



Speech by

**CHRIS CUMMINS**

**MEMBER FOR KAWANA**

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Hansard 29 October 2002

#### **TREASURY LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Mr CUMMINS** (Kawana—ALP) (3.05 p.m.): The purpose of this bill is to make a number of technical changes to acts administered by the Treasury Department. I wish to make mention of the amendments to the Electricity Act 1994 which have two purposes: firstly, to allow for more than seven energy arbitrators who deal with disputes between electricity entities and their customers to be appointed by the regulator, given the need for arbitrators to be situated throughout the state and the workload of persons appointed as arbitrators; and, secondly, to validate existing arrangements for on-selling electricity by bodies corporate to unit occupiers to provide commercial certainty with response to deficiencies recently identified in the Electricity Act 1994 and the Electricity Regulation 1994.

In speaking about electricity and funding changes by this government, I must make mention of my officiating on behalf of the Treasurer at the turning on of the lights at the Kawana Waters Bowls Club on 14 October 2002. The lighting was installed around the club's three lawn bowls greens with financial assistance from the state government. It contributed \$23,100 towards the total project cost of over \$38,000. The lighting has made the bowling greens safer and more comfortable to play on during the summer months and will significantly benefit a large proportion of older adults. The club has some 3,300 members and caters to men's, ladies' and mixed competitions, and allows schools to use the facility.

Over the last two years 31 minor facilities program projects have been approved in the Sunshine Coast local government areas of Maroochy shire, Noosa shire and Caloundra city. This represents a total investment of over \$1 million by the state in sport and recreation infrastructure. Mr Kevin Duffy, chairman of the board of the Kawana Waters Bowls Club, was the master of ceremonies. Although I was invited to stay and participate in a game of bowls under the lights following the opening ceremony, I bowled only three down. I was very pleased with my beginner's luck, so to speak, but due to another electorate commitment at Neighbourhood Watch I needed to leave.

I must also make mention that under this Treasurer and the Beattie Labor government we have seen the Queensland unemployment rate drop again. Figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics revealed that Queensland's trend unemployment rate dropped to 7.1 per cent last month. I believe this is the lowest rate recorded in Queensland since 1990. These figures are a great boost for job seekers and prove that the job creation policies put in place by this Beattie Labor government are paying off.

Jobs have always been our No. 1 priority. Despite tough national and international economic conditions, we have managed to create an environment in the Smart State that fosters hard work and innovation and is attractive to business. These figures were another endorsement of the overall health of the Queensland economy. Earlier, the ANZ Job Advertisement Series showed that the number of job ads in Queensland rose by 25.1 per cent during the previous 12 months—the best job prospects of any state or territory in Australia. In addition, in its *Budget Monitor* of all states and territories Access Economics gave our economy a tick and stated—

We do think an investment surge has started and Queensland is in the forefront of it.

I believe we should be happy with these figures, but we should not be satisfied until every Queenslander who wants a job has a job.

Members of this House should acknowledge that the Pay-roll Tax Act 1971 currently contains an exemption for wages paid to apprentices and trainees. The amendments will more closely align the exemption with the circumstances in which trainees attract state government financial assistance from the Department of Employment and Training.

I commend the minister, who is in the House at the moment, for the dedicated work he and his parliamentary secretary have done in ensuring that apprenticeships and traineeships right across Queensland continue to increase, giving our youth an opportunity to enter into the work force and receive good training. A Smart State is one in which we can continue to push for tertiary education. Not everyone will have the opportunity to go on to tertiary education, and we always will need tradesmen.

The amendment will not impact on wages paid to trainees on an existing trainee contract started prior to the amendment's commencement. The amendment to the Taxation Administration Act 2001 will remove the commissioner's obligation when remitting assessed interest by way of an assessment to issue a notice to the taxpayer where, after any remission and application of payments received, there is no unpaid amount for an instrument or transaction. This will improve administrative efficiency without adversely impacting on the taxpayer. I commend the bill to the House.