



Speech by

STEVEN RODGERS

MEMBER FOR BURDEKIN

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BUDGET DEBATE 2001

Mr RODGERS (Burdekin—ALP) (11.29 p.m.): I congratulate the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth, on the budget handed down on Tuesday—a budget for all Queenslanders. The Beattie Labor government has once again shown that it is prepared to take note of the needs of the whole state in progressing a balanced and fair budget process for the benefit of all. The Beattie government has delivered on all of its election commitments. Coming from the Burdekin electorate, it is great to see that 58 per cent of budget funding has gone to rural and regional areas of Queensland.

The electorate of Burdekin is a large and diverse area of the state and has a large range of industries, such as sugar, cattle, coalmining, industrial, tourism, aquaculture, small crops, copper and zinc refineries and other manufacturing based industries. This budget will inject much-needed funding and support into the Burdekin area, something that has been neglected by previous coalition governments. In a snapshot, the electorate and its constituents will receive much-needed benefits from the budget in areas of education, housing, health, emergency services, transport and main roads and primary industries. These are just a few of the areas that will benefit from the budget handed down on Tuesday by the Beattie Labor government.

I turn to the capital works program spending for the area for the 2001-02 budget. In education \$6,559,467 has been allocated for the relocation of the Oonoonba State School. This was a welcome announcement given the confusion of the last few months relating to the future funding of the school. I congratulate and thank the Education Minister, Anna Bligh, for her assistance in dealing with the problems with the school and getting it back on track. There was also a \$122,000-plus subsidy under the Cooler Schools program for the William Ross State High School. Health has also benefited. Some \$500,000 has been allocated this year for the \$12 million hospital redevelopment at Ayr for the preliminary designs. Over \$1 million in total funds have been allocated for public housing capital works programs throughout the electorate.

Roads funding has been another big winner for the electorate. This has been a controversial issue for the electorate over the years, however it will now benefit with \$37,000 for a lighting upgrade to the Collinsville airstrip. The Ports Corporation of Queensland is allocating \$1.8 million plus towards the asset replacement and upgrade of the Abbot Point coal terminal. There is also the allocation of \$500,000 towards a \$2.5 million commitment by the federal government for funding Burdekin safety works on the Bruce Highway. There is also \$1.965 million to complete the construction of overtaking lanes on the federally funded Bruce Highway between McKenzie Creek and the AIMS turn-off. There is also \$100,000 to commence a \$3.7 million project to construct bridges and approaches to Expedition Pass on the Ayr-Dalbeg Road, which is long overdue. Also contained in the budget was \$350,000 to complete the \$970,000 project for widening and rehabilitation of the 3.8 kilometre section of pavement between the Belmore mine and Coral Creek on the Bowen Development Road.

Under the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme, TIDS, the following state government contributions are provided for local government projects. Some \$238,000 has been allocated to continue the reconstruction of road and new bridges at Barratta Road in the Burdekin, with a total subsidy of \$880,000. There is also \$28,000 to commence work for the provision of a parking and bus set-down area at Clare State School in the Burdekin shire, with a total subsidy of \$51,000. Finally, some

\$42,500 has been allocated for the provision of bus set-down, kerb and channelling at East Ayr State School in the Burdekin, which is also well overdue.

I turn now to primary industries. Primary industry producers in the Burdekin will have access to more assistance for training and skills development under a \$15 million commitment over the next three years. The government had increased its contribution to the second stage of FarmBis by \$4 million. With the federal government matching it dollar for dollar, that makes for a combined \$30 million program over the next three years. As a member of the state government's Rural Queensland Council, I have raised the need for this increased commitment to FarmBis. I am pleased that the government has decided to allocate \$15 million to the program during 2001 to 2004, \$4 million more than the \$11 million set down in the first three-year stage of FarmBis. The Queensland government is currently proceeding to put in place a state planning group which will include industry representatives to oversee FarmBis operations in Queensland. I welcome the commitment of the Queensland government, in particular the Primary Industries Minister, Henry Palaszczuk, to ensure Queensland farmers have more access to training assistance through FarmBis.

I thank the Premier, Peter Beattie, and all cabinet ministers and secretaries for their assistance when I have brought issues of need for the Burdekin region to their attention. However, before concluding I want to mention statements made in the media which called the Treasurer a boilermaker. The Treasurer is a former welder. I think that might have had something to do with his putting together the budget. While there were a few leaks before it was finished, the final test is that it is a sound and well-put together budget that will hold up against any challenge put by the opposition. Congratulations, Treasurer. Well done. I conclude by thanking the people of the Burdekin for their help in achieving these positive results for the area. I am sure that with their continued support we can work towards a good result for the next budget as well. Congratulations, Treasurer.
