



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR MUNDINGBURRA

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1999 BUDGET SPEECH

Ms NELSON-CARR (Mundingburra—ALP) (3.30 p.m.): The Beattie Budget is yet another step in the right direction to create a Smart State with a stable Government that honours its commitments. As I come from north Queensland, it is heartening to see that more than half of Queensland's capital expenditure will be spent on regional communities—communities that have suffered neglect in recent years. Townsville is no exception with the Regional Centres Program injecting millions to improve community infrastructure and facilities.

This is a sober Budget, but a visionary one. It boosts Education, Health and Justice, and concentrates on eliminating waste across other departments. Redundant programs or any carryovers are out and the development of high-tech industries is in. The Budget delivers on community programs and social services ranging from job programs and child protection to community renewal. Children in State care will receive better care with \$100m to be provided over four years for child protection and \$63m to improve Queensland's youth detention centres, including the closure and replacement of the notorious Sir Leslie Wilson Youth Centre.

The Government is committed to the maintenance of a free, modern, public hospital system for all Queenslanders. The Budget reflects that commitment with a record \$3.45 billion in recurrent Health funding and a continuing commitment to take health services to the community. The Budget includes additional funding for the successful Positive Parenting Program, a boost of almost \$5m for palliative care and a \$13m injection to improve mental health services. This Budget provides \$40m over four years to provide one computer for every five children in State schools and continued funding of Labor initiatives such as Education for All that prevents disadvantaged children slipping through the cracks. It provides \$3.6m for an intensive literacy and numeracy program targeted at ATSI children and students for whom English is a second language. Class sizes and students with special needs or those who are in need of learning support will continue to be an area on which I focus for increased improvement at a local level and, indeed, at a political level.

The Budget also continues the Beattie Government's commitment not just to fight crime but to fight the causes of crime, with \$1m being granted this year to establish drug courts and \$15m being provided to continue the successful Community Renewal Program. The Townsville/Thuringowa region has done extremely well in attracting State Government budgetary allocations. The Health budget has allocated \$53m to the Douglas Hospital and committed a further \$8m to the James Cook University Medical School.

The Budget commits \$15m to the National Highway, \$6m to the Bluewater/Leichhardt Creek construction, \$3.5m to the Garbutt and Upper Ross Road development and \$5.5m to the Herveys Range Development Road. This is very welcome news. I am also delighted at the Government's ongoing commitment to rail infrastructure in the Townsville region, with \$4.5m being allocated to the Stuart rail servicing site, which is Stage 2 of the development. The Beattie Government's commitment to industry growth and development in the Townsville region has been further reinforced with a \$16.4m infrastructure grant for development associated with the Sunmetals project and a \$2m infrastructure commitment to the Western Mining Corporation, which will go towards developmental works in the region.

I particularly welcome aspects of the Budget that impact on sections of the Mundingburra electorate. A sum of \$109m will be spent over four years to implement child protection legislation. Our commitment includes the provision of another \$30m per year to increase funding to disability services. It must be remembered that the massive boost of \$100m to the disability sector in last year's Budget was more than had ever been provided before. A sum of \$30m was provided last year and another \$30m will be provided this year. Our predecessors ignored disability services completely. The urgent need for funding in this area does not go unrecognised. In the future I will continue to do all that I can to lobby for extra money for people with a disability and for those who care for and help to decrease the burdens of people with a disability. Another \$3m is set down in the Budget for the Positive Parenting Program. These are wonderful initiatives of the Labor Government that will help to strengthen the fabric of our community.

The final \$4.3m allocation to Townsville's Strand development, \$6m to the Nelly Bay development and the final \$4m allocation to the Dairy Farmers stadium will give the region a continued and added bonus. The Beattie Government recognises the dynamic nature of Townsville and its position on the threshold of industrial boom, and the State Budget is reflective of this.

Townsville's families will be taken care of in the second Budget from the Beattie Government. Disability Services Queensland is a new agency that will focus specifically on support services for people with a disability. The Budget also ensures the continuation of post-school service options for people receiving support through the Moving Ahead Program, with additional funding of \$12.5m to be provided over four years. I know the post-school options program in Townsville, Pathways, was concerned about the two-year transitional nature of the current Moving Ahead Program, so this commitment should make families rest easy. Family support initiatives will also be completed and support will be provided across the State to at least 130 families that have children with a disability.

I am particularly pleased by the inclusion of Townsville as one of the sites for a youth justice centre where young offenders are encouraged to right the wrong and are given opportunities to address the causes of their offending behaviour. As a former teacher and guidance counsellor, I know how important a centre like this will be in Townsville. It is something that we have been working on for a while and I am very pleased to see that it is becoming a reality.

I am proud to be part of a Government that takes the role of the family so seriously and that prides itself on its education policies. Ours is a Government that can identify community needs and, instead of ignoring them, makes an effort to fix them. I will be pursuing the new Police Beat shopfront for Townsville, to have it strategically placed in my electorate. Queensland has a strong, stable and effective Government that has delivered on all of its commitments and is not afraid to tackle the difficult problems that previous administrations have chosen to ignore.
