



Speech by

RONAN LEE

MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY

Hansard 22 June 2001

BUDGET DEBATE 2001

Mr LEE (Indooroopilly—ALP) (3.14 p.m.): It is a great pleasure for me to rise in support of such a great budget. I say this as someone who, unlike most of the opposition, has not been sitting in this parliament all week. In fact, at 7 o'clock on Wednesday morning, I was outside the Indooroopilly railway station handing out budget information flyers and talking to commuters. It is my great pleasure to inform the House that the feedback, certainly in my electorate and, I am sure, throughout the state—as I am sure opposition members will find when they finally set foot in their electorates—has been nothing short of fantastic.

A number of the people with whom I spoke on the morning after the budget was delivered asked me to pass on their congratulations to the Treasurer. A number of them had read recently in the local newspaper where he opened my electorate office. They were pleased to see such a great budget. Why wouldn't they be satisfied? This budget delivers big in the key areas of education, health, police, family and disability services, and the environment. It is also a budget that delivers big for the Indooroopilly electorate.

From the very beginning, I said that I was determined to be an active local MP and that I would keep my electorate informed about state government issues. It is a pleasure to be able to inform my electorate about this budget. In my maiden speech, I also said that my No. 1 priority as the member for Indooroopilly would be education. I believe this budget sets new records for education funding in the Indooroopilly electorate. There is over \$1.5 million in education capital works funding, including \$852,687 for Indooroopilly State High School's secondary school renewal program and \$728,335 for site redevelopment at Toowong College.

I visited Toowong College on Monday to assist a local student with their enrolment. It was a great pleasure to walk around the school and see the achievements that this Labor government has had so far. For the first time, thanks to this Labor government, that school will have a school auditorium. I understand from the P&C association that that is something the school has been aiming to do since the 1960s. It took a Labor government to make that a reality for them. I am also pleased that Ironside State School will share in the \$10 million to develop a centre of excellence in maths, science and technology.

On Wednesday night, during the parliamentary dinner break, I visited the Indooroopilly State School after-school care group. That is another school that has benefited greatly from this Labor government. Indooroopilly State School has recently achieved some excellence of its own. The school entered a team in this year's HP Inventing the Future Challenge and in fact was named the Queensland winner. I think it is a great testament to this great Labor government's commitment to making Queensland a Smart State that the winner of a national online IT challenge would be a state school from Indooroopilly. They received a prize of \$6,000 worth of technology of their choice, presented to them by the Minister for Education at a special service at the Science Centre.

This is a great achievement. It is through ongoing partnerships with industry and initiatives like this that we will encourage young Queenslanders to become leaders in the Smart State. I also congratulate their teacher, Mrs Margaret Randall, who provided team members Ben Croker, Nick Dent, Adele Lim, Jonathon Sparkes and Emma Stevenson with the guidance to achieve such a great result for their school. They have made their teachers, their parents and their community proud.

I have also spoken in this place about my local schools' musical achievements. I am once again pleased that the state government is committed to spending money on things like this in schools. Along with a number of local parents, I was very proud to hear a performance by the Western Suburbs String Orchestra. Many local children benefit greatly from state school and music programs. Under the guidance of director Andrea Messenger, they performed as guests of the Queensland Youth Orchestra junior string ensemble at the old Queensland Museum last Saturday night.

It was very satisfying for me, because I not only saw children who have benefited from music programs in their schools but also had the pleasure of watching my young sister, Rioghnach Lee, and her friend, Hannah Anderson, and others performing absolutely fantastically. After watching performances like that, I am absolutely flabbergasted that members opposite could not find anything good in this budget. It delivers in a tremendous way for education. Had the members opposite seen those students perform, they would know that this government's commitment to making Queensland the Smart State is most definitely the right idea.

But that is not all. The University of Queensland benefited from funding of over \$9.5 million, the centrepiece of which is super computing. I am very proud that this government is committed to helping the University of Queensland in this way. I might add that this comes at the same time as the Howard government is belting the living daylights out of tertiary education. It makes me very proud, as the local Labor member, to be able to go to the University of Queensland, my old university, and tell them that we are doing the right thing by tertiary education. The Indooroopilly electorate has never had a representative so determined to promote education. I am pleased to say that the Indooroopilly electorate has never had an education budget that delivers like this one.

I would like to speak briefly about some areas in this state budget as they relate to my local area, and particularly I would like to talk about funding for bikeways. I have spoken already about this government's commitment to making Queensland the Smart State. But it seems to me that the government is committed to making Queensland the healthy state. Funding has been allocated in this budget to create a bikeway along Strickland Terrace in Sherwood and Graceville. I am very pleased about that. I am a keen cyclist. I have raced for the Bramble Bay Amateur Cycle Club and for the Ipswich Amateur Wheelers. I am hoping that very soon young children in my electorate will be able to ride their bicycles from Sherwood State School all the way to the Jack Pesch Bridge in Chelmer without having to deal with major traffic flows. I feel very strongly about that. Jack Pesch is a friend of mine. I raced bicycles against his two grandchildren and often had my bicycle repaired at his shop up on Petrie Terrace. The Pesch Bridge is used by over 400 cyclists every day. It is the bridge that I use when I ride my bicycle to work.

It is great to be able to see that allocation in this state budget, because just last week the year 5 students at Sherwood State School were treated to a bicycle safety check by Donald Tainton of Forest Lake Cycles, who for a number of years has been going to the school to assist the children with bicycle safety. I am pleased to be able to say that this state government is helping the local community with bicycle safety, too. This is a great budget for sport. As someone who, like many members, loves sport, I am also very pleased to see \$130,000 allocated for a clubhouse upgrade for the Toowong Rowing Club.

There is also some wonderful funding in this state budget for the western suburbs Home Secure/Home Assist program. This government is committed to making our community safer. Over the past couple of weeks I have spoken to many local people at Neighbourhood Watch meetings. I am very pleased to see that the budget allows for an extra 300 police officers to be employed. I am personally very happy to see a trial of buprenorphine as part of the detoxification treatment program that has been offered. We were all aware of the scourge of illicit drugs in our communities. I am very proud to see that this great government is committed to doing everything that it can to make our community safer. Personally, it is also great to see a figure of some \$2.5 million for Legal Aid Queensland and community legal centres.

I conclude by saying that, as the member for Indooroopilly, I am very proud to be able to support such an excellent budget. I feel personally that it is a budget that delivers big in the areas that should be delivered big—it delivers big in education, it delivers big in health, it delivers big in families, police and disability services. It is very disappointing for me that the members opposite could not find it in their hearts to admit that this is a great budget for all Queenslanders, whether they live in Indooroopilly, Rockhampton or north Queensland. I would also like to point out that yet again there is no-one from the One Nation Party present in the chamber. Perhaps if they were to spend more time in the parliament they would understand exactly how good this Labor government is. I am honoured to support the bills.
