



Speech by

CHRISTINE SMITH

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

Hansard 5 June 2003

STATE BUDGET 2003-04

Mrs SMITH (Burleigh—ALP) (11.16 p.m.): I am proud to stand here today and acknowledge that this sixth state budget of the Beattie Labor government focuses on the essential service areas of health, education and law and order. It provides money in areas that will impact on the lives of every family in the Burleigh electorate with no corresponding increase in taxes.

I am especially pleased to see that a further \$200,000 has been allocated to complete stage 2 of the upgrade to the special education unit at Miami State High School. Last month I was honoured to officially open the first stage of this project. Students in the unit are mainly vision and/or hearing impaired. Before the upgrade the unit's 47 students attended lessons together in one large classroom, which was hardly conducive to learning. Special kids need special facilities and there was a serious lack of special facilities. This additional \$200,000 will give these students facilities equal to those of their able-bodied peers; not better but just equal, which is all they ever asked for. I thank the Minister for Education for hearing my plea for this funding.

To residents, particularly those on the southern side of my electorate, funding to complete planning and begin construction of the Tugun bypass is particularly welcome. This bypass is long overdue and I welcome an anticipated start date for later this year. Facilities at the Gold Coast Hospital are set to improve, with \$1.2 million to be spent on refurbishing the Mental Health Unit. There is also substantial funding for other services including oncology, renal health, intensive care and emergency services. The Gold Coast is the state's largest growing city and the budget reflects the increasing demand for health services.

Residents in Varsity Lakes, the former suburb of Stephens, will benefit from a further \$1 million to continue the upgrading of Department of Housing homes. This housing estate, developed in the early 1970s, has more than 250 dwellings. The funding will not only improve the appearance of housing in the area but will also enhance the quality of living for residents. The budget also includes \$7 million towards the completion of the \$18 million redevelopment of the Tallebudgera Outdoor Recreation Centre. This has been a three-year project that is coming to fruition.

Nearly \$538,000 has been provided to North Burleigh Surf Lifesaving Club to construct a new two-storey clubhouse and Burleigh Heads Junior Rugby League Club will receive \$150,000 to upgrade its clubhouse. In addition, the Gold Coast Gymnastics Club will receive \$75,000 to upgrade its Miami indoor facility and the Burleigh Heads Tennis Club will receive nearly \$31,000 to construct an outdoor tennis court with ancillary lighting.

These grants are wonderful news for local residents. The money will go straight into projects that a lot of people can use and enjoy. As a member of parliament, the most heartbreaking stories I hear from my constituents are from those with disabilities or with disabled children. I am very pleased that this budget contains substantial funding for disability services. This budget provides funds for real assistance to individuals and families, and for resources that will enhance the quality of life in our communities. I commend the bills to the House.