



Speech by

KEN TURNER

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

Hansard 23 August 2000

APPROPRIATION BILL, ESTIMATES COMMITTEE D

Mr TURNER (Thuringowa—IND) (4.38 p.m.): The people of Thuringowa are concerned. They are concerned about our public health system, with the Townsville General Hospital forced to cut back operations from five days to four in an attempt to make up almost \$2m of its \$4.5m funding overrun. They are concerned about the ever-increasing hospital waiting lists. They are concerned about the lack of funding for an acute spinal unit at the new Douglas Hospital. They are concerned that a spinal pain clinic has not been included in the new hospital facility. They are concerned that funding is not available for funding for a much-needed bridge across the Ross River to access the Douglas Hospital. They are concerned about an education system that is not meeting their children's needs.

The people of Townsville and Thuringowa are missing out on important basic health, education and transport infrastructure. They are missing out on a vital road link. When the people read in the newspaper that the cost of relocating Townsville's railway station has blown out from \$11m to \$23m—a project that is as unnecessary as it is unpopular—they worry about this Government's priorities. They wonder about the value of a diesel tilt train service, which is estimated to cost at least \$400m, which will offer passengers a trip to major northern centres sitting up for 24 hours. The tilt train will never compete with services provided by airlines. It would be only a marginal improvement on an express Sunlander—a train which, on current data available from the operations of the Brisbane-Rockhampton electric tilt train, will cost Queensland taxpayers millions of dollars in operational costs and interference to long distance freight services.

The people are concerned that their hard-won dollars are being squandered on luxury projects instead of addressing basic human needs. It is time that Queensland taxpayers had their scarce financial resources allocated to the areas of greatest need and not into relocating railway stations and tilt trains that they do not give two hoots—or two toots—about.
