



Speech by

# GORDON NUTTALL

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

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## 1999 STATE BUDGET

**Mr NUTTALL** (Sandgate—ALP) (11.43 p.m.): We have two Bills before the House this evening, namely the Appropriation Bill and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill. I want to touch firstly on the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill. I mentioned to Mr Speaker in passing that I hope that some of the money that has been allocated can be used to do something about the microphones that we have in this Chamber. I do not believe that there is one microphone in the Chamber that does not have some sort of sticky tape or masking tape around it to keep it together. The seat behind me is falling apart. The whole place is falling apart. I hope some money will be spent on the Chamber. I might mention that we also need a microphone for the Clerk because every time he stands up to read the petitions we can never hear what he says.

There are a few issues that I want to touch on in relation to my electorate and also in relation to the broader issue of the Budget in general. The first issue I want to raise in relation to my electorate concerns the Northpoint TAFE College. It is the third largest TAFE college in the State. In this Budget, some \$4m has been allocated to that college. I am pleased to see that and I congratulate the Minister on it. That money will go towards continued improvements of facilities for students.

Over the past five or six years the Northpoint TAFE College has become a college of which we in my electorate are particularly proud. The director of the college, Mr Craig Sherrin, and I share a close working relationship. I want to place on the public record my congratulations to Mr Sherrin for a job well done. The college has continued to grow. I understand that its annual Budget is some \$25m, of which this Government contributes some \$12m. It is a credit to the director and the administrators that the college raises the remainder of those funds.

Another issue I wish to raise concerns schools within my electorate. This is an issue that is dear to my heart because, whether people accept it or not, when Labor was in Opposition for some 34 years Labor seats such as mine were particularly neglected.

**Mr Reynolds:** A disgrace!

**Mr NUTTALL:** The member for Townsville is right, it was a disgrace, because politics were played at the expense of children's education. I believe in equity, and I believe that all children should be on a level playing field in terms of the availability of resources to enable them to learn. However, we cannot have a level playing field until we are all on the same level. Schools within my electorate have been neglected for too long.

I will give honourable members a perfect example. When Labor was in Government and the Honourable David Hamill was Minister for Education, Sandgate State High School was marked down for a new home economics block. That school has the second worst home economics block in the State. When we lost Government, that home economics block was dropped off the Capital Works Program by the conservative Government that took power. I thought that those days were gone, but when Labor lost Government in 1996, the conservative Government that took over immediately crucified Labor electorates—and mine in particular—in relation to this home economics block.

**Mr Pitt:** It's vindictive.

**Mr NUTTALL:** It is vindictive when it is at the expense of children and their education. I have had enough of that sort of nonsense. I have had a lot of correspondence with the Minister and the department relating to this home economics block. I note in the Budget papers that 10 high schools are earmarked for the Building Better Schools program, which is going to be moved from primary schools to secondary schools.

Sandgate State High School is some 40 years old but continues to maintain an enrolment of between 1,100 and 1,200 students. I would say to the Minister and the Department of Education that not only do I expect, but the school community and the community in general would expect and anticipate that Sandgate State High School will be amongst the 10 schools which are earmarked for master planning. I do not want to see a plan put on paper; I want to see money spent at the school.

The school urgently needs major refurbishment. I anticipate and expect that that will be done. Having said that, and having made my position quite clear regarding Sandgate State High School, I must thank the Minister for Education for other facilities which have been provided at schools in my electorate. I am deeply appreciative of that. I want to make it quite clear to the Minister that I am not complaining about what has been done. However, I am putting the Minister and the department on notice that more needs to be done. It is time for the parents, the students and the teachers in my electorate to receive their fair share.

The ambulance centre in my electorate is an older centre. I am pleased to see that \$250,000 has been earmarked to purchase land for a new ambulance station in the future. Indeed, the ambulance station does need to be relocated. I look forward to seeing in the following Budget an allocation for a new ambulance centre for my electorate. That would be very welcome.

Currently, the ambulance centre occupies a prime location. I appreciate the fact that the Minister and the department will need to sell the centre to offset the costs of relocation. However, a delegation of people has already been to see the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care and I am hopeful that, in conjunction with the Brisbane City Council, we can purchase the old ambulance station site for a community centre for the people of Sandgate. Sandgate was one of last areas to be brought under the jurisdiction of the Brisbane City Council when it was formed. It has a very, very strong sense of community. A large number of community organisations within my electorate work very hard and they are in need of a home. The current ambulance station site would be an ideal location for such a centre. I know that the acquisition of that site is not going to be inexpensive. However, both the community and I have set the goal of establishing a full community centre on that site.

I turn now to health services. My electorate has eight aged nursing homes, two of which are the biggest nursing homes in the State: the Freemasons nursing home and Eventide. I want to refer in particular to the Eventide nursing home. People would well be aware that, when Labor moved from Government into Opposition, the Eventide nursing home came under attack and was to be sold by the conservative Government. Ironically, on the day that Mr Howard called the Federal election, the Honourable the Premier, who was then the Leader of the Opposition, and the Honourable Kim Beazley, the Leader of the Federal Opposition, were both at Eventide nursing home. I am pleased to say that the Premier gave a commitment that Eventide was not for sale.

There is much more that I would like to say about how the Budget contributes to my electorate but, as I am mindful of the hour, in closing I will say that I noted a comment in the Courier-Mail that this Budget was a traditional Labor Budget. I am extremely proud to be a member of a Government that has focused on health, education, law and order and, more importantly, on employment. In my view, one of the strongest, most telling factors of this good Labor Government has been the way in which we have continued to ensure that the public sector has played a vital role and that jobs in the public sector have been retained by this Labor Government. With those few words, I commend these Bills to the House.

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