



Speech by

MIKE REYNOLDS

MEMBER FOR TOWNSVILLE

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL
APPROPRIATION BILL

Mr REYNOLDS (Townsville—ALP) (12.44 p.m.): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak on the appropriation Bills that are currently before the House. I take this opportunity to commend the Treasurer, the Honourable David Hamill, on the excellence of his first Budget, brought down just a couple of days ago. Today I will concentrate on some of the many benefits that this Labor Budget brings to Townsville and to the region around the city that I represent.

The State Budget brought down on Tuesday acknowledges Townsville's place as Australia's latest boom city. This Budget has backed the huge private investment now entering the region, with pledges of more than half a billion dollars in capital works in the north Queensland region. It backs up the \$550m being spent at Sun Metals by Korea Zinc. It backs up the announcement that has been made by Queensland Nickel in regard to the cogeneration plant that is being built there. It backs up the many tens of millions of dollars of private investment that is happening in Townsville and the region around it.

The Budget means a great deal for Townsville and the Townsville region. Today I will highlight some of the major impacts for Townsville to come out of this Budget. We see \$84.7m being spent in new rail projects in the city and region, \$33.1m for improvements to Townsville port, about \$40m in funding for health facilities and \$20m for roads and transport facilities. I will now outline some of the major benefits in those four areas.

The new rail projects include a \$23m contract for construction of coal and livestock wagons at the Townsville rail workshops. This Labor Government is committed to making those rail workshops an important part of rail activities throughout the State of Queensland. In that same area we see \$11m being allocated to complete the manufacture of the Great South Pacific Express. What a wonderful venture this will be for Queensland Rail and for the Orient Express partners, who have worked up that project with Queensland Rail.

We see \$22m for the upgrade of the line between Townsville and Hughenden and a \$16m commitment for a new spur line into the zinc refinery near Townsville. That \$550m investment being made in the Townsville region will be an amazing catalyst for further industrial development to occur. We also see \$9.5m allocated in this Budget for Stage 2 of the Stuart rail complex. In all, we see a major commitment to rail in the City of Townsville and the region. It shows this Government's commitment to the railway workshops in Townsville and to rail infrastructure in the region.

We also see a major improvement to Townsville port. I say this with some pride, having spent six years as the Chairman of the Townsville Port Authority. We see \$33.1m being spent on improvements to Townsville port. That includes \$11.5m for an extensive capital dredging program to allow Townsville port to continue its activity as one of the major ports in northern Australia, \$9.8m for jetty and berth extensions, \$8.7m for reclamation works and \$3.1m for plant and equipment.

Mr McGrady: That was because of good planning in years gone by.

Mr REYNOLDS: I will take that interjection by the honourable member for Mount Isa and Minister for Mines and Energy. The planning that was carried out by the Goss Labor Government saw

the port of Townsville double its tonnage in that six-year period. We saw \$300m worth of infrastructure built at the port.

Mr McGrady: Who was the chairman?

Mr REYNOLDS: I know I am very modest, but I must say that I was very pleased to be in the situation of overseeing this project in conjunction with the Goss Labor Government. The Minister for Transport at that time, of course, was the Honourable David Hamill.

Mr McGrady: Go back a few more years.

Mr REYNOLDS: I am aware that the honourable member for Mount Isa was a board member of the Townsville Port Authority and made a great contribution to the port. One of the major commitments in this Budget that assists Townsville is the increase in the funding for health facilities. This Budget contains an allocation of \$40m for health facilities. Included in this allocation is the amount of \$15.6m towards the \$170m Townsville Hospital which is being built at Douglas. Another \$2m has been allocated towards the \$10m commitment to establish a medical school in Townsville. Recently the Federal Government committed itself to this project and I welcome that commitment. I also welcome the commitment to this project by the Federal Labor Opposition, because we want an autonomous medical school at James Cook University in Townsville. We have worked tremendously hard towards the school's establishment.

Mr Reeves: It is a good university, too.

Mr REYNOLDS: It is an excellent university. I have been very proud to be associated with the university over the past 30 years. We have also seen two very important new commitments in the area of health. The first is an allocation of \$1.6m for the bone marrow transplant unit at the Townsville General Hospital. This is only the second unit to be established in Queensland and I commend the Minister for Health for this very important initiative. I also welcome the allocation of \$300,000 for the establishment of a national unit for multi-disciplinary studies of spinal pain at the Townsville General Hospital. I visited that unit with the then shadow Minister for Health and we were able to see the worth of that unit to the Townsville General Hospital. Unlike the previous coalition Government, this Government is willing to put our money where our mouth is and commit ourselves to the establishment of that unit.

We have also seen an important commitment made to Palm Island, a very important part of my electorate. This Budget contains an allocation of \$3.6m for new health facilities on Palm Island. We have also seen a \$20m commitment for roads and transport facilities. This allocation includes \$6.4m for the construction of a four-lane, divided carriageway on the Townsville Port Road. This road is a very important component of the Townsville arterial road system. I welcome the construction of this road. We have seen \$4m allocated for the construction of the Hervey's Range Development Road, \$3.8m for the Elliott River Bridge and its approaches on the Bruce Highway and \$1.4m towards providing four lanes on Thuringowa Drive. As the member for Thuringowa would be very much aware, this allocation represents an important commitment to the Townsville region. We also have an allocation of \$2.5m for Shaws Road, \$300,000 for the upgrade of public transport infrastructure and, importantly, a \$400,000 commitment for the Stockland intermodal interchange facility.

