



Speech by
**Hon. NITA
CUNNINGHAM**

MEMBER FOR BUNDABERG

Hansard 30 October 2001

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Regional Centres Program

Hon. J. I. CUNNINGHAM (Bundaberg—ALP) (Minister for Local Government and Planning) (10.17 a.m.), by leave: As a former Mayor of Bundaberg, I know how important it is for regional towns and cities to have an attractive city heart, not just for the sake of visitors but also for the sake of civic pride. I also know how difficult it can be for councils to find the money to create and maintain an attractive CBD when they are faced with the competing demands for ratepayers' dollars. So it always gives me great pleasure to see the real difference that funding from the state government can make when it comes to helping councils pump new life into their town heart.

The Regional Centres Program is an initiative of the Beattie Labor government that is having a significant impact on towns and cities around the state. This government has allocated \$50 million over three years to the program, which subsidises local councils with populations of more than 15,000 people to help them improve social and economic infrastructure in regional centres. Coupled with matching amounts from councils and community groups, the Regional Centres Program will create a \$100 million boost to Queensland's regions with the flow-on effects of creating jobs during the construction of these projects. The Regional Centres Program provides support for a wide range of infrastructure and community facilities, including the revitalisation of central business areas, tourism infrastructure, foreshore development in coastal areas, social and community facilities, and streetscaping.

Recently, I had the pleasure of inspecting progress on a number of these projects currently under way in regional centres throughout Queensland. Caboolture Shire Council is undertaking a project to provide physical infrastructure and streetscape improvements to rejuvenate Caboolture's central business district. That council has received final approval for a subsidy under the Regional Centres Program of more than \$1.56 million for stage 1 of the project, which is expected to cost \$5.13 million in total. Last month I officially opened stage 2 of Maroochy Shire Council's Urban Improvement Strategy. This is a \$2.4 million project, to which this government provided half of the funding.

I have also inspected works in progress or had the pleasure of officially opening projects from north Queensland to the Gold Coast. I have seen first-hand projects at Innisfail, on the Gold Coast, Kingaroy, Hervey Bay, Redcliffe, Beaudesert, Townsville, Thuringowa, Burnett and Bundaberg. The feedback I receive about this program, wherever I am in the State, is the same. This is a program that is making a real difference to communities right around Queensland. The Regional Centres Program is not only helping councils provide improved infrastructure and facilities for their residents but it is also helping to give Queenslanders a greater sense of pride in their local community.
