



Speech by

CHRIS CUMMINS

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Hansard 6 June 2003

STATE BUDGET 2003-04

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (3.19 p.m.): Queensland is the Smart State. This Queensland state budget is continuing our government's push to ensure that we are the Smart State. People are the most precious resource we have, and the Beattie government recognises that fostering innovation and investing in their skills is critical to the future of our economy. That is why we are so committed to building Queensland as the Smart State. I am proud to outline how our government has placed a special focus on health, education and job creation in this state budget.

Health

Local Sunshine health services will receive—

- \$250,000 additional funding for cancer treatment services
- \$950,000 additional funding for renal dialysis services, which is part of an additional \$13.1 million to realign and expand renal dialysis services for hospital, inpatient and home based care
- \$100,000 additional funding for intensive care units
- \$191,000 additional funding for community mental health
- \$270,000 to remodel the mental health inpatient unit to include a high dependency unit to enable the unit to improve safety for staff and patients
- four new clinical staff for mental health services
- \$100,000 additional funding for emergency departments
- \$500,000 for the upgrade and relocation of the Nambour Hospital BreastScreen facility
- \$1 million to upgrade the allied health and birthing suite, completing the \$26 million redevelopment of Nambour Hospital
- \$200,000 for a mobile X-ray unit
- \$150,000 for a patient monitoring system
- \$150,000 for a central monitoring station at Nambour Hospital
- \$79,000 for the operating theatre
- \$25,000 towards the purchase of medical equipment for palliative care centres for Living Association Inc. Buderim
- \$525,000 to enhance services in the emergency department at Caloundra Hospital
- \$660,000 for rehabilitation services within the Sunshine Coast Health Service district, a major element of which will be the Caloundra day therapy unit.

We recognise that with an ageing population there is an increased demand on rehabilitation services in relation to conditions such as stroke or falls in older people. This will provide an extension to the inpatient rehabilitation services which have been relocated to the Caloundra Health Service from Nambour Hospital and lead to improved continuum of care for local residents requiring rehabilitation.

Across Queensland the Beattie government will continue to address waiting times for elective surgery with a \$10 million allocation in the 2003-04 state budget. This state budget has a record

\$4.6 billion for health, which is an increase of 6.9 per cent, or \$300 million, on last year's budget. The extra funds will be used for increased and enhanced services for a growing and ageing population.

I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Education

The Beattie Labor Government will continue its push to be the Smart State. As part of that commitment I am very proud to announce that the State Government has committed:

- \$17.2 million to Stage 1 for a new Chancellor State College. This will serve students in the years 7 to 9 in its first year, 2004.
- \$1.7 million to Stage 1B which will see shared facilities at the Chancellor State College.

Our community appreciates the increases in funding towards school maintenance for Sunshine Coast schools that include:

- \$260,000 for additional facilities at the Buderim Mountain State School.

I must sincerely thank the parents and students, principal and staff who have been extremely patient, but diligent in helping me lobby for these necessary upgrades.

- \$126,000 to paint rooms, buildings etc at Bokarina State School, Buddina State School, Buderim Mountain State School and also roofing works at the Buderim Mountain State School.
- \$840 000 for a space general learning area at Talar Primary College.
- \$6,000 for the Italian school committee for library resources.

The pursuit of excellence in the classroom is a priority for the Beattie Labor Government.

State-wide 382 new teachers in 2002-03, including 158 new teachers as the third instalment in the government's commitment to employ 800 extra teachers over enrolment growth over four years, and 224 new teachers to keep pace with enrolment growth.

Quality teaching is central to the goals of a Smart State.

An increase of \$75.3 million has been provided for state school teacher salaries. Queensland teachers are amongst the highest paid in the country.

\$28 million over four years to train teachers in the use of Information, Communication Technology in teaching and learning.

\$2 million to enable Years 1-10 teachers to undertake development in assessment strategies.

\$3.2 million will be provided to support the conversion of casual administrative positions to permanent roles.

From early childhood through to adulthood we want to equip all Queenslanders with the knowledge and opportunity to compete and excel in a rapidly changing world.

Increased funding towards transport and roads

I am very pleased to have achieved:

- \$14.5 million to complete the construction of the Kawana arterial that will link the Sunshine Motorway to the Nicklin Way at Warana.
- \$4 million towards duplication of the Sunshine Motorway between Mooloolaba Road and Maroochydore Road.
- \$120,000 for parking areas near Bokarina Primary and Kawana Waters High School, that will service new community facilities at East Bank.

Police increases for the Sunshine Coast include:

- \$185,000 is committed to establish a Police Beat shop front in Buderim.
- \$185,000 is committed to establish a Police Beat shop front at Kawana.
- \$178,000 for a tactical crime squad that is based at Kawana Waters station for the Sunshine Coast area.

The Beattie Government has already provided an additional 105 funded police positions for the Sunshine Coast Police District since coming to office and our community will continue to benefit from this program to boost police.

I have lobbied strongly for an additional police presence for our area and I am delighted the government has listened to my representations on behalf of the community.

In fact, this announcement represents the culmination of a lot of hard work by residents throughout the community. I must thank all those residents who signed petitions and public who attended meetings.

