



Speech by

Hon. STEVE BREDHAUER

MEMBER FOR COOK

Hansard 27 October 1999

APPROPRIATION BILL

Estimates Committee C

Report

Hon. S. D. BREDHAUER (Cook—ALP) (Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads) (4.43 p.m.): I would like to make a few comments on the Estimates, but I would like to start by responding to some of the nonsense that some people on the other side of the Parliament have been peddling this afternoon.

I know that the member for Callide has not been in this place for very long and I know that he is not very experienced in the procedures of Parliament or in the processes of budgeting across Government and that sort of thing, but before he stands in his place in the Parliament and spreads the sort of outrageous mistruths that he does continually he should think about the implications for people in his own constituency and people in other constituencies whom he is unnecessarily alarming by his ignorance.

Basically, the member for Callide has proven that he has not read the Budget documents. I simply plead with him to go and get the Budget documents and read them and try to understand them. Alternatively, if he cannot read them himself he should go and get someone such as the member for Gregory, who is a former Transport Minister and who does understand a little bit about the budgeting process at least, to explain a few of the details to him. But he gets up and makes assertions about \$100m being cut from this district budget, \$30m being cut from another district budget and \$60m being cut from another district budget. It is absolute nonsense.

I say another thing to the member for Callide, and to the member for Charters Towers as well. The member for Charters Towers has actually been around a little longer than the member for Callide, so I would have thought he might know better. Since 1995 we have had in this Parliament a process whereby we bring down the Main Roads budget at the same time as the other budgets but then have a Roads Implementation Program which is brought down about two months later. That goes into all of the detail, chapter and verse—down to the individual projects and the individual allocations for maintenance programs that are going to be conducted in every electorate, in every local government area, in every district, in every region right throughout the State of Queensland.

Those opposite could not ask for a more comprehensive or more detailed analysis of what the road funding will mean for each district. That the pair of them come in here and complain that there is a lack of detail in the budget and a lack of detail in the press statements I have put out subsequent to the budget and that in some way I am trying to hide the cutbacks that they allege are going to occur—they say that because they cannot read the Budget papers—demonstrates again their absolute ignorance of the parliamentary processes that have been going on in this place for years under Governments of both political persuasions. I think it does them no good to make those kinds of criticisms in here and to unduly alarm particularly local governments in their area about the future of the budget.

I said at the Local Government Association conference in Toowoomba earlier this year that we brought down a Roads Implementation Program in October or early November last year. It was launched by me and the Premier in Mount Isa when we had the Community Cabinet meeting there. Basically, we said that the funding for the first two years was fixed and would be delivered and that the funding for the subsequent years was indicative. That has been the process ever since the Roads

Implementation Program first started. That is what we are committed to. Funding in this year's budget, which was year 2 of last year's Roads Implementation Program, will be delivered as we indicated. When I bring down the Roads Implementation Program in about the middle of November of this year, the funding in the first two years will be committed and the funding in the latter three years will be indicative, as has always been the case.

I also refer to the member for Burleigh, who has just made certain comments. The member for Burleigh is normally a little better researched than she was for her contribution here today. She talked about driver testing. That has been an issue. The driver testing association was part of the Q-Safe arrangements and it has been part of the consultation that my department has been doing to address the issues that have arisen in relation to delays.

If the member for Burleigh had read the Budget papers and read the post-Budget statements we have made, she would know that we have actually found an additional \$3m in this budget for customer service centres and call centres so that we can address some of the very issues she spoke about. For her to come in here and say that there will be three-month waiting lists on the coast by Christmas and that that will affect the employment prospects of young people really does her no credit as a member of Parliament when she should have known that the additional resources we have allocated to that budget will help to address the situation. I do not know if it will be the total answer, because we are working through the solutions, but we found an extra \$3m through our budget process this year to attend to the problems we have experienced in customer service centres. The public have experienced delays. I acknowledged that at the committee hearing and I acknowledge that today. We are doing something about it.

Time expired.
