



Speech by

CHRISTINE SCOTT

MEMBER FOR CHARTERS TOWERS

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BUDGET SPEECH 2002

Mrs CHRISTINE SCOTT (Charters Towers—ALP) (9.02 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the budget brought down by our Treasurer, the Hon. Terry Mackenroth. I will detail some of the benefits which accrue to the electorate of Charters Towers. In an area which is 15.5 per cent of the state, slightly less than 270,000 square kilometres and rather larger than the state of Victoria, I can tell members this: we get heaps! We get big bucks for this electorate.

Recently I had a conversation with the Treasurer in which he told me that he had no hospitals in his electorate and no ambulance stations. I later discovered he has a fire station, he has half a school—it is on the border—and I think he probably has about 50 kilometres of bitumen road. My electorate has about 37 state schools, 10 private schools, 22 police stations, 18 ambulance stations, 12 fire stations, approximately 400 rural fire brigades, and I cannot count the thousands of kilometres of bitumen road in my electorate. I have never tried to count the kilometres of bitumen and I do not think I could do it even if I wanted to.

Mr Seeney: Thanks to the National Party. Thanks to Joh.

Mrs CHRISTINE SCOTT: With all the good things Joh did for Queensland, he never had a program of building roads in the bush. That was left for the Labor Party.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Liddy Clark): Order! The member for Callide will not interject from other than his correct seat.

Mrs CHRISTINE SCOTT: The member for Warrego has said that it is going down in the bush. Yes, it is going down in the bush—it is going down very well indeed in the bush.

I will come back to detailing the benefits brought to my electorate by this budget. In a part of Queensland which is often not cool, I am very pleased to welcome \$383,000-odd in Cooler Schools funding across the electorate; \$162,000 for maintenance of 10 state schools and \$350,000 to buy teacher accommodation in Richmond, a town where we have not had one vacant house for teachers.

Our local community has had \$1 million in Queensland Heritage Trails Network funding for the Charters Towers goldfields project; \$122,000 for upgrades and maintenance works in national parks; \$911,000 for water supply works in Jericho; \$500,000 towards a water filtration plant in my home town of Charters Towers; \$60,000 for a living park museum in Etheridge; \$85,000 for a community multi-purpose centre for Hughenden; \$97,000 for upgrading the water supply to the Richmond township; and, from the Major Facilities Program, \$350,000 for an artificial lake within an environmental water park for aquatic recreational activities at Richmond. I do not know if members appreciate what this means for Richmond. In an area where there is no surface water, kids cannot go and fish, they cannot go and canoe on a lake, and they cannot swim in the local river because there isn't one. I was 12 years old before I learnt to swim because there was nowhere for me to learn. I do not know if members appreciate what this means to the people of Richmond. At last they can do the things that others accept as normal, such as messing around in boats. Further, there is \$732,000 allocated for housing works, which is creating jobs in our local communities.

Roads and dams are emotive issues in my electorate, and the Queensland government will continue to meet its commitments to the state's road network despite major cuts to road funding by the federal government. The Beattie government has an ongoing commitment to the state's roads, despite

major cuts to state and local government road funding in the recent federal budget, amounting to \$78 million over previous federal commitments.

Mr Palaszczuk: That's because of their federal member, who stands for nothing.

Mrs CHRISTINE SCOTT: I thank the minister for that interjection. \$7.9 million has been allocated for road maintenance and construction in the electorate, including \$1.865 million to widen and seal the Capricornia Highway through Alpha to Barcaldine and Beta to Jericho. \$2.2 million has been allocated to widen and overlay the Flinders Highway through Richmond to Julia Creek and the Chatfield Creek approaches. In fact, \$10 million has been allocated to the road between Townsville and Mount Isa. \$3.7 million has been allocated to seal Harveys Range developmental road from the Battery to the Devils Marbles; \$100,000 to pave and seal Eastmere Road; and \$85,000 to form and pave the Riverside access road.

