



Speech by

Hon. P. BRADDY

MEMBER FOR KEDRON

Hansard 28 October 1999

**APPROPRIATION BILL
Estimates Committee F
Report**

Hon. P. J. BRADDY (Kedron—ALP) (Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations) (12.37 p.m.): At the outset I wish to defend and affirm the efficacy, validity and value of the Community Jobs Plan and the Community Employment Assistance Program, which was under some attack by the member for Clayfield in the report and also from the Leader of the Liberal Party outside this place. Let us be clear about this. These programs have assisted thousands of long-term unemployed people and provided invaluable infrastructure, particularly in regional communities.

The other matter that refutes the attack is that the approval process was designed specifically to be fair. In fact, although it was my policy that the Government has adopted, it excludes me from determining which projects are approved. I did not seek any capacity to approve these projects. Approvals are decided in each area by an independent committee that includes local community representatives. We see in the CJP projects that more than 56% of the projects have gone to non-Labor electorates. I had no part in that; the community representatives and the committees decided that. So to suggest that there is any unfairness is absolute politics played at its lowest and at its worst by an Opposition that did not even have an employment Minister when it was in Government.

The CJP is by far the bigger of the two programs discussed, with \$21m allocated, and 56% of those schemes went to non-Labor electorates. The CEAP schemes are not dreamt up by me or by my office or by my department; they are community projects which are suggested. Sure, seventy-odd per cent of them went to Labor electorates, but I did not pick them; I did not promote the projects. Most interestingly—and this absolutely and totally refutes the insidious and unfair nature of the criticism—not one application under the CEAP program from a coalition electorate was rejected by the committees. If 70% of them went to Labor electorates, it was because there were no other ones put forward from the Tory electorates. I do not do it. They are absolutely fair. The unfair criticism by the member for Moggill and the member for Clayfield is totally refuted. Both programs are community based. Obviously, approvals depend on the quality and quantity of applications submitted by grassroots community organisations. We know that some areas have more well-developed community support systems than others. I reject the insidious and unfair criticism.

In relation to WorkCover, I also am astonished at the continuing attack on Mr Gerard Murphy by the member for Clayfield. Mr Murphy is a former President of the Queensland Law Society and the Law Council of Australia. He is widely recognised by people on both sides of this House—other than the member for Clayfield—as a person of great integrity. He is an extremely experienced lawyer. I do not think it is at all a disadvantage that as a solicitor he acts for plaintiffs. I think there is a place on the board for people who are experienced in acting for plaintiffs as a lawyer.

In terms of the member for Clayfield's attempt to deny his role in introducing a system that has resulted in some WorkCover premium increases, history will tell the true story. The difficulties being experienced by some employers as a result of the transition to full experience-based rating can be laid squarely at the feet of the former Minister and the former Government. I should stress that WorkCover is adamant that 89% of employers received a lower premium rate this year.

In relation to the member for Clayfield's attack on Madonna Jarrett, again that is totally unfair. The selection panel recommended MJM Issues Management because of Ms Jarrett's demonstrated

knowledge of the workers compensation system gained through her extensive involvement in previous reviews by this Government and also by her experience working in New South Wales.

In relation to the main committee report, I believe the committee has it wrong when it says that there is some uncertainty about which departments or organisations should do it. There is no uncertainty at all. The organisational units of each department can be examined. The definition says that GOCs are included in that. If this committee wishes to change that, that is fair enough; but there is no uncertainty, so there should not be any criticism on the basis of uncertainty. The suggestion to change is a matter for the committee.

Time expired.
