



Speech by

**DIANNE REILLY**

**MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA**

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Hansard 20 June 2002

### **BUDGET SPEECH 2002**

**Mrs REILLY** (Mudgeeraba—ALP) (10.47 p.m.): I am happy to rise to support these appropriation bills and this budget—the Treasurer's second budget and the Beattie government's fifth budget. I am proud and happy to say that it is one of its best budgets. This is a true Labor budget. Even the *Courier-Mail* and other astute media have recognised that fact. Indeed, the Premier and the Treasurer have referred to it as a budget with heart. This is a budget that delivers for the state's most vulnerable, our most needy and our most important and priceless asset—our children. It does this through record funding in the areas of child protection, education and support for families.

There is no doubt that the Gold Coast will benefit from the commitment of record funding to the Department of Families of \$148 million over four years. Support for families, children and young people in need or at risk—and particularly in the field of child protection—is crucial for the long-term wellbeing and safety of the next generation. It represents an investment in the future—a far better investment than some of the short-term capital works projects that the opposition would prefer to see than spending in this vital area. This investment will bring about savings in the future.

Supporting children and young people and their families now will lessen the burden in the future on juvenile justice, justice, health systems and many other problems in society. In a rapidly growing region such as the Gold Coast, with a highly transient population where many young families and single parents have little or no support, this is a very real commitment to improving the lives of those who are struggling. Family breakdown, poverty, unemployment and instability are just some of the things which put children at risk. As much as we hate to admit it—it is a bitter pill to swallow—child abuse, neglect and homelessness do exist. Many people on the Gold Coast will not accept that it is there, but it is there. It does exist behind the Gold Coast's glittery lights, theme parks and tourist attractions. It is right there and we could all see it if we just opened our eyes.

This is an issue which I have been tackling a lot over the past 18 months and on which I have been lobbied very hard by many community members and organisations. I congratulate all those people who have worked hard to put child protection on the public agenda, including the media, particularly the Gold Coast *Bulletin* and ABC Radio. But I especially want to congratulate the Minister for Families, Judy Spence, because I know that she has worked tirelessly to bring about this result. Unlike the member for Cunningham, the opposition's spokesperson for families, I believe that we have got it right. He has got it wrong.

**Mr Copeland** interjected.

**Mrs REILLY:** The figures tell the story. No government in Queensland's history has ever had the heart, the guts or the courage to put forward a budget like this, a budget which has addressed the chronic underfunding and neglect that this area has suffered at the hands of conservative coalition governments since the birth of this state.

**Mr Copeland** interjected.

**Mrs REILLY:** It is thanks to the persistence of the Minister for Families and the vision and determination of the former Families Minister, Anna Bligh, and the Premier and Treasurer that funding for the Families Department is now 97 per cent higher—put that figure in your pipe and smoke it—than when the Beattie government was elected. The Premier and the Treasurer are the ones to be commended for that effort, because we would have seen that from the National Party—

**Mr Copeland** interjected.

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

**Mrs REILLY:** We would have seen it, wouldn't we? That was something that would have come.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! I remind the member to address her remarks through the chair and if the member for Cunningham wishes to interject he should be in his correct seat.

**Mrs REILLY:** My apologies to the Chair, Madam Deputy Speaker, but I am so passionate and so upset about this issue because so many people have talked to me about this every day—day in, day out. What they have said to me is that this is the first time anyone has listened to them, anyone has been interested, anyone has cared in that electorate on the Gold Coast. When my constituents wanted to talk about child abuse, sex abuse, domestic violence and family breakdown in the past coalition members shut their doors and said, 'Oh, it's really hard. Sorry, I can't talk about that. But if you've got a crane you'd like me to put up over there on the skyline I'm quite happy to talk about that.' When constituents have phoned my office they have thanked me for the commitment and they have given me even more reason to be proud of my position. I know why I joined the Labor Party. I know that in my heart today. I have known it for a very long time because this is what the Labor Party is all about, and those opposite cannot stand it. The opposition would love to be in our shoes today.