This is an excellent Budget for my City of Townsville and, indeed, for north Queensland generally. The Budget allocates \$9.5m towards the correctional centres in Townsville; up to \$10m for school building projects in Townsville; and \$4m for modifications to the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre. This latter allocation includes \$2m which will go to a pilot community-based juvenile justice centre. The sum of \$2.5m has been committed to the key area of development projects in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We also have an allocation of \$300,000 for the construction of a disability respite centre in north Queensland. The Labor Government has seen fit to commit funds in an effort to assist people with disabilities who live in various communities throughout Queensland. It is a major commitment.

Mr Reeves: About time.

Mr REYNOLDS: It is about time. For far too long coalition Governments in this State have ignored the real needs of people with disabilities. If we look at the trend in regard to disability services, we will see that this money will be allocated to the unmet needs of people with disabilities.

In this Budget we also see important commitments in regard to national park facilities around Townsville. I am delighted to see \$50,000 being allocated towards the Magnetic Island National Park. Under coalition Governments this park has been starved of resources. The Budget also contains a commitment of \$200,000 for the redevelopment of facilities at Alligator Creek in the Bowling Green National Park. Those are key areas where money needs to be spent in the Townsville region.

I welcome the \$150,000 allocated towards new ambulance communications centres at Townsville. These are much needed facilities. The Budget also ratifies recent announcements of State

funding of \$15m for redeveloping The Strand. The beachfront at The Strand, which had been badly affected by Cyclone Justin last year and the record 10 January floods this year, will be repaired and we will eventually have a world class vista in this area. The former coalition Government would not commit funds to this project. It is a major \$24.7m project. I take this opportunity today to call on the Federal Government for assistance in this area. The Federal Government has been too lousy to commit even \$1 towards this project. The Townsville City Council has asked——

Mr McGrady: What has Peter Lindsay been doing?

Mr REYNOLDS: Peter Lindsay, the Federal member for Herbert, has done nothing to help the people of the electorate of Herbert. I call on the Federal member for Herbert, who is currently seeking re-election, to get off his backside and do something for the people of Townsville. I ask him to use his endeavours to obtain money from the Federal Government towards this important redevelopment of The Strand.

In this Budget we see the allocation of \$6m for the Nelly Bay safe harbour development. I put on record that that development must go ahead as soon as possible. I want to see the scar at Nelly Bay disappear. The allocation of funds in this Budget is necessary for construction of the public facilities associated with the Nelly Bay safe harbour.

I also welcome the \$7.5m allocation to upgrade the Willows Sports Complex. This is a world-class facility for Rugby League and other international events that are held in Townsville. This allocation will allow us to update the Willows Sports Complex and make it into a modern facility. The complex is jointly managed by the Townsville City Council and the Thuringowa City Council. The complex has urgent needs in regard to drainage. Eventually, we will have a sports complex which will be the envy of other sports complexes throughout Australia. This Government has made commitments towards attracting athletes to Queensland for pre-Olympic training and I believe the Willows will play a major role in that regard.

I also welcome the \$3m that has been, at long last, allocated for the Garbutt urban renewal scheme. This scheme was a victim of the capital works freeze which was brought in by the former Treasurer, the member for——

Mr McGrady: Caloundra.

Mr REYNOLDS: Caloundra. This commitment of \$3m restores the Garbutt urban renewal scheme to where it should have been. It was severely neglected by the previous Minister for Housing, who is with us in the House today. It was a forgotten scheme. The people of Garbutt were forgotten. We saw the enrolment of the Garbutt State School, preschool and day care centres drop dramatically, and that was all because of those 90 families being lost to the suburbs.

Dr Watson interjected.

Mr REYNOLDS: I know that the former Minister for Housing does not want to listen to this, because he is ashamed of the previous Government's efforts in terms of Garbutt. We have also seen new Police Beats in Garbutt, Rasmussen, South Townsville and Kelso, and I warmly welcome those as part of this Budget.

Sitting suspended from 1 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

Mr REYNOLDS: Before the luncheon adjournment, I highlighted the Budget delivery for Townsville, and I commended the Treasurer on the Budget that he delivered just two days ago. I conclude by saying that the Townsville electorate will be a great beneficiary under the Cooler Schools program. Twenty schools in the electorate will now be eligible to apply for funds under the \$40m Cooler Schools program. The subsidy arrangement, of course, will also be boosted. School communities will now receive \$4 for every \$1 that they raise. This is twice the amount provided by the former coalition Government. Students should not be forced to take classes and sit exams in stifling hot conditions. The extension of the Cooler Schools program will be a major boon for Townsville and, indeed, for north Queensland and central Queensland.

This is a Budget which recognises Townsville's role in developing Queensland. The Beattie Government understands that creating employment in regional Queensland is the way to boost our economy and alleviate the likelihood of being hit hard by the Asian financial crisis. As well as the tremendous capital boost that the City of Townsville is receiving, we will also attract a hefty component of the 27,000 new apprenticeships, traineeships and job placements which will be created in Queensland by the Beattie Government over the next four years.

Finally we have a Government in power which understands that north Queensland counts. More than half of the State's population lives in regional Queensland, and it is great to see the Beattie Labor Government move beyond the Brisbane-centric mentality of former coalition Governments. Again, I commend this Budget to the House. It is a great Budget for Townsville and north Queensland.
