



Speech by

KAREN STRUTHERS

MEMBER FOR ARCHERFIELD

Hansard 17 September 1998

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL
APPROPRIATION BILL

Ms STRUTHERS (Archerfield—ALP) (9.03 p.m.): I rise to support these appropriation Bills. Each year, State Budgets come and go, but this one is here to stay and will lay the foundations for some great developments in Queensland. This Government has delivered a great set of figures. I am pleased to report to my constituents—some of whom are here tonight, as members might have heard—that this Budget strikes a very good balance between social and economic priorities. Tonight, my constituents have been enjoying a barbecue. I might say that they will be continuing their efforts to make sure that this Government is here to stay, that I am here to stay, and I welcome them to the Queensland Parliament.

The people in our electorates will want to know what is in the Budget for our areas and what will directly benefit our schools, hospitals, families and work. These are important and expected considerations, and I will highlight key benefits for the residents of the Archerfield electorate shortly. However, we also need to judge Budgets and, in fact, judge Governments not solely on what they will do for each of us individually but on what benefits there are for the community and the State as a whole. Budgets have to lay the foundation for longer-term security as well as meeting some immediate needs. I am pleased to say with confidence that the Beattie Government State Budget delivers immediate improvements in health, education and justice and lays the foundation for significant employment growth.

I am pleased to report to the residents of the Archerfield electorate that they will receive some direct benefits and facilities and gain a great deal from the employment strategies and increased funding in health, legal and other areas contained in the Budget. Firstly, I want to look at some of these direct benefits and facilities. Unlike my colleagues who represent electorates in north Queensland or in major industrial centres in this State, I cannot boast of million-dollar gas pipelines or port redevelopment projects and other big ticket items.

Mr Palaszcuk interjected.

Ms STRUTHERS: That is right. Archerfield contains a number of older residential suburbs, light industrial areas and several new suburbs experiencing rapid growth. It does not have the big ticket developments of other electorates. In keeping with the nature of the community, some of the direct funding to the Archerfield electorate includes a new preschool and State school, the Grand Avenue School at Forest Lake. Previously, this initiative had been announced and a parents and citizens group has been formed. The Budget ensures that this new school is on track for opening in 1999.

There has been an allocation of \$10.5m for construction work on the Scientific Services Complex at Coopers Plains, and an allocation of \$4m to complete the establishment of the Construction Skills Centre at Salisbury. The headline story for our area is the \$3.3m that has been allocated generously by the Minister for Mines and Energy to establish an electricity substation at Archerfield. You beauty! I am sure there will be plenty of jobs in that.

There will be some disappointments for Archerfield residents in the Budget. My major concern is that the \$16m required for the grade separation of Boundary Road at the railway crossing is not allocated in this Budget. It has been a 20-year battle to get this horrendous crossing rectified. Some interim works are under way but big dollars are needed for a long-term solution. I will keep up the call for

the major roadworks and continue talks with the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads on this issue. I also know that many residents in the Archerfield electorate want improved public transport, school computers, major roadworks to ease the congestion on Granard and Mains Roads, security grilles in their public housing, and job security. This Budget does not meet all of the needs of the people of Archerfield, but they should be assured that I will keep up the fight.

However, I am very pleased to report to my constituents the Statewide benefits that all of us will gain. The State Budget provides a \$283m, four-year Breaking the Unemployment Cycle program. New apprentice and trainee opportunities will be created in Government departments, local government and statutory authorities. The Budget also provides a \$5.4m training fund for the building and construction industry to create between 800 and 1,000 additional apprenticeships per year, \$165m for improved health services, \$65m to reduce hospital waiting lists, \$126.2m to assist disabled people and \$372.3m for law, order and public safety infrastructure.

As the member for Archerfield, I will be ensuring that my electorate reaps the benefits of some of these Statewide allocations. In regard to jobs—at the instigation of the Minister for Employment, Education and Training, I am chairing an employment seminar at the Archerfield aero club in October. That seminar will bring together industry and community groups to develop employment generation proposals for my area. I am hopeful that we can get some of the urban renewal money or jobs strategy money that is contained within the Budget. I will be working hard to make sure that funding for employment projects, capital works and related initiatives directly provide secure employment for people within the Archerfield electorate.

The \$4m Construction Skills Centre is a great boost for my area. That centre will enable young people to develop world-class skills, equipping them well for work in this growing industry. In the area of family support, I am extremely pleased to see that Peter Beattie's actions have spoken louder than his words. This Government has allocated a massive increase in funding for disability support at \$126.2m, \$5.2m to improve child protection services, \$6.3m for three juvenile justice centres, \$17.4m to improve child-care services and \$484.7m—up from \$458.6m in 1997-98—for housing initiatives. Under the previous coalition Government, Queensland was no national champion in the provision of adequate social and community services. In 1996-97, the previous Government spent a mere \$122 per head on social and community services compared with a national standard of around \$200. That statistic is taken from the 1998 Grants Commission update.

This Government is getting a better balance between economic and social priorities. We are making a shift to social rationalism rather than economic rationalism. I am looking forward to implementing the Government's Budget strategy.
