samford primary school is typical of the primary schools experiencing the pressures of new residential development and the escalating numbers of young children attending. It is good to see that 685 new teachers are to be employed.

Literacy and numeracy are to get \$16m over four years. There will be \$35m over four years for attention to teaching those with disabilities and learning difficulties. There will be \$17.5m over four years to assist in developing behaviour management regimes within schools and \$35m over four years for maintenance and security aspects within schools. There is a 5% increase in the Budget for education.

The Samford primary school, which I mentioned earlier, has been a particular beneficiary of this first Beattie Labor Government Budget—the Ferry Grove-friendly Budget, as I have called it. There is a \$300,000 allocation for extra school accommodation and covered walkways for the students at the Samford primary school. Mitchelton State High School is also a beneficiary. Approximately \$510,000 has been allocated for the upgrade of the manual arts section of the high school—a very important aspect of that high school, as it seeks to expose our high school students to the opportunities and possibilities of continuing their education into the TAFE sector.

There are a number of other issues related to education in my electorate which on this occasion have not received attention, but they are being looked at by the Minister for Education. Those issues include the music room at the Grovely primary school and the library at the Mitchelton primary school. A matter I will take up with the Minister for Education is some State assistance for the park and ride facility that is being developed at the Patricks Road primary school to assist in overcoming the safety concerns for parents and students at the beginning and end of the day.

The second item of particular benefit to the Ferny Grove area is the further allocation of approximately \$118,000 for the completion of the remaining work at the Ferny Grove Police Station, an initiative undertaken by the Labor Government under Premier Goss.

In the area of emergency services, I wholeheartedly commend the Government for its initiative to provide free ambulance services for Seniors Card holders and pensioners, commencing on 1 January. If there is one initiative of this Government that will be remembered by the average, working-class people of my electorate and in electorates throughout Queensland, it will be the provision of free ambulance services for our retired workers, who have battled all their lives and now deserve some consideration. A fair number of the 850,000 Seniors Card holders and pensioners are to be found in my electorate.

I also draw to the attention of the Minister for Emergency Services the exemplary history and record of the Samford Rural Fire Brigade. I had the benefit of meeting the management committee and general members at a recent meeting. These people are clearly trendsetters in the provision of excellent, high quality service to the rural fire brigade sector. I have an interest in this area and I will take up this matter with the Minister in the future.

I was delighted that the Minister for Housing recently launched the reintroduction of the garden competition for public housing in Queensland. It is a wonderful initiative. This program was reintroduced at the house of Mr Eric Turner in Gilston Parade, Keperra, in my electorate. This exercise is quite rightly designed to lift the profile of public housing in Queensland. It will help erode the stigma that has been gradually put upon public housing. It will illustrate the truth of the fact that Queenslanders who are in need and who occupy public housing are some of the best people one could come across. These people look after their properties and their gardens and they are extremely worthy tenants.

I want to refer to a couple of other initiatives in the housing area. We have seen the allocation of \$3.5m to youth housing. This initiative will be of great benefit to an organisation called Streetwise Ministries in Ferny Grove. I pay particular commendation to the Reverend Ray and Shirley Chapman who run this organisation. For many years they have been taking in street kids, looking after them and helping them to settle into other accommodation which will help them to re-establish their shattered lives. I also draw attention to the \$7.7m for the Home Secure program. I foreshadow that there will be many instances where that initiative will bear fruit for the residents of Ferny Grove and surrounding suburbs.

In the area of family and community services, I want to pay a special tribute to the Minister for Family and Community Services, because this section of the Budget illustrates clearly the credentials of a traditional Labor Government—looking after those who need a hand up. I particularly want to commend two organisations in my area which are working very well with the department. One of these is the Piccabeen Community Association. This organisation has an outstanding reputation for the social welfare work it undertakes. Many community organisations have contact with that association. One of these is Tough Love. This organisation is dedicated to counselling and training parents in finding new skills so that they can deal with difficulties they are experiencing with their children. Another organisation is MUST—Mitchelton Unemployment Support Team. As the name suggests, this organisation is preoccupied with the extraordinarily important question of finding work for our young people.

I want to mention a couple of other Budget initiatives. The first is the reintroduction of the solar hot water rebate scheme, which provides for a rebate of up to \$500. The objective of this scheme is to reduce the demand on the electricity system by some 20%. This initiative will be readily taken up by people in my electorate. This most worthy scheme should never have been wound down.

I commend the Government for the \$500,000 integrated ticketing project for travel by rail, private bus and Brisbane City Council bus. This initiative will be of great benefit to the constituents of my electorate of Ferny Grove. My constituents appreciate the \$5m that is to be spent on security measures on trains and the upgrading of railway facilities to improve access for people with disabilities.

Mr Lucas: You're well known in this Parliament as one of the best advocates for your electorate.

Mr WILSON: I humbly take that interjection. In conclusion, this is a tremendous first Budget for the Beattie Labor Government. I foresee that over the years to come there will be similar Budgets brought down by the Labor Party, the heart and soul of which are designed to assist ordinary men and women and their families. They will be assisted through job creation, job security and a responsible attitude to social welfare. I commend the Budget to the House.