



Speech by
**Mrs NITA
CUNNINGHAM**

MEMBER FOR BUNDABERG

Hansard 21 October 1998

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Committee (Cognate Debate)

Estimates Committee A

Report No. 2

Mrs NITA CUNNINGHAM (Bundaberg) (12.51 p.m.): I was a member of Estimates Committee A, and as this was the first time I have taken part in an Estimates committee hearing, I place on record my admiration of this democratic process. I also commend the Premier, the Ministers and their staff, departmental personnel and the staff of the Parliament for the efficient way in which these hearings were conducted and the forthright way in which the broad cross-section of questions were answered.

It gives me a great deal of pleasure to speak in support of the adoption of the Estimates Committee A report No. 2, which encompasses the financial operations of the many diverse sections of the Premier's Department, the Treasury Department and the new State Development Department, which was established with the aim of ensuring a whole-of-Government approach to Queensland's economic development.

The 1998-99 Budget addresses Labor's election commitments while retaining the essential core of the previous administration's May Budget. On that basis, the report should have the support of members on both sides of this Chamber and must be extremely difficult to speak against. The Premier described the Budget as one that lays the foundation for a better Queensland. In this report, we see that it also lays the foundation to meet that target of reducing unemployment to 5% over the next five years, creating jobs—the major concern of the people of Bundaberg and the major concern of the people of Queensland.

My colleague the member for Cairns has outlined advantages for Cairns in the Budget. My electorate of Bundaberg also fared well, with the provision of \$14.5m for our base hospital extensions, \$1.6m for refurbishment of the Bundaberg campus of TAFE and \$4.5m to complete Walla Weir. We will share in regional funding for roadworks and for the upgrading of railway stations in readiness for the tilt train service. Our local governments will continue to gain subsidies for water and sewerage infrastructure capital works and grants for public libraries. Funding for the Bundaberg Base Hospital will allow for extra dentists, extra mental health services and extra facilities, such as the CT scanner, for which tenders have already been called. I believe that most electorates in Queensland have been treated just as fairly and just as positively.

This Estimates Committee A report No. 2 is comprehensive. It clearly identifies program initiatives, like the very successful Community Cabinet meetings, the State development centres that are opening throughout Queensland and the jobs forums that are already under way. It identifies program enhancements and costings as well as concerns that were raised by committee members during the hearings. Most importantly, despite negative comments, this report clearly shows that the Budget does provide for a better quality of life for all Queenslanders. It does provide for industry and commerce. It does provide record expenditure for capital works within this State. It does provide for more jobs and job security. It will address problems in education, health and safety, and it does, indeed, lay the foundation for a better Queensland. I commend this report to the Committee.
