



Speech by

**Mr R. QUINN**

**MEMBER FOR ROBINA**

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**CAPITAL WORKS FUNDING**

**Mr QUINN** (Robina—Lib) (11.54 a.m.): I was pleased to hear the previous speaker saying that in fact it can only get better in north Queensland under this government. Well, it should be better, because when we look at the figures in terms of capital works over the past couple of years we see a dramatic decline in the allocation of capital works to this part of Queensland. In just two years, from when the Premier held office two years ago by just one seat and desperately needed north Queensland support to stay Premier, the state government channelled some \$385 million into north Queensland's capital works budget; but now that the Premier has his massive majority, 66 out of the 89 seats, he seems to have lost his north Queensland focus. This year, just \$244 million is earmarked for the region, a clear sign that Mr Beattie now takes the voters of north Queensland for granted. We simply cannot use the north Queensland sitting of state parliament to distract people's focus from the fact that the Premier has pulled the plug on essential jobs and infrastructure in the northern region of this state—a region that covers Townsville, Ingham, Charters Towers, Ayr and Home Hill.

The \$500,000 being spent on this parliament is just little compensation for the \$140 million that has been cut in the capital works program for this part of Queensland over the past two state budgets. That is the reality. The announcements here today go only a little way to repairing the damage that has been done by this government over the past two years to the capital works budget in this part of Queensland. When we look at the overall budget we can see what is happening in terms of capital works. In 2000-01, the budget for capital works in Queensland was \$5,285 million. This year it is \$4,836 million, a cut of \$449 million or almost an 8.5 per cent reduction. What about the capital works allocations to this part of Queensland over the corresponding period? In 2000-01, the budget for the northern region was \$385 million. This year, it is \$244 million—a reduction of \$141 million, a massive 36 per cent cut in capital works for this part of the state over a two-year period. That is what is going on here; that is the reality of what is happening.

When we look at it in relative terms, in 2000-01 the \$385 million represented 7.2 per cent of the entire capital works budget in Queensland. What does the \$244 million this year represent? Well, it has gone from 7.2 per cent to five per cent. This is not only a real cut but also a relative cut across the board. Where do these cuts occur? They occur in the key areas—health, \$88 million down to \$15 million, a \$73 million cut; and education, \$19 million down to \$12.4 million, a cut of \$7 million. This morning it was announced that the airconditioning would be increased—some compensation! TAFE, \$3.5 million down to \$1.2 million; housing \$25.6 million down to \$19.9 million, a \$5 million reduction; natural resources, \$13 million to \$1.9 million, a reduction of \$11 million; state development, \$12.9 million down to \$3.4 million, a \$9.5 million reduction; and the funding for roads over the same period has been cut by \$1.6 million. That is why we cannot get the Douglas Arterial Road on the agenda, because when capital works are cut in terms of the road budget in this state there is no more money. That is the reality of all this.

For the two years since the Beattie government was returned there was a real reduction in the capital works budget in Queensland and a real reduction in the capital works budget of the northern region. It is hitting hard in terms of job creation in this part of the state and hitting hard in terms of building up the necessary infrastructure across the board. What we are seeing here is little compensation for the massive cut, the massive reduction, in government funding here. What about the gall of members opposite to stand up and say what they are doing in terms of the improved jobs creation program? That is what is going on here. As the Leader of the Opposition was saying, it is a bit of glitz and glamour. It is not focusing on real delivery of services. We cannot focus on real delivery of services when the capital works component in this budget is reduced.