



Speech by

Mr W. BAUMANN

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

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BUDGET 2000

Mr BAUMANN (Albert—NPA) (4.36 p.m.): In rising to speak to the Appropriation Bills, I would like to point out that this Budget, presented by the Treasurer, demonstrates the length to which this Government will go to try to hoodwink the people of Queensland. We have heard the Premier and Treasurer trumpeting the virtues of a \$3 billion Capital Works Program, the majority of which is to be spent outside the south-east corner of Queensland. One may have presumed that this meant that the Government was going to undertake massive capital works programs in regional and remote Queensland. However, even a cursory glance at the capital outlays by portfolio will show members the deceit that is being perpetrated upon the Queensland public.

The first thing members would notice is that, in the conventionally high capital expenditure areas of the Education and Transport portfolios, there is a significant decrease in allocation for capital works. The member for Gregory has pointed out already that Transport spending is reduced from \$1.25 billion last year to \$1.07 billion—a reduction of almost \$200m. In the roads budget, the capital works allocation has been reduced from \$780m to \$762m. In the Education portfolio, the story is just the same. Last year, the capital budget for Education was \$327m, whilst this year's allocation is \$227m. The Police capital budget has been reduced from \$96m last year to \$82m; the Natural Resources capital budget has been reduced from \$161m to \$150m; and there has even been a decrease in the Health capital works allocation from \$585m to \$472m.

I ask all Queenslanders to pass judgment on this cut to Health capital works when everyone but the Minister for Health knows that we are in a health crisis in this State. Two years ago, there was a pre-election promise by Labor for a community health centre for the Helensvale/Oxenford district. All I can say is that, once again, there is no indication in these Budget papers that this community health centre is going to happen. However, last night in this House I did speak to the Minister and she has confirmed verbally to me that expressions of interest have most certainly been released. I know that the Minister has invited me to write to her—and I will do that—to confirm that funding has been provided for this.

Yesterday in this House, I also questioned the Minister for Education about the Jacobs Well Environmental Education Centre and its vessel, the E. R. Duke. Apart from some more rhetoric—more "trust-me" style of promises from the Minister—I see nothing in the Budget that indicates the successful outcome that he has indicated to me.

Mr Wells: Trust me; I'm from a can-do Government.

Mr BAUMANN: "Trust me", he says. The Minister can call me cynical, but I have stopped believing in Santa Claus—he advised me on Santa Claus yesterday—and the tooth fairy. I, like the people of Jacobs Well, much prefer a seeing-is-believing philosophy. I look forward to seeing the Minister delivering on his promises, and I await anxiously his invitation to attend his announcement, where I will be only too happy to congratulate him on meeting my request.

The E. R. Duke is a floating classroom and, as such, should be given the status of a classroom in the recurrent maintenance program. I am sure that the Minister has had this put to him on many occasions. It is something that has not happened in the past, but the opportunity exists to do it in the future. This will give a sense of continuity and security to this or any replacement vessel allocated to what is, after all, a significant and relevant Education Department initiative.

There are a number of education projects that I would like to welcome, including the amenities upgrade at Ormeau State School and the ongoing development of the next stage of the Pacific Pines State High School. The problem that was faced—

Mr Wells: That's going to be an excellent school.

Mr BAUMANN: I thoroughly agree with the Minister. As the Minister knows, the problem at the Ormeau State School was with the sewerage arrangements, the toilet amenities and other things. It was an ongoing problem for years. It could have been a health problem if it were not addressed, but I am very pleased to see that the Minister has allocated quite considerable funding to address that matter.

There is also allocation for a new ambulance station at Helensvale. The Coomera marine precinct allocation of \$250,000 is a positive for a potentially large employer of local expertise.

In my own electorate of Albert, there are numerous matters that are crying out for attention by this Government, including safe drop-off and pick-up zones for buses at Beenleigh State School, safe and secure off-street drop-off and pick-up areas at the Mount Warren Park SEDU and upgrading of computer hardware and software at Windaroo Valley State High School. They are but a few, but they are all very, very important ones, particularly to the residents of that area of my electorate. If the Minister has any money there to do some pork-barrelling with—it is an electorate that will most certainly be contested at the next State election—I would be quite happy to see some pork-barrelling money come that way. The people are looking for an outcome there.

There has been much said about this Treasurer's Budget, but little mention has been made of the raid on the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Fund, which was established by the Bjelke-Petersen Government—or I will give him credit for it. Of course, the glossy Goss Labor Government introduced a systematic raiding of these funds that were established to protect the public interest. These funds are supposed to be insurance for the real battlers—this is supposed to be a Budget for the real battlers—against unscrupulous and shonky marketeers.

Let me remind the Treasurer of the case of Trevor and Amanda Brown, who have been fighting for compensation from this fund for the past 18 months. This couple paid \$169,000 for a property at Elanora in 1997, only to find that it was \$50,000 overpriced. They now see the fund being ripped off by the Government to pay for public housing. I would like the Treasurer and the Premier to know that it is people like the Browns who are the battlers. They have been ripped off once and now feel they are being ripped off again, with Labor destroying the viability of the fidelity fund. This action by the Treasurer means that all the honest and genuine auctioneers and agents are now honorary henchmen for the Hamill hit squad, and this fund is now no more than another new tax imposed by the Treasurer, instead of having the insurance and security value it gave battlers at its inception. We have a Treasurer in this State whose approach to budgeting is that every time he runs out of money, he raids a GOC or a fidelity fund. I hope the Treasurer has somebody else who runs his home budget, or we would probably see him raiding the kids' moneybox!

I have mentioned already the number of portfolios where capital budgets have decreased, so where is this record spending? Where on earth, one might ask, is it being spent? This Budget is more notorious for what it does not say than what it does say. It is an exercise in deceit, and one that I believe will come back to bite the member for Ipswich—perhaps on a very tender part of his anatomy—and this Government for trying to treat the people of Queensland with contempt.