The establishment of these Police Beat shopfronts is a proactive policing initiative designed to reduce demands and complement the work of existing services.

Police Beat shopfronts create an increased and highly visible police presence in the community, which acts as a deterrent to crime.

Employment & training means real jobs

The Sunshine Coast will receive around \$7.2 million to create over 1060 jobs through the Beattie Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative for the financial year 2003-2004. This includes an estimated \$4.4 million to help create nearly 510 entry level jobs in skill shortage areas in the public sector through apprenticeship and traineeship programs, and \$2.8 million to provide jobs for 550 long term unemployed people and those at risk of long term employment, through community and employment programs.

Sunshine Coast residents are very proud that our area is recognised as leading Queensland in school-based traineeships and apprenticeships and our State leads Australia.

We have committed \$100,000 to assist early stage companies to develop and grow via the Innovation Centre at the Sunshine Coast Technology Incubator at the Sunshine Coast University at Sippy Downs.

Jobs remain our Government's number one priority. Since coming to power the Beattie Government has created approximately 200,000 new jobs in Queensland—21.4 percent of all jobs created in Australia over that time.

Budget forecasts reveal the unemployment rate is set to remain the lowest figure in Queensland in thirteen years.

Sunshine Coast sporting and recreational facilities

- \$2 million over a four-year period for the development of a regional outdoor sporting stadium at Quad Park, Bokarina as it is the regional sports complex.
- \$71,676 to construct a multi sport indoor facility at the Maroochydore Rugby League grounds on Wises Road.
- \$11,450 to install irrigation at Quad Park.
- \$9,754 to relocate and upgrade lighting at Quad Park, Sunshine Coast's regional sporting facility.
- \$9,509 for the Buderim Craft Cottage Assoc. Inc. for the purchase and upgrade of computer equipment.
- \$28,804 for Sunshine FM community radio towards the upgrade of broadcast and transmitting equipment.

A New City Heart

The development of a new city heart will create significant benefits for Maroochydore and in fact all Sunshine Coast residents. Our State Government will contribute \$1.5 million and I will be keen to see the development of a new city heart which will become a real focal point for the residents of our area. This new area will feature a City Square and a boardwalk linking Cottonree. In undertaking this project, the Maroochy City Heart will not only become more visually appealing to our local community but it will help create a sense of place which reflects the community and vitality of our great area.

The beauty about this funding is not only does it provide local government with the opportunity to fund projects they could otherwise not afford, but the Beattie Labor Government, together with Queensland's local governments, is helping to create jobs locally.

Queensland Ambulance Service

The Queensland Ambulance Service Budget of \$276.25 million includes additional funding of \$6.27 million to enhance service delivery and to alleviate pressures on paramedic staff caused by Queensland's ageing and growing population.

The Budget provides funds for an additional 110 ambulance officers (25 fully qualified officers) and 86 new vehicles.

From 1 July 2003, Community Ambulance Cover will replace the QAS Subscription Scheme and provide all Queensland residents with ambulance cover anywhere in Australia.

Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service has been allocated \$37.5 million, which includes \$17.8 million to continue the seven-year urban and rural fire vehicle replacement and modernisation program, \$12.4 million for building refurbishment, upgrade and replacement of 16 stations and the construction of a special operations facility, plus \$7.4 million for communication and operational equipment.

Counter Disaster and Rescue Services

Counter Disaster and Rescue Services has been allocated \$5.6 million to complete the \$8 million funding program to replace the Queensland Rescue Squirrel helicopter, plus \$0.9 million additional funding for community helicopter providers based on the Sunshine Coast and similar regional rescue bases. An additional \$1 million has been provided to support State Emergency Service Volunteer Marine Rescue and Surf Life Saving.

A record \$607.6 million budget for Emergency Services makes a vital contribution to the safety and wellbeing of every community in Queensland.

This Budget continues the commitment of the Beattie Government to achieving safer and more supportive communities through the provision of world-class emergency and counter disaster services.

Positive environmental initiative:

- \$359,000 towards the Kawana Sewage Treatment Plant to improve the treatment of effluent.
- \$12,705 towards the Eric Joseph Foote Memorial Sanctuary Assoc. Inc. to upgrade the toilet block.

Queensland's progress towards a sustainable future has been boosted with the allocation of more than \$300 million to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the State Budget.

This Government has placed such a high priority on valuing the environment, and the Government continues to allocate substantial funding for the EPA's activities including relocating and setting up HMAS Brisbane for use as a diveable shipwreck, artificial reef and tourist attraction.

The EPA is also responsible for more than 11 million hectares of land and 52,000 square kilometres of marine parks, including five of Australia's 14 World Heritage Areas.

The EPA has finalised the appointment of 140 extra permanent rangers in the past two years and now employs almost 2,300 staff to carry out its broad range of responsibilities.

Major boost for Home and Community Care Services

Home and Community Care Services (HACC) in Queensland will be boosted by at least \$7.5 million.

The demand for HACC services is increasing in Queensland because of population growth and the increasing number of retirees settling in this state.

