



Speech by

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MEMBER FOR MUDGEERABA

Hansard 21 August 2003

APPROPRIATION BILLS—ESTIMATES COMMITTEE F

Mrs REILLY (Mudgeeraba—ALP) (4.19 p.m.): I was pleased and privileged to take part in the budget estimates process as a member of Estimates Committee F. On behalf of the committee chair, the member for Mount Ommaney, who will be joining us shortly, I want to thank the committee for their hard work and their spirit of cooperation during the process. I especially want to congratulate our committee chair, Julie Attwood, the member for Mount Ommaney, on her professional stewardship of this complex and most diverse committee.

Estimates Committee F covered the expenditure of the portfolios of Innovation and Information Economy, Public Works and Housing and Families, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Disability Services. As I have already said, a broad range of issues were discussed on the day. There is not time to revisit them all today but I do want to cover a few, particularly those that are relevant to the Gold Coast and Mudgeeraba. Most significantly, the committee covered in some detail the record funding allocated by the Beattie government to the area of disability services.

With the Gold Coast's rapidly growing population, demand for services which support people with disabilities and their families and carers is high. I meet and talk regularly with the Gold Coast Family Support Group, which has some 500 clients, as well as the local DSQ office and parent groups, chat groups, individuals and peak bodies on disability related issues and I regularly represent disability issues to the minister or the DSQ office that come through my office. I can tell members that their response to the budget increase of \$290 million over the next four years in additional funding has been overwhelming. People with disabilities, their families and carers are relieved, overjoyed, ecstatic and optimistic because they know that the funding increase will lead to more support, better services and better quality services. They know that this government is the first government that has listened to them, that cares about them and is serious about improving the lives of Queenslanders with a disability.

I have already seen the results of this budget increase at work with a family in my electorate who have two young adults at home—two young men in their 20s with severe intellectual disabilities and challenging behaviours who have been cared for by ageing, loving parents who have been pushed to the brink of a nervous breakdown. The mother has suffered severe health problems as a result of the mental stress of their situation. They will now be able to access family support with the extension of this family support program to people aged over 18 living at home. I want to commend the minister, Judy Spence, and her hardworking dedicated team at Disability Services Queensland for this most important budget initiative.

While the topics covered by the three portfolios examined by Estimates Committee F were diverse, there was a common thread that I could identify, and that common thread or theme is this: the Beattie government's commitment to improving the quality of life for all Queenslanders—whether that be through the provision of reliable, cost-effective energy or support for life-saving research and technology or through the development of infrastructure and capital works projects providing jobs and economic outcomes or a leg-up for young job seekers through Q-Build apprenticeships, and we heard much of that detail discussed in the section on capital works and housing. I want to commend the Minister for Housing and Public Works for his dedication and commitment to those areas, in particular to getting outstanding achievements for Queenslanders and to improve their quality of life in the area of housing.

The community renewal projects and innovative housing projects have increased support for people who are struggling to find affordable housing, as many do in my electorate. We also heard about the increased support for families, for families in crisis and, in particular, for indigenous communities with outstanding innovative projects that are happening across our north Queensland communities in indigenous areas, particularly in relation to the alcohol management plans and then, of course, for people with disabilities.

Throughout all of those areas the common theme that stood out was the obvious care and commitment that this Beattie government has for Queenslanders. This is a government that cares. This is a government with heart and it is a smart government for a Smart State because it delivers real quality of life outcomes to the most disadvantaged Queenslanders within a financially responsible framework. It is a budget to be proud of. I am proud of it. I am happy to commend the report of Estimates Committee F to the House.