



Speech by

ANITA PHILLIPS

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

Hansard 21 June 2002

BUDGET SPEECH 2002

Ms PHILLIPS (Thuringowa—ALP) (12.37 p.m.): I am proud to stand here as a member of the Beattie Labor government which has delivered this socially responsible budget. It focuses, in the words of the Treasurer, 'on new investment in the vital areas of families, education and training, health and housing to provide opportunities for all Queenslanders'—and, might I add, for all who live in Thuringowa.

There has been considerable comment from the other side of this House and from certain sections of the media that this budget is fiscally irresponsible; that there is some sort of mystical monetary deficit that will plunge Queensland into darkness. Let me try to bring these harbingers of doom into the 21st century, where the economic soundness of a society is judged not by one but by a triple bottom line. Gone are the days of assessing a government's budget by its capital works expenditure. How dark ages is that! What is this obsession with bricks and mortar? It is far more important to invest in people and in our future.

The progressive media fully understands this fact of life. The extremely positive editorials in the *Australian* and the *Courier-Mail* acknowledge this in their budget assessments. Modern day economists no longer cling to economic statistics alone in assessing the value and worth of a society. They take at least two other factors into consideration—namely, human and natural value—and these can be quantified in monetary terms.

The triple bottom line is accepted in most modern countries as a truer indication of the economic soundness of the society. The triple bottom line consists not only of productive capital but of the human and natural capital as well. To explain this somewhat simplistically, when we look at the \$51 billion allocated for Education in this budget, we may see it as a huge cost—a negative under the productive capital column. However, it would be entered also in the human capital column, this time as a positive entry, because of the assets it will bring across the entire society.

I would now like to examine the human capital investment in my electorate of Thuringowa, commencing with education. The pursuit of excellence in the classroom, wherever that might be, is a priority for the Department of Education, especially in this landmark year as we progress one of the most significant packages of reforms for Queensland's school system. This commitment is clearly demonstrated in Thuringowa through a range of measures, including over \$1.8 million in Cooler Schools subsidies; \$500,000 for Kelso State School, \$450,000 for Rasmussen State School, \$230,000 for Kirwan State School, and nearly \$700,000 for Kirwan High School. I congratulate the minister on responding so positively to our communities' plea for cooler environments for our children to study in.

Non-government schools in my area will also benefit from the \$1.9 million allocated under the budget for airconditioning in their schools. The budget includes \$210,000 for maintenance works at Kelso and Kirwan State Schools and Thuringowa and Kirwan High Schools, and \$110,000 to the Northern Beaches High School to remedy the unsightly drain that currently exists at the front of the school. Negotiations regarding this have gone on for over five years, and I thank the minister for resolving this issue in response to my representations. The Willows State School will benefit from the \$140,000 being spent in the region for the New Basics initiative, which will equip students with critical thinking, problem solving and lifelong learning skills.

I would like to continue sharing with honourable members the many benefits for Thuringowa included in this budget, but in the interests of saving time I seek leave for the remainder of my speech to be incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Human Rights Commission has codified human capital so that it can be costed in monetary terms.

Some of the indicators they use are—the percentage of the community who live to be over 80 years, and the quality of their lives, the percentage of students who complete 12 years of schooling, the infant mortality rate. These and similar statistics are collected to quantify the human capital of a society.

Indicators of Natural Capital would be the value of unspoiled landscape which adds to the enjoyment of life, the number of tourists who will visit this facility, how many people come to appreciate these assets.

The value of minerals in the ground, timbers in forests not felled, can often exceed the moneys gained by mining the minerals or chopping down the trees.

Increasingly, progressive countries are assessing the soundness of their economic base by combining these three indicators.

So where does this 2002/03 Beattie Labor Government Budget stand on all these indicators?

Under all three categories, no matter how stringent the analysis, this proves to be a very positive and responsible Budget.

The economic bottom line reveals a net operating surplus of \$23 million and a cash surplus of \$354 million in the General Government sector for 2002/03, with surpluses over the forward estimates period. The State's net worth is expected to continue to grow, reaching \$58.5 billion by 30 June 2003. By anyone's assessment, that is a very sound economic bottom line

Lets look now at some indicators of the Human Capital Bottom Line. To paraphrase a wise saying, "the measure of a government is how it treats the least advantaged in the community". And this government's awesome Families Package is one indication of Labor's commitment to quality social outcomes for all Queenslanders

We will increase funding for Families by \$188 million over the next four years. This commitment continues the determined efforts made in the past four years to make up for years of neglect.

When this additional money is added to the existing Families Budget, the Disabilities, Education, Health, Social Security and Welfare and Housing and Community amenities Budgets, the total outlay amounts to over \$15 billion, about 80% of the General Government GFS. Overall, we have increased recurrent expenditure for the Families Department by 15.5% to \$518 million, Education by 5.8% to \$4.2 billion, and Health by 6.7% to \$4.3 billion.

