



Speech by

JULIE ATTWOOD

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

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APPROPRIATION BILLS [ESTIMATES COMMITTEE G]

Mrs ATTWOOD (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (4.02 p.m.): I congratulate the Minister for Families, Disability Services and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and the Minister for Primary Industries and Rural Communities on their efforts at the estimates hearing on 19 July. As chairperson of the estimates committee on that day, I was impressed with the calibre of responses and the level of knowledge of both ministers.

The total appropriation for the Department of Primary Industries and Rural Communities is \$260.298 million and future developments for this department include: the implementation of a five-year eradication plan for the red imported fire ant; the development of the Queensland aquaculture industry through commercial breeding and aquaculture production initiatives; the technological development for climate prediction and crop modelling systems; and the continuation of the east coast trawl management plan. Questions from committee members were wide-ranging and included issues such as eradication programs for the red imported fire ant, future direction and strategic developments for the department, future prospects for Queensland food and fibre exports, funding arrangements for various programs, and opportunities for women in the primary industries sector in Queensland.

The department's budget represents a strong investment to support our food and fibre industries. The topical fire ant is of great concern to the DPI. It poses enormous economic costs to Australia. It could be responsible for more than \$6 billion over the next 30 years. The pest has been detected at more than 700 sites in Brisbane. With the cooperation of the Commonwealth and other states and territories, the department has developed a \$123 million, five-year eradication plan. Approximately 400 new jobs will be created as part of the proposed eradication campaign. People will be employed to undertake pest treatment, monitoring and vital support roles in the eradication of this pest. I look forward to this great campaign to eliminate this insidious invader.

Job opportunities are important to our economy and are a feature within all portfolios of government. In the 2001-02 financial year, 80.9 per cent of proposed expenditure, that is, \$210.646 million, for disability services will be allocated to labour costs.

The budget for the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy rises to \$107.4 million in 2001-02. The Beattie government is committed to maintaining and increasing support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders to improve their lives. Strategies will include a community expansion plans project and the Torres Strait major infrastructure program, and to make recompense for the non-payment of award wages by Queensland governments between 1975 and 1986.

The 2001-02 Disability Services budget allocation of \$304.1 million includes an additional \$31 million in recurrent funding. This and the last budget are endeavouring to make up for the historical neglect of the interests of the disability sector. It will continue to bring about more individualised adult life support packages, family support for children with a disability, assistance for respite services and support for people with disabilities to establish themselves in the local community.

The minister has met with parents and friends of the Basil Stafford Centre and made a firm commitment to ensuring that the centre is an option for those families who wish their family members to remain at the centre. An example of this in my electorate of Mount Ommaney is the purchase of McPherson Lodge Corinda to permanently house five extremely physically disabled people.

The 2001-02 budget for Family Services was \$405.161 million. Of particular concern to me is the amount of support able to be provided to child protection. This government has made a four-year commitment, that is, \$100 million over four years. The minister advises that she will be taking a submission to cabinet to fully inform her cabinet colleagues about the issues concerning child protection workloads.

Other important matters include funding for domestic and family violence protection initiatives, support for older Queenslanders and youth justice services. These are all issues that members of parliament deal with on a day-to-day basis. We realise how important it is that help is available for all of those people who come to see us as a last resort.

There is never enough or sufficient funds to meet every community need. There is always some group or some individual who will miss out. But this government recognises that we need to make inroads into these matters and that they cannot be ignored.

I thank the research director and her assistants, the Chief Hansard Reporter and his staff and the parliamentary attendants for their assistance on the hearing day.

Time expired.
