



Speech by

JULIE ATTWOOD

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

Hansard 21 June 2001

BUDGET DEBATE 2001

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (5.33 p.m.): I am very pleased to show my support for another fair and equitable, back-to-basics Beattie budget. I congratulate the Treasurer, the Honourable Terry Mackenroth, on a job well done. This government has ensured that it has covered all bases. When I walk around my electorate and talk with residents I consistently hear about what is important. The issues that people are concerned about most are families, education, health, law and order, jobs and the environment.

This 2001 budget focuses on all of these important areas and delivers vital services to all Queenslanders. Some of these initiatives in policy commitments include: \$10 million over three years for eight new centres of excellence in mathematics, science and technology; \$50 million over three years for the Triple R maintenance program to improve the appearance of schools and enhance the attractiveness of the learning environment; \$5 million to help 16,500 people waiting the longest for public dental health services and \$20 million over two years to reduce waiting lists for elective surgery; \$20 million over two years to create traineeships for young people, focusing on environmental protection, horticulture and waste management; \$2.8 million over four years to establish 10 additional police beats and police beat shopfronts; and \$40 million over four years for national park maintenance, funding up to 140 new park rangers and the equipment and supplies for them to help maintain our national parks.

During my first term I wanted to open up communications between people and government. I think I have partly achieved this through my program of listening posts, a regular newsletter, distribution of some of my speeches, door knocking, information stalls and community bulletins. I believe that the people of Mount Ommaney know that I am there to represent them and that they can call on me if they need help with their issues.

When I am able to, I take the opportunity to visit the nine schools in my electorate. I need to be satisfied that our children are receiving the best possible education and that facilities meet acceptable standards. The debate on the appropriation bills is an excellent opportunity to talk about the Beattie government's great achievements in the electorate of Mount Ommaney.

Just prior to my first term I made a commitment to provide a community health facility in the Oxley-Corinda-Sherwood area. I am pleased to advise now that the centre was officially opened by the Minister for Health, the Honourable Wendy Edmond, on 6 June this year. The facility will be a great asset to this community and will include services such as one-on-one child health consultations, positive parenting programs, nutrition advice, stress and pain management and medication awareness, open health clinics, community health nursing assessments, a baby health clinic, health education and home care for asthma and diabetes management. Nine staff members, including two qualified nurses, will service a population of 27,000 people living in the immediate area. A meeting room seating 20 will be available for community groups to use after hours. I thank the minister and her staff for their cooperation in allowing this health centre to come to fruition.

The Centenary High School is continuing to progress, with stage 3 construction due to commence in the latter half of this year. This stage will comprise a performing arts facility, a student centre with international size basketball courts and a media and television block. Total cost is

approximately \$3.36 million, and design plans are available for viewing at the school. A sum of \$2.43 million has been allocated in this year's budget.

The Corinda State High School's \$7.2 million upgrade is progressing according to schedule and a number of stages have been completed. Some of the enhancements included a new technology learning centre and a performing arts centre, incorporating the existing school hall. In addition, two of the existing buildings on the site will be dismantled and new state-of-the-art facilities built. A sum of \$1.41 million has been allocated in this year's budget. Teachers and students have waited many years for these improvements, and soon Corinda State High School will have facilities to match the quality learning curriculum available there.

Corinda State School and the preschool centre are working to achieve the relocation of the preschool on the primary school grounds. I was involved in discussions and extensive consultation with parents when a new building option was chosen over a demountable building option. Preschool students will temporarily move into F block at the beginning of July, and their new facility will be completed by the beginning of 2002. A sum of \$436,800 has been set aside in this year's budget. I have asked the minister to ensure that time lines are met in relation to the completion of the new building for the convenience of all concerned.

Recently I inspected the new library extension works at the Middle Park State School. The extra space is a big plus for the library staff and the children who will use this facility. The old library block was always cramped and it was difficult for classes to access resource material on a regular basis. A sum of \$99,536 has been allocated in the budget for a new amenities block.

I continue to support other schools in my electorate and endeavour to meet with the principals, staff and P&C associations periodically to discuss matters of concern. For example, I recently arranged for a handrail to be constructed for the ramp at the rear of the Jamboree Heights State School hall following one of my regular visits with the principal. Jindalee State School will receive \$378,600 for two two-space relocatable buildings to accommodate the increasing number of students. This will alleviate immediate space shortages while a long-term solution is found.