\$6 million has been allocated for rural air and bus subsidies. I heard the member for Warrego complaining earlier about those subsidies. We considered what people actually needed versus what they wanted. In terms of the traffic between Townsville and Hughenden, there were three services a week. We had 114 passengers getting on planes in 365 days. That is one passenger every three days. We have chosen to give Hughenden a two-day a week service so we can give Burketown and Normanton services they have never had before. Only six people chose to go to Mount Isa from that service. When we give them what they need rather than what they want we can give more places a better service.

Mr Palaszczuk interjected.

Mrs CHRISTINE SCOTT: No, I am not ready to do that.

Opposition members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! A member is on her feet. I said this to all honourable members: there is a member on her feet. Please pay her that courtesy.

Mrs CHRISTINE SCOTT: Funds have been allocated to continue upgrading the north-west's major freight route, the Flinders Highway, between Townsville and Cloncurry. This is part of a strategy to improve the highway's width and service so it can be opened without restrictions to type 2 road trains between Townsville and Cloncurry by 2004. In line with this strategy, the bulk of the money will be spent on the Hughenden to Julia Creek section on which type 2 road trains are currently restricted to daytime access only. \$2.5 million has been provided to upgrade the Flinders Highway between Hughenden and Richmond. This funding will allow work to begin on rehabilitating and widening the section between Sloane and Namoi creeks and to complete rehabilitation and widening of another five kilometres as well as upgrading the highway's intersection with Old Richmond Road. On the Kennedy Developmental Road between Hughenden and Winton \$1.265 million will be spent on shoulder widening and sealing within the Flinders shire. There will be upgrading of the formation on the Hughenden to Muttaborra and Aramac to Torrens Creek roads.

The state coal network rail infrastructure is being upgraded through an outlay of \$5.7 million to improve coal fleet capacity and enable coal trains to lift their speed to 80 kilometres per hour. The Redbank workshops have also just won a new order worth \$4.2 million to build 46 extra coal wagons in addition to a current order for 220 wagons and 40 wagon bodies valued at \$32 million. These contracts are making an important contribution to the provision of jobs in regional Queensland and in Brisbane. The construction of 300 KOJX cattle wagons is also providing significant employment in Townsville, with \$2 million directed towards the program during the financial year. These cattle wagons are being built to provide capacity for QR's livestock operations and to replace ageing KSA wagons. I welcome this funding. It will help the primary producers in my electorate.

In the Richmond shire we have received \$153,000 to upgrade and seal Simpson Street and the Richmond to Croydon road. In the Flinders shire, \$112,000 has been allocated to begin formation work on the Prairie to Muttaborra road, to continue progressive upgrading of the Porcupine Gorge access road and to commence work on the construction of floodways on local roads. I welcome this funding, because it will help to keep tourists in our area for another day, and that means prosperity for our local businesspeople.

In emergency services, we have received \$350,000 to replace the ambulance station at Hughenden. In police we have received \$212,000 to replace the Mount Surprise Police Station. I heard the member for Callide complaining about the budget for police. The police have received a record budget this year. Every week the Police Union has been tipping the can on me about the lack of a police station at Ravenswood. A couple of weeks ago the union sent me a form I could sign to support the police wages claim. It went straight in the bin and it will stay there!

In the area of Health, we have received \$800 million to establish a north Queensland spinal rehabilitation service in Townsville to provide in-patient, outpatient and day-only facilities, and that will be very welcome in my electorate as we have spinal patients who go to Townsville. Hospitals in the

Moranbah health service district will receive half a million dollars to upgrade medical technology and equipment. They will purchase an infant incubator valued at \$20,000, a foetal monitor, an ECG machine, 21 electric beds and eight wheelchairs. The Clermont Hospital has received \$84,000 for a variety of health technology equipment. The Charters Towers health service district will receive \$590,000 extra.

This budget is strong on money for families, health and education. I thank the Premier, the Treasurer and other ministers for a budget that is truly a core Labor budget. It is indeed Labor heartland. I commend this bill to the House.