This has led to an increase in the number of people eligible for support and maintenance services. These services help prevent premature or inappropriate admission of people to residential care.

In 2002-03, Queensland had an eligible HACC population of more than 350,000 and that is expected to increase significantly every year.

The increased funding would target areas of identified need, in particular the basic support and maintenance services to assist people to live independently in the community.

Families

Families on the Sunshine Coast realise the Beattie government is a compassionate government and this State Budget gives heart to the community that I have the privilege to represent. The people on the Sunshine Coast want the best opportunities for themselves and their children. They need to feel safe in their homes and have better prospects for their future. This Budget continues towards achieving those goals.

Public housing

Becoming the Smart State means a better quality of life and opportunities for all Queenslanders.

The 2003 State Budget includes \$45 million to address homelessness in Queensland.

\$9.8 million will be expended under the Department of Housing's Crisis Accommodation Program to further improve and extend services for homeless people.

Australia was on the brink of a housing affordability crisis like we had not seen since the Great Depression.

Public housing waitlists are soaring, community housing organisations are turning people away and more people are ending up on our streets.

Yet the Federal Government continues to slash funding for the construction of more public housing.

The Federal government continues to waste billions of taxpayers' dollars on rental assistance which does not even deliver one additional house for the 167,000 Queenslanders battling to keep a roof over their heads in the private rental market.

The State Budget allocated a further \$12.5 million for the not-for-profit company to build and purchase additional housing.

This record budget delivers the following for Queensland:

- Disability Services—\$290.5 million increase over 4 years.
- Education—\$4.48 billion—A boost of 5.8, including 636 new teachers.
- Employment & Training—Record \$577.7 million for TAFE.
- Health—Record \$4.63 billion—increase of \$300 million.
- Police—More than \$1 billion—increase of \$84 million, including 300 additional police.

The Government is determined to work harder and smarter to improve the quality of life of people with a disability, their families and carers.

The new \$200 million over four years means:

- an extra \$62.5 million to increase services to young people and adults with a disability;
- an extra \$54.5 million to strengthen families and build community capacity; and
- an extra \$83 million over four years to improve viability, quality and accountability of services.

Conservative governments shamefully neglected Queenslanders with disabilities for many decades, and I am proud that our budget makes them a priority.

By 2006-07 state funding for disabilities will be almost 164 per cent greater than when we came to office—when it was \$125.1 million.

This Budget maintains our Government's sound economic record.

- Strong economic growth—economic growth at 4%.
- Jobs—unemployment rate of 7%—lowest figure in Queensland in thirteen years.

The positive and strong economic outlook contained in the 2003-2004 State Budget will be achieved by a combination of several factors, including good government, a committed workforce and a private sector in which our community has confidence.

This State Budget will provide direct and indirect incentives for private sector growth, we will continue to see new investment and importantly, for the private sector, more training and employment growth across the Sunshine Coast. These are very welcome initiatives. Positive incentives from the Beattie state government, a government that has worked hard to strengthen business and investment confidence, recognising, as it does, that the engine room for growth and job creation in our great state must obviously be the private sector.

This state government Budget is very good for the basics that my community demands and deserves.

As a competent, caring and compassionate government we must continue to address many of our society's problems, at the same time making sure we are continuing to give incentives to the private sector.

In 2003-04 the Budget reveals our economic growth rate is forecast to be 4 per cent compared to the Commonwealth figure of 3 and a half per cent.

To highlight the underlying strength of our fiscal performance if we took out the impacts of our fully funded superannuation scheme we would have had an operating surplus of close to \$600 million.

A recovery in investments to more long term average rates of return will deliver both cash and operating surpluses in 2003-04.

This financial year the State's total net worth had climbed to \$58.7 billion and was expected to exceed \$60 billion by 2003-04.

This State Budget will deliver a cash surplus, maintain Queensland's AAA credit rating, and still increase funding to services and capital works.

This Queensland Government Budget also contains a record \$738 million in concessions such as discounts, rebates and subsidies for disadvantaged families or individuals—a \$37 million increase from this financial year.

There are also tax exemptions and concessions, which mainly benefit business, of more than \$2.1 billion, up 6 per cent from last year.

Next financial year Queenslanders are forecast to pay \$1,480 per capita in state taxes compared with \$1,892 per capita for the average of the other states.

This means that taxpayers in other states will pay 28 per cent more than Queenslanders.

I am proud of this Budget because it builds on the economic strengths of our great State and offers improved opportunities for businesses and job seekers.

There are increases in funding and resources in key areas such as education and the environment and an additional 300 police, 636 teachers, and 110 ambulance officers.

The Beattie Government's focus on building on the State's traditional strengths and fostering new innovative industries had delivered consistently higher rates of economic growth than the rest of Australia.

I believe the Queensland Treasurer has produced a very credible budget which fully deserves my support on behalf of the Sunshine Coast community that I represent. In closing I must acknowledge the funding increase in this Budget for people with disabilities. People with intellectual disabilities cannot often articulate their gratitude. They don't ask much of us. They simply ask to be treated with dignity as human beings. Increased funding is another positive step along the way. People in our society with physical disabilities will also be appreciative of this much needed funding increase.

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