



Speech by

JULIE ATTWOOD

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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**APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL
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Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (9.44 p.m.): I am proud to be part of a Government that is committed to reducing unemployment and targeting funds towards addressing the basic needs of our society. There are many needs and wants across all electorates in Queensland and they cannot all be catered for at once. The electorate of Mount Ommaney has many issues that need to be addressed.

Maintenance in a number of schools has been neglected. Oxley Secondary College has been waiting for the building of a construction court for many years. It keeps being taken off the agenda. The Middle Park State School P & C has advised me of a number of projects which have also been taken off the agenda. In fact, I have heard from most schools in the area and all have brought to my attention the same issues.

The Budget has committed a \$35m increase over four years to address school maintenance and security. The Minister for Education, Dean Wells, is committed to improving education by increasing spending by 5% on last year's Budget. The Centenary suburbs are still growing rapidly with new estates popping up at Riverhills, Sinnamon Park and Seventeen Mile Rocks.

We have needed our own ambulance service for many years and, with the population increasing by 6% every year, and rapidly ageing, the need for an ambulance service is even more urgent. The Budget provides for an amount of \$330,000 to purchase land to house an ambulance centre. This is a first step in providing a fully functional ambulance centre for the Centenary suburbs.

Noise barriers and the bikeway currently being constructed along the Centenary Highway will be completed early in 1999. The Government has sped up this process in order to satisfy the needs of local residents. The Government will provide \$1.3m for the third stage of the Centenary Highway noise barrier project and an additional section of the bikeway. There is still a need to look at the traffic hotspots along the highway—the bottleneck that occurs and the speed of traffic and its effect on noise. Testing of highway usage and speed limits will occur in late 1998 and early 1999 to ascertain the effects on noise levels.

Another issue that has long been awaiting attention is the need for ramps at the Oxley and Sherwood Railway Stations. We need an increase in the level of access for mothers and the disabled. The Budget provides for \$5m to be spent on security measures and \$3m for upgrading of access by the disabled to the Citytrain network.

The Mount Ommaney Police Station is a relatively new asset to our area. However, there is always the question about adequate police numbers, particularly after the closure of the Oxley Police Station. The Budget will provide for the completion of accommodation for the Brisbane Dog Squad at Oxley and the continuation of the relocation of specialist squads from Alderley to Oxley. A further \$105,000 will be provided to complete the Mount Ommaney Police Station. The Government is committed to increasing the number of operational police in the State. This is being achieved through the Queensland Police Service staffing plan, which aims to deliver an increase in police strength of 809 police and 571 civilians between July 1996 and August 1999.

I believe that the Government's Budget caters adequately for a broad range of people across my electorate. There is something in it for everyone—for young and old, for rich and poor, for employed and unemployed, for women and men, and for families and individuals.

For women, the provision of quality and affordable child care is fundamental to ensuring that women can participate in all areas of life, particularly in the paid work force. \$2m is provided for the first time by the Office of Child Care to assist non-profit organisations involved in outside school hour care services, child-care centres and kindergartens. These organisations will be able to apply for grants for capital equipment and facilities. With support for child care there needs to be help available for women to re-enter the work force. \$200,000 will be provided to give women the skills, confidence and self-esteem to re-enter the work force. \$1.5m has been allocated by Queensland Health for a new initiative to assist and support parents who have identified problems with their child's behaviour or development.

For our seniors, \$15m has been allocated for the first time to the Queensland Ambulance Service to provide free ambulance services to all pensioners in Queensland for the six months from 1 January 1999. An increased amount of \$7.7m is allocated to the home assist/service program by the Department of Housing for home repairs, minor modifications and security for older people with a disability. The motor vehicle registration concession has been reintroduced for all Seniors Card holders from 1 July 1998 at a cost of \$2.7m in 1998-99. This concession provides a 50% reduction in the motor vehicle fee component of the registration fee.

For our young and unemployed, \$0.799m is allocated by Queensland Health to the Innovative Health Services for Homeless Youth Program that provides primary health care services for young people who are homeless or who are at risk of homelessness. Capital assistance for non-State schools will increase by \$1m per annum. \$4.6m—including \$2.3m for 1997-98—is allocated to provide a 50% subsidy for external infrastructure at new non-State schools, including passenger pick-up and set-down areas.

Having had a long-term career in the former Department of Employment, Education, Training and Youth Affairs prior to entering politics, I have a deep concern about our young people and their futures. They need to have some long-term goals, a worthwhile career and know that, some day, they will have their own homes and families. Employment does not seem to be on the agenda of the Federal coalition Government. It has closed the CES, and it is now more difficult for the unemployed to access jobs and for employers to hire unemployed people. The Beattie Government has set itself a difficult agenda, but it has had the courage to put jobs back on the agenda.

The Budget provides \$283m for up to 24,500 jobs, apprenticeships and traineeships over four years under the Community Jobs Plan initiative. This includes 6,500 apprenticeships and traineeships in the public sector, up to 9,000 additional apprentices and trainees in the private sector and 9,000 job placements of three to six months in community and environmental projects. As well, 17,800 extra jobs will be created from capital works, making a total of 65,600 jobs supported by the Capital Works Program, 685 additional teachers, 995 extra health workers, and over 370 more police and civilian support staff. I believe that these commitments will give our young people the opportunities that they deserve—a turning point in their lives. Not only will Queensland get back to work, but a number of measures have been put in place to address the urgent social needs of Queenslanders. As well, millions of dollars will go towards improving our health services, reducing hospital waiting lists and providing assistance for the disabled in our community, addressing the needs of students with disabilities and learning difficulties, and promoting multiculturalism.

I intend to make the most of these Budget provisions for the benefit of my Mount Ommaney electorate. As an advocate for the members of my community, I will be ensuring that their needs are heard by Ministers of the Beattie Labor Government. The people in Oxley are in need of a long-overdue community health centre. An increase in the number of police is essential to act as a deterrent to crime in the area. There needs to be established in the electorate a meeting place for young people where they are able to get together with their peers for sport and recreation and to partake in community and vocational activities. I will be hounding my colleagues in Government to achieve these aims over the next three years. Much can be achieved by chipping away at the problems piece by piece to arrive at an ideal state.