**Mr Purcell:** They would never fill them!

**Mrs REILLY:** No, they could never fill them—never, ever. The electorate of Mudgeeraba has had a significant windfall in this budget which is recognition of my constant representations and the lobbying of my community and also the significant growth and development occurring in the Gold Coast hinterland. Unlike much of the Gold Coast, and indeed much of Australia, most of the growth in Mudgeeraba is in young families with young children rather than the ageing population, so the pressure on educational services is enormous. I am delighted to see the allocation of \$6.4 million for the purchase of land and the establishment of a new school in the Reedy Creek/Bonogin area. Yes, the initial allocation for planning was announced in last year's budget. This is a further commitment to that project, and I hope to be able to announce a location soon.

Other highlights in education spending include \$106,300 for the William Duncan State School to build a hall, and I know that the William Duncan P&C has been working very hard towards achieving this goal; \$100,000 for the repainting of buildings at Mudgeeraba State School and William Duncan State School; \$242,800 for the replacement of the Numinbah Valley Environmental Education Centre amenities block; and \$400,000 for an extra four classrooms at the Mudgeeraba Special School, a school of outstanding quality and commitment. In addition, almost \$700,000 has been allocated for the continued upgrade and maintenance of public housing in the electorate.

But perhaps the biggest winners in this budget are the hundreds of children who come to Mudgeeraba each week to play sport at the Mudgeeraba District Sporting Association's Firth Park facility. They play netball, Aussie Rules Football, Rugby League and baseball. Clubs from all over the hinterland come to the Gold Coast to play and train at Firth Park. A number of years ago the Gold Coast City Council provided funds for a clubhouse which has a canteen and a bar area as well as change rooms and toilets on the first floor. It also has a second storey which remains vacant and unfinished. This white elephant has not only been an eyesore for many years but has also represented a shameful waste of space and opportunity. I have been lobbied long and hard by the Mudgeeraba District Association over the past 18 months. Association President Arthur James has dedicated himself to the completion of this building and the development of something which would be of value for the entire community. In the interests of time, I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Association has prepared a design and plans for the facility and I am pleased to announce that their application for funds under the Department of Sport and Recreation's major capital works program has been successful.

\$356,000 has been allocated for the upgrade of this building which will go along way to establishing an accessible community facility and restaurant where local groups can meet, train and celebrate.

A further \$63,000 will go towards lighting for the baseball field, so that both local and international teams will be able to play at night, the way that visiting teams from Japan and the US expect to play.

This is a much needed boost for the district's sporting clubs and community groups and an achievement of which I am very proud.

It will showcase Mudgeeraba to the Gold Coast and to the world as a centre of sporting excellence, attract additional visitors to the area and provide a first-class function centre for this growing community.

I want to congratulate Arthur James, Jacqueline and Brian Ballard, the various club Presidents and supporters and all those involved in this project, and in particular the many volunteers, parents, supporters and of course, young sportsmen and women who make Firth Park such a great place to play sport, pursue excellence and just have fun.

I want to thank the Treasurer and Minister for Sport and Recreation and all his staff, (especially those who've put up with my weekly and recently, daily phone calls pleading for these funds) for recognising the importance of this venue to the Gold Coast hinterland.

There are many other aspects of this budget which deserve comment and which acknowledge the Gold Coast's place in the State's economy, such as funding for extra police, health services and jobs but there isn't time to go into detail on all of them.

I will however, mention that the hinterland's other most valuable asset, our environment has also received a significant boost.

Protecting the environment and biodiversity of unique areas such as Springbrook National Park and the Lamington Plateau is essential to our future, as is support for managed, sustainable tourism which showcases these assets.

So I welcome the commitment of funds for an additional 60 rangers for Queensland national parks and forests. Mudgeeraba has been allocated \$342,000 for upgrades and maintenance of state forests and parks as well as a commitment of capital works funding to complete the safety upgrade of the Purlingbrook Falls circuit and other walks at Springbrook National Park.

I am extremely proud of this budget. It is a budget with heart and soul which acknowledges the Gold Coast's position as the fastest growing region in Australia and the hinterland as the jewel in this crown and I commend the Bill to the house.

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