This government will invest this money to make tangible improvements in Queenslanders' lives.

And what about the Natural Capital? The Budget is full of positive examples of natural assets and treasures being preserved, protected, value added and celebrated.

Families:

Annual funding for the Families Department—excluding funding provided for concessions, is now \$194 million higher or 97% higher than when the government was elected.

The Thuringowa community will greatly benefit from this huge input of funds including for:

- Prevention and early intervention initiatives to refocus Queensland's child protection system to ensure its effectiveness and efficiency

- A share of the \$17.5 million to employ more frontline staff and enhance technology

- \$33.5 million increase in funding for foster and relative carers who care for our most disadvantaged children—those who can't at this time live with their own parents.

Health;

\$5.12 million has been allocated to the Townsville district for increased hospital and medical services. This will enable Thuringowa residents full access to the services they need such as:

- \$1,230,000 to The Townsville Hospital for a range of technical medical equipment

- \$290,000 to the Dental Unit for new procedures equipment,

- \$123,000 to the Nathan Breastscreen Centre for diagnostic and medical equipment,

- \$330,000 for mental health services

- \$130,000 for staffing for the new Psycho-geriatric Unit.

- \$286,000 for the Acquired Brain Injury Unit

- \$350,000 in recurrent funding to expand dialysis services in the North, including to employ a full-time nephrologist

- \$250,000 for a Neonatalist to support the retrieval of very sick babies for treatment at the Townsville Hospital

- Additional funding for the Home and Community Care program would target areas of identified need, in particular the basic support and maintenance services to assist people to live independently in the community.

Employment and Training:

Townsville region will receive almost \$18 million to create regional jobs and training opportunities during 2002/03. Specifically for Thuringowa/Townsville this will mean:

- An estimated \$4.6 million for community employment programs to assist almost 500 long term unemployed people.

- An estimated \$12.7 million for employment support programs which will help to create entry-level jobs in crucial, skills-shortage industries and the public sector.

- An estimated \$500,000 for programs to assist over 200 mature-age job seekers.

The expenditure of \$500 million for the soon to be started gas fired Townsville Power station and \$6 million for Ergon to improve the electricity supply network in the area, will bring 100s of jobs into the region.

\$483,000 is to be spent on IT upgrades at the Barrier Reef Institute of TAFE for training students,

\$779,000 for housing works, while providing better housing for the community, will also create jobs.

Transport and Main Roads:

Funding to road infrastructure and planning projects has been maintained, despite major cuts to road funding by the Federal Government.

A total of \$9.9 million in federal funding has been provided towards the \$48.6 million Douglas Arterial project, for which the State will meet prematurity costs of \$7.2 million representing the cost of brining this federal funding responsibility forward by four years.

Bikeway extensions to the Upper Ross area, on Mallee Street, between Gouldian Avenue and Gollogly Lane, and on Gouldian Avenue between Pinnacle Drive and Jabiru Park.

\$100 million for the upgrade of the Rockhampton to Townsville section of the rail track renewal project

\$3 million for infrastructure works to improve disability access to Traveltrain services.

\$73,000 for the rollout of 50 km/per hour speed zones

Additional funding for bus operators to carry eligible students to and from school, for the taxi subsidy scheme to assist people with disabilities, for public transport needs of school students with disabilities, and a campaign on school transport safety.

Leisure and Sport

\$600,000 in additional operational funding has been granted to the Museum of Tropical Queensland to ensure its on-going financial stability,

\$22,185 to the Upper Ross PCYC to resurface and line-mark the hall floor

\$25,000 to the Ryan Community Centre to establish an outside entertainment area,

\$21, 200 to the Yalga-Binbi Institute at Shalom College, to purchase computers and desktop publishing equipment for their "Black Ink" indigenous art and literature project.

A share in \$2 million to clubs across the State for the Thoroughbred Training Track subsidy scheme

\$157,000 towards new local sporting facilities, including a running track and lights at Greenwood Park, and cricket nets at the Brothers Club.

Other Highlights:

Nearly \$600,000 to go to the Thuringowa Council towards their for the Condon Sewage Effluent Reuse project.

\$320,000 will be granted to the Thuringowa City Council towards their Cityscape 2000 project,

With an enhancement of funding, the Drug Court pilot program will expand into Townsville, to help offenders overcome their drug dependence and associated criminal behaviour, through court reinforcement and supervised treatment programs,

\$956,000 has been allocated for the region's public libraries.

\$800,000 to establish an accreditation unit within the Office of Fair Trading to regulate the residential services industry across the State which will boost standards and improve the quality of life of some of the most vulnerable members of our community.