



Speech by

Mr JIM PEARCE

MEMBER FOR FITZROY

Hansard 21 June 2001

BUDGET DEBATE 2001

Mr PEARCE (Fitzroy—ALP) (3.21 p.m.): When I look at what this year's budget delivers for the electorate of Fitzroy, I have to first acknowledge that the budget is for the benefit of all Queenslanders, not just the Fitzroy electorate. It is a budget that delivers on pre-election commitments. It is a budget delivered by a government with a social conscience and a focus on jobs. Much of the big dollar issues have been out in the public arena for the last two days, and there has been plenty in the media about that.

Economists and those who are leaders or representatives of groups or organisations have spoken about the budget. International economic ratings agency Standard & Poor's has said that the state's accounts are in the best shape of any state in the country. That is a credit to our Treasurer and to the cabinet of the Queensland government. There are those who have been negative and those who have been positive, and that is always going to be the case when a government brings down a budget of this type. In the interests of my constituents, I intend to touch on some of the bigger portfolios so as to allow for people to get an understanding of just how much it does cost to provide services and infrastructure to this vast state.

Because of the number of members who wish to take part in this debate and the many hours of debate that are ahead of us, I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech, which is a prepared speech, incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The average person in the street in the Fitzroy region has limited understanding of what the budget process is all about. I am, from time to time, challenged about the amount of revenue collected from our region—primary industry—coal and taxes and the amount returned to the region.

A state budget is like a family budget—there are limited financial resources to meet the needs, so we have to spread the funds available to best meet the needs of the government family—the people of Queensland. For example, this government has identified capital works of some \$5.1 billion in this budget year.

It is expected that these capital works can support more than 46,000 full-time jobs. The \$5.1 billion includes \$1.6 billion for railroad and port infrastructure; \$382 million for hospitals and other health facilities; \$311 million for schools, TAFE and other education facilities. Education is to get a record \$4.3 billion.

Health gets another record recurrent budget of \$4.06 billion—\$13 million of which will go to the upgrade of hospital medical equipment. The Beattie government will invest more than \$842 million in jobs and training through the employment training and youth portfolio with more than \$100 million for the 'Breaking the Unemployment Cycle' initiative.

The police budget gets an increase of \$69 million to its operating budget and an extra \$25 million for the corrective services budget. The addition of funds for the police operating budget means that the \$870 million allocated is the highest ever provided. The transport and main roads budget for this financial year is \$3.39 billion. Transport gets \$1.27 billion and main roads gets \$2.121 billion, which includes \$1.11 billion for roadworks. This funding will ensure that 17,500 workers will keep their jobs.

The Environmental Protection Authority and Queensland Parks and Wildlife will receive \$341 million and \$215 million respectively. \$10 million has been allocated for 80 new ranger jobs. Disability Services Queensland will get an extra \$31.6 million, pushing the operating budget up to \$304.1 million. The Department of Families goes up to \$335 million—an increase of \$36.6 million.

An allocation of \$400 million has been made to manage Queensland's natural resources and further develop growth in the mining industry. Primary industries and rural communities is to get an extra \$10 million, boosting the portfolio budget to \$1,299.6 million.

I am pleased to see the FarmBis initiative allocated \$15 million over the next three years—this is a very popular and effective initiative. The list goes on—with \$10 million extra for Legal Aid. \$250,000 has been allocated to establish Australia's first workplace bullying task force. This task force will look at workplace bullies and it will be interesting to watch the development of what I consider to be a long overdue need.

An allocation of \$239.4 million has been made to run the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority; \$235.84 million for the Queensland Ambulance Services and \$42.27 million for counter disaster and rescue.

I will now localise some of the funding earmarked for the Fitzroy electorate and some of the projects that will benefit the region. I welcome the announcement of a number of capital works projects for the Fitzroy electorate, including—

- \$131,767 in Cooler Schools subsidy for Ridgeland State School;
- \$101,582 for half general learning area block (stage 2) at Woorabinda State School;
- \$144,823 in Cooler Schools subsidy for Mount Morgan State High School;
- \$400,000 for new Dog Squad facility at Capricornia Correction Centre;
- \$1,116 million to upgrade infrastructure to increase coal train speed to 80kph;
- \$1.226 million for construction of new council chambers at Woorabinda;
- \$500,000 over five years for Mount Morgan Council—Millennium Arts Regional Initiatives;
- \$338,000 total funds for public housing capital works projects in electorate;
- \$6.5 million for the construction of bridges on the Dawson River, near Theodore;
- \$1.7 million to complete widening of existing pavement on Fitzroy Development (Dingo Mount Flora) Road between Rolfe Creek and Bore Creek floodway;
- \$500,000 on same road for works between Valkyrie school and Broomsound shire boundary;
- \$500,000 to commence widening between Bore Creek floodway and 'Cosmos'; and
- \$3.5 million to complete overtaking lanes on Bruce Highway between Benaraby and Rockhampton.

Under the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS), the following state government contributions are provided for local government projects—

- \$100,000 for the replacement of bridge over Dee River at Deeford, with a total subsidy of \$250,000;
- \$68,000 to commence sealing of a 1.8km section of Razorback Road, from Moonmera to boundary, in Fitzroy shire, with a total subsidy of \$138,000;
- \$30,000 to commence paving and sealing of Bluff—Jellinbah tipsite/Racecourse Road, within Duaringa Shire, with a total subsidy of \$108,900;
- \$50,000 to complete paving and sealing of a section of Valkyrie Road school bus route, within Broomsound shire, with a total subsidy of \$100,000; and
- \$50,000 to gravel a second section of Moongan Road, within Mount Morgan city.

I am also pleased that there appears to be additional funding allocated for the ongoing rehabilitation of the Mount Morgan mine site. This year's allocation of \$11.8 million will mean the pump back system, which returns leached polluted waters back into the old mine, will continue to be funded.
