



Speech by

CHRIS CUMMINS

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Hansard 29 October 2003

APPROPRIATION BILL [No. 2]; APPROPRIATION [PARLIAMENT] BILL [No. 2]

Mr CUMMINS (Kawana—ALP) (2.54 p.m.): I rise to speak on the Appropriation Parliament Bill (No. 2) for 2003. It is no secret that we on this side of the House hold this Treasurer in extremely high regard, realising economic growth in Queensland is again forecast to exceed that of Australia in 2003. The Queensland economy is forecast to grow considerably faster than the national economy and this is despite an additional detraction from growth because of the deterioration in drought conditions across the state since previous budgets. The fiscal responsibility that this government has shown is, in my opinion, second to none. I would find it quite humorous if it were not so irrelevant and silly to hear the conservatives standing up, bagging our side of the House and complaining that the state is broke and similar, realising of course that they are fully supportive of a federal conservative government that will go down as the highest taxing government that Australia has seen.

Under the Liberal-National federal government we see record foreign debt, record current account deficit, record trade deficit, record household debt, record credit card debt. Sadly, the record household debt and record credit card debt affects the majority of the Australians whom we represent. It hurts Australians. While the federal government is happy to give very generous concessions to the top end of town, they sadly forget that they claim to represent the battlers. We hear their conservative friends on the radio prophesying to the western suburbs of Sydney, Melbourne and Queensland about what a great heart the Prime Minister and the Treasurer have. Sadly, in this House we hear similar rhetoric. It falls on pretty deaf ears in Queensland, because we have only three representatives from the Liberal Party in this House at present and hopefully fewer after the next election.

The Sunshine Coast has fared well under the Beattie Labor government. We are working to secure the Sunshine Coast's future by honouring commitments and again proving that we deliver on previously made commitments. I am very proud of the many achievements that we have delivered to the region since the election in February 2001, including bolstering Tourism Sunshine Coast by encouraging extra flight links to southern areas and a new TAFE facility, which was opened earlier this year and cost approximately \$15 million.

As many in the House will understand, these TAFE facilities are a great benefit for people who are not going to go to university. They get their training and then pick up real jobs. Employers not only on the Sunshine Coast but right across Queensland are demanding that when people come to them they have the ability to make money and earn money for them from day one. On-the-job training, so to speak, is not what it was years ago. Our government is very committed to the TAFE industry. Sadly again, it is no secret that when the other side of politics were in government they tried to gut TAFE. They would privatise it if they could.

Mr Shine interjected.

Mr CUMMINS: I do not think he is even worth mentioning.

We have seen extra Sunshine Coast teachers above the growth projections, more than \$40 million for major Sunshine Coast health improvements, more than \$13 million for Sunshine Coast public housing, over 50 extra police for the Sunshine Coast and more than \$70 million for major road projects, which is greatly appreciated. Again, previously this was a very safe conservative area. Because it was so safe both at a state and federal level all they used to argue about was who would get preselection. If they had fought just as hard for their area we would have seen something delivered, but

the Sunshine Coast did miss out. Not only are we behind the eight ball; we have one of the highest growth areas.

I am very pleased that in coming months we will open approximately \$22 million worth of Kawana Arterial road, which will dissect my electorate and take a significant amount of congestion off the roads. Along with that we have the Sunshine Motorway SM 2032 study. Again, not only did we have poor roads; we did not even have the planning instruments. The conservatives never fought to make sure that they planned so that when good roads are needed they are built. Since the lifting of the tolls on the Sunshine Motorway the Sunshine Coast has seen no major improvements under conservatives. We are very proud of what we have achieved on the Sunshine Coast. We do want to be part of a strong future for Queensland. The state has enjoyed strong growth and stability mainly because we have a government that I believe does deliver, and it has delivered for the Sunshine Coast.

In closing, I commend the Treasurer. I think we have a very smart, fiscally driven Premier, Deputy Premier and entire cabinet. That can be seen by checking *Hansard*. Honourable members will see that very rarely does the conservative side question or debate. In years gone by we would have thought that that would have been what they based their whole arguments on. The Leader of the Opposition is in the House. I will not criticise him for his ad. I think it is marvellous that he is out jogging, getting fit. Sadly, he is lost in the wilderness with no-one to follow him. I commend the bill to the House.