The Oxley Secondary College was closed at the end of 2000 due to rapidly declining student numbers. The site has continued to be maintained by Education Queensland, even though it has been handed over to the Department of Natural Resources for disposal. I have asked to be continually informed of the disposal process to ensure that proper community consultation occurs, particularly with those residents most affected by the site. Some of the possible options will be discussed at a public meeting in due course. Residents will be kept informed of these events.

The Mount Ommaney Police Station continues to be a great asset to the Centenary suburbs and surrounds. On a regular basis I meet with the district inspector to discuss local problems and seek solutions. The Neighbourhood Watch groups keep me informed about incidents within their local areas so that I am able to take the matter up with police hierarchy. My commitment to increase the police presence in the Oxley-Corinda area has been realised in this year's budget. A police beat, one of only 10 statewide, has been approved for this area, and this will greatly assist local businesses at the Oxley Shopping Centre and improve the safety of pedestrians accessing public transport systems. I thank the Minister for Police, the Honourable Tony McGrady, for listening to my concerns.

In relation to railway stations, upgrade of access to the Oxley and Corinda railway stations is imminent, with construction expected to commence in the latter half of this year. Completion of these projects is now anticipated by June 2002. People living in these suburbs will be pleased that improvements will enable better access for the elderly, parents with prams and the disabled. \$3.2 million has been previously allocated to upgrade these railway stations. With this and the CityTrans project completed at Darra last year, more people will be encouraged to use public transport to their place of employment. Hopefully, this in turn will result in fewer traffic problems on major access roads. The Minister for Transport realises that improving public transport facilities results in a cleaner, healthier environment.

The Centenary Highway continues to be used as the major access road from the western suburbs to the city. Traffic density on this road has escalated dramatically over the past 10 years. The bikeway was constructed as an alternative for commuters and has been taken up enthusiastically by a number of cyclists. After 2002, cyclists will be able to use the bikeway from Sumners Road right through to the city, with the link between the Centenary Bridge and Fig Tree Pocket Road completed. \$25,000 has been set aside in this budget to finalise planning for asphalt resurfacing of the Centenary Highway between the Ipswich Motorway and the Brisbane River. The total project will cost \$2.5 million.

In relation to public housing, \$1,503,000 was allocated in the budget to fund capital works projects in the electorate. Waiting lists for public housing, particularly for the elderly and people with disabilities, are up to six years, and these funds will help to decrease this waiting time. \$487,000 was set aside to purchase MacPherson Lodge to provide permanent accommodation for five disabled residents.

In relation to the war memorial, on Anzac Day this year the recently formed Centenary Suburbs RSL held its first ceremony at the new war memorial in Mount Ommaney. Over 250 people were present at the unveiling of the war memorial stone on that day. It was a great achievement by the war memorial committee, which I assisted in organising about two years ago. Without the help of Q-Build apprentices who carved the stone, this venture would not have been completed by 25 April. The first official service will be held on 11 November, Remembrance Day, and I look forward to this event with great enthusiasm as the patron of the Centenary Suburbs RSL. I would like to thank the Minister for Public Works for his invaluable assistance with this important project.

As to community grants, local groups and P&C associations have benefited from the government's Gaming Machine Benefit Fund. The fund provides grants to community organisations for a variety of purposes, such as the purchase of basic office equipment, community education activities, arts and recreation events. \$146,944 was provided to local groups in the Mount Ommaney electorate in support of various events and activities since July last year.

In relation to the International Year of the Volunteer, it is great that we officially celebrate and recognise volunteers in 2001. As the local member, I meet with and talk to these people every day of the week. They are the backbone of our community, and often we see them in more than one role or community organisation in the area. As many as 524,000 people in Queensland volunteer 93 million hours per year to various organisations. This equates to approximately \$2 billion to the state economy. The best part of being a volunteer is that you do it because you want to and not because you have to.

Apart from my role as state member, I also volunteer for a number of organisations including the Canossa aged care complex, the Blue Nurses, the Queensland Cancer Fund and, more recently, the Salvation Army's Red Shield Appeal. My personal experience is that the role of the volunteer is very satisfying and personally rewarding. But it takes a lot of dedication, commitment and concern for others to carry out that role successfully. To that end, I will be awarding medallions and certificates to outstanding volunteers in the local community in the coming months. The government appreciates the participation of all volunteers, and I congratulate them all for a job well done. There are many volunteer groups in the Mount Ommaney electorate, and I table a comprehensive list of groups, contact names and telephone numbers.
