



Speech by
**Mr DENVER
BEANLAND**

MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY

Hansard 27 October 1999

APPROPRIATION BILL
Estimates Committee B
Report

Mr BEANLAND (Indooroopilly—LP) (3.31 p.m.): The people of Queensland believed that the new Labor Government would continue the great work undertaken by the former coalition Government under then Minister Sheldon. However, they have been greatly disappointed as a result of the lack of decision making by this Government. In this Budget alone there have been significant cuts made across-the-board in the area of the arts.

The \$1,235m Budget deficit has meant that Arts Queensland has felt the pressure, as have all other departments. The Queensland Museum's staff numbers have dropped by some 14% and the Performing Arts Trust's staff numbers have been cut by 34%. This is at a time when the Arts Office itself has seen its numbers increase by 20%. I mention this because the Museum has branches across Queensland. No doubt those branches will be affected, as will the main Museum here in Brisbane. This will have a significant effect across-the-board, as will the Beattie stealth tax and the Beattie asset tax, when it is felt. Of course, in future years that will have to be funded by the Office of Arts. It will have to find funds to overcome that new tax which will be imposed upon it by the Treasurer. All in all, it is not quite the wonderful picture and the rosy situation that it should be.

Worst of all, the Minister and the Government seem to be unable to make a decision. Funds are again proposed to be spent in relation to the off-site storage facilities for the Museum and the State Library, yet no location has been specified. Without a suitable location, there is little chance of those funds being spent in this financial year. There is an allocation of \$28m. Planning and preparatory work has to be undertaken.

Last year funding was allocated for the Queensland Cultural Centre 2000 development project. Most of that was not spent, in spite of the fact that this Government made commitments prior to the last election that it would continue with the program and with the processes of undertaking the Cultural Centre Stage VI development. That simply has not happened. Disappointing as it might be, the reason is that the Government clearly lacks vision and the ability to make decisions to get on with the sort of work that needs to be undertaken. Of course, there is a great need for off-site storage facilities to be constructed for the Museum, the State Library and the Art Gallery. That issue has arisen time and time again.

I raise the need for the Minister to make a decision in relation to the two orchestras. I know that the Minister likes to blame the Federal Government and everyone else, but at the end of the day funding has little to do with the fact that a decision needs to be made by the Government on the future of the two orchestras. The indecision means that there is a lack of confidence on the part of the musicians. They are not sure of their future. It is hampering the growth and development of music in this State. It is not such a difficult decision to make.

The Minister likes to talk about the need for additional funding. We want to see additional funding not only from the Federal Government but also from this Government in relation to the orchestras. This Minister can put up additional funding for the orchestra at any time. No doubt he is hurt and hit by this Budget deficit of \$1,235m. He never mentions the huge Federal Budget deficit left by

the former Federal Government. I see a former Federal Finance Minister across the way, none other than Mr Beazley—one of the architects of the \$10,000m Federal Budget deficit left behind.

Mr Springborg: Beazley's black hole.

Mr BEANLAND: Beazley's black hole. It is like Foley's black hole from the Workers Compensation Fund—some \$400m.

Mr Springborg: Two weeks before they said that there wasn't one.

Mr BEANLAND: He did say that two weeks before, but the former Government had to find \$105m out of consolidated revenue to fill in the black hole, as well as use all the increases in funding from small businesses. The issue in the arts area simply requires decisions to be made. If decisions were made, then the arts would be better for it.
