



Speech by

Hon. P. BRADDY

MEMBER FOR KEDRON

Hansard 27 October 1999

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Breaking the Unemployment Cycle

Hon. P. J. BRADDY (Kedron—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (9.49 a.m.), by leave: A year ago this week, Premier Peter Beattie officially launched the State Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative. The initiative has created 14,000 extra jobs and training places and is well ahead of its schedule for its four-year target to generate 24,500 jobs and training positions throughout Queensland. More than \$70m has been pumped into the State's economy over the past 12 months as cash bonuses to employers, grants to community groups and wages. Nearly \$9m has been paid to employers for taking on more than 3,100 new apprentices and more than 2,300 new trainees.

After years of negative growth, the building and construction industry has recorded a 40% increase in apprenticeship and traineeship approvals. State Government departments, agencies and local councils are also taking on additional trainees and apprentices, with more than 2,500 trainees and 450 apprentices employed throughout Queensland in the public sector. The community has backed the Government from the start of this initiative. Community response has been very encouraging. Grassroots community organisations across the State have secured \$26m for working with the Government to create jobs and training projects that benefit the long-term unemployed, while providing vital community facilities. Funding for the community projects includes \$21m under the Community Jobs Plan to create more than 1,800 jobs and nearly \$5m under the Community Employment Assistance Program to assist more than 4,000 people.

One of the key benefits of the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative is that it offers benefits to all our regional and rural Queensland communities and helps these communities build the capacity to help themselves. This is reflected by the regional spread of jobs or training places created under the initiative. In the South Coast region more than 3,800 jobs and training places have been created. In the Brisbane North region, which also includes the Redcliffe, Caboolture and Burpengary areas, nearly 2,500 jobs and training places have been created. Nearly 2,800 jobs and training places have been created in the North/Far-North Queensland region. In the Wide Bay/Sunshine Coast region, 1,900 jobs and training places have been created. In south-west Queensland, 1,700 jobs and training places have been created. In central Queensland, jobs and training places have been created for more than 1,600 people.

It is a magnificent result that is helping to revitalise communities and bring hope to the unemployed. The fact that apprenticeship and traineeship approvals have jumped by nearly 40% in the 12 months to 18 October represents a major victory. By focusing on creating jobs in industries with skills shortages, the Beattie Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative is also helping to create skilled workers—people who have a better chance of acquiring employment that is secure and sustainable.

Unlike the Commonwealth Government controlled Federation Fund rorts, distribution of Breaking the Unemployment Cycle funds is not decided by politicians; they are distributed by committees comprising business people, community representatives and local government and departmental representatives. I have no input into the selection process nor into the approval process that follows the committee's decisions. I have seen the statement of reservation from the member for Clayfield published in the Estimates Committee F report and repeated by some media, regrettably without

checking the veracity of the claims. The facts are—and the member for Clayfield was told this at the Estimates committee—that Labor electorates are underrepresented in the distribution of projects under the highly successful Community Jobs Plan.

Mr SANTORO: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, as the matter is the subject of parliamentary debate that is to occur tomorrow, I ask for your ruling as to whether it is appropriate—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The Minister has not mentioned the Estimates.

Mr SANTORO: Is it appropriate that the Minister should be canvassing the content of a report that was tabled in the Parliament yesterday and which is to be considered by this Parliament tomorrow?

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I believe the Minister is actually commenting on newspaper reports on that issue.

Mr BRADDY: I withdraw the reference to the Estimates report.

Mr SANTORO: I rise to a point of order. The subject matter that the Minister is commenting upon is contained within my Estimates committee report.

Mr SPEAKER: Order!

Mr SANTORO: I would respectfully—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! If your colleagues would let me hear, I would then be able to listen to you.

Mr SANTORO: Mr Speaker, with respect, if the Minister wishes to pursue the point in the Parliament, tomorrow is the appropriate time for that to happen. If he wishes to pursue it in the media—I again ask for your specific ruling. The subject matter to which the Minister is referring is contained within a report that was printed and published by this Parliament.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member has given me his argument. If he will now resume his seat, I will give the ruling. The situation is that the member has been on radio on this same issue.

Mr SANTORO: I have not been on radio.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I will finish my ruling. I call the Minister.

Mr BRADDY: These facts are facts, irrespective of where they were debated.

Mr SANTORO: I rise to a point of order. Mr Speaker, I ask for your specific ruling on the matters that I have raised with you for ruling.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I have just ruled. There is no point of order. The Minister has withdrawn the reference to the Estimates debate.

Mr SANTORO: Mr Speaker, you indicated—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The member will let me finish my statement. He will resume his seat. The Minister has withdrawn any reference to the Estimates debate. I am happy with that. I accept the statement. There is no point of order. I call the Minister.

Mr BRADDY: In relation to media reports that have been carried in relation to the criticism that the shadow Minister is attempting to hide behind, the facts are these: only 43—

Mr SANTORO: I find the comments by the Minister that I am trying to hide—I am happy to debate him in public, in this Parliament; but I just wish the Standing Orders of this place would be upheld.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Is the member saying that he finds those words offensive? He did not say that. Does he ask for them to be withdrawn?

Mr SANTORO: The Minister is saying words to the effect that—

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Is the member asking for them to be withdrawn?

Mr SANTORO: I ask that they be withdrawn.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! I call the Minister.

Mr BRADDY: I withdraw.

In relation to the facts of the Community Jobs Plan projects, 43.8% have gone to Labor electorates and 56.2% have gone to non-Labor electorates. That is in relation to projects where we have allocated \$21m. In relation to the CEAP programs about which the member for Clayfield is upset, only \$5m has been allocated to those programs and some 70% of those have gone to Labor electorates. The point that should be made is this: of the bigger programs involving \$21m, 56% have gone to non-Labor electorates. What is being attempted here of course is the misleading politics of the half-truth. Of the two schemes, in the most important and the most expensive, the ones where the most money is allocated, the non-Labor electorates have over 56% of the projects. One cannot be fairer than that.

I repeat: I do not have any say in the allocation of these projects, as the member for Clayfield knows. The facts are that some electorates get more than others simply because of the quantity and quality of applications.

Mr SANTORO: Mr Speaker, with respect to your previous ruling, the Minister is canvassing material that was published in this Parliament as part of the Estimates committee process. I wish to stress that I have no difficulty in debating the issue with the Minister either in this place or outside of the Parliament; however, it is a Bill before the House. It is inappropriate for the Minister to be canvassing Estimates matters during this part of the proceedings.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! There is no point of order. I call the Minister.

Mr BRADDY: I repeat that this matter was canvassed on ABC radio this morning. I am replying to that. Some electorates get more than others simply because of the quantity and quality of applications made to the independent review committee. I have no deciding input at all. Non-Labor electorates have more of those in the \$21m program. There is no criticism that can be made publicly, nor should there be.
