



Speech by

DON LIVINGSTONE

MEMBER FOR IPSWICH WEST

Hansard 6 June 2003

STATE BUDGET 2003-04

Mr LIVINGSTONE (Ipswich West—ALP) (10.47 a.m.): I rise in support of this great Labor budget. This is a budget for all of Queensland. It is a very good budget for Ipswich and the West Moreton region and it is a budget that most people in the community share in. I congratulate Minister Terry Mackenroth and all of those other people who have been involved in putting this bill together. It is certainly a great Queensland budget.

It is hard to believe the doom and gloom of those opposite. Day after day they claim that the state is going broke. Perhaps they do not understand why we have a AAA credit rating. They want increased spending, no new taxes and the budget kept in the black. How stupid do they think the public are? No wonder they became politically irrelevant.

When we look at the state as a whole we have economic growth at over five per cent, unemployment the lowest in 13 years and \$24 billion in improved infrastructure. In Queensland we spend \$600 per head of population. The highest of any other state is Western Australia, which spends less than \$500 per head. In the area of health, there is an extra \$300 million, taking health spending to over \$2.6 billion. There is major increased spending on Disability Services, 636 more teachers and approximately 300 extra police. We have a new police beat at North Ipswich, which has been received very well. The new policeman in charge is doing a tremendous job. We have a new Tactical Crime Squad in Ipswich with 14 police, at a cost of \$142,000. Total spending for the police budget has topped a billion dollars for the first time in history. That shows what a great job we are doing in increasing spending in that area.

In all of these areas of improved spending, Ipswich will get its fair share—something it never got under the coalition. A very high priority of mine is the schools in my electorate. Fernvale, Glamorganvale, North Ipswich, Leichhardt, Lowood, and Rosewood schools will all see improvements this financial year. Hopefully we will be able to do a few other things as well.

Under the Regional Centres Program Ipswich will receive \$3.15 million towards the river heart project. That will be great for the city and for the business community. Honourable members should not just take my word for it. An editorial in the local paper this week stated—

The upcoming Ipswich project is one of the most imaginative concepts to receive funding and a real credit to those involved ...

The editorial also states that it is one of the best initiatives of the Beattie government. I am sure that everyone in the Ipswich area would agree.

In the town of Lowood we will spend approximately \$38,000 heating the local swimming pool and \$39,000 for the state government agent one-stop shop. Atkinsons Dam has been a problem in our area for a long time. The area of Lowood has been in National Party country basically forever, and it is fair to say that the National Party did not do very much to help the local farming community up there. It is little wonder that they have turned to us for support. Atkinsons Dam, which has not had much water in it for many, many years, has a real need for increased culverts. In this budget is \$658,000 to increase the size of those culverts. Weather permitting, work should start by the end of this month.

Another election promise of this government which I have spoken about on many occasions related to One Mile Bridge. We have worked tirelessly to have this come about and we are sharing the cost with the Ipswich City Council. Premier Beattie had originally made a

commitment that this government would contribute a maximum of \$7.5 million for half of the construction cost of the bridge. The reason for it being for half of the construction cost is that it is a council bridge with a council road going over it. In this case we recognised that the Ipswich council was not going to be in a position to fund it, and in this year's budget is \$1.5 million to go towards stage 1 of what will be a maximum of \$9.5 million for the construction of the bridge. The costs will be shared with the council.

One of the other great success stories of this government has been the improvement in government housing. In this budget is \$2.9 million for the construction of new singles units in Flint Street, North Ipswich. For a long time a great concern of mine has been that under a future coalition government we will see government housing in this state sold off. When Labor came to government we inherited the situation of a company being given the right to look after a lot of the housing in Brisbane. A company called Chesterton looked after a lot of the housing in the Mount Gravatt area. The truth is that the scheme was a total disaster. It very badly affected a lot of the people living in those houses. I hope that this opposition will make a commitment that it has no intention of selling off government housing, because it would be an absolute tragedy if it did.

A tremendous amount of work has been done in Ipswich and certainly in the area of Leichhardt. Hundreds of houses have been done up. In around 1994 Terry Mackenroth as Minister for Housing actually kicked off the program there. The first thing that happened when the Borbidge government came into office was that that was frozen. Fortunately, under this government the first thing that happened when Minister Schwarten became minister was that that great initiative was kick-started again.

In addition to urban renewal we also have community renewal, which has certainly done a great thing for that area. I ask members to consider that something like \$20 million has been spent in this area, which had been neglected for many years. Could members imagine over \$20 million being spent by a coalition government in an area for poor people? I think not.

I would like to share with members some of the achievements achieved by the government's Community Renewal Program in the suburb of Leichhardt. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Leichhardt, in West Ipswich, is home to a unique community. Over the past three decades the Leichhardt community has grown to become one of the most passionate, determined and courageous communities I know of.

Leichhardt's community spirit was ignited by the great floods of 1974, when about 400 people were left homeless. This natural disaster brought what was quite a geographically and socially segregated community together to look after one another. This was a turning point for the people of Leichhardt. They realised they could work together as a whole; a single community united by a common purpose.

And since that day, the Leichhardt community has done just that—they have worked together, and with all levels of government to improve the quality of life for local residents.

An integral part of this community-government partnership has been the state government's community renewal program, administered by the Department of Housing, which has worked closely with residents, Ipswich City Council, and other government and non-government organisations to achieve sustainable solutions to local issues.

Since the community renewal program began in Leichhardt in 1998, this government has invested \$4.2 million in nearly 50 projects which have enhanced neighbourhood amenity, community pride and access to services in Leichhardt.

Let me highlight how we have helped to deliver real outcomes for the people of Leichhardt.

In 1995 the Department of Housing helped to establish a Police Beat in Leichhardt, which has helped to combat crime in the area. The Police Beat has provided the community with an increased awareness of crime prevention, resulting in a dramatic reduction in crime, from 60 offences per month down to 10. This is one of the lowest crime rates in the Ipswich area—a remarkable achievement.

Community renewal has also helped very young children in Leichhardt to develop literacy skills, through a project which encourages parents to read to children under the age of five. This innovative project aims to minimise illiteracy by encouraging an interest in reading before children start school.

Continuing to nurture Leichhardt's next generation, community renewal has delivered leadership training and peer support for young people, who have developed skills in conflict resolution, problem-solving, teamwork and effective communication.

Community renewal has also funded a family support worker, who has delivered parenting, life skills, counselling and conflict resolution programs to many local families.

The government has also made a significant investment in upgrading the area's public housing, through a public-private partnership as part of the urban renewal program.

But perhaps community renewal's greatest success in Leichhardt has been its pivotal role in helping to create the new state-of-the-art community centre. This government has invested over \$1.5 million in this centre through the Department of Housing's community renewal program and the Department of Families. In 1999 Leichhardt residents began dreaming of a new facility, as their needs continued to outgrow the capabilities of the existing centre. And since then I have worked with community renewal, Ipswich City Councillor Charlie Pisasale and many others to make this dream a reality.

The purpose-built community centre has become a hub for the community, providing a much-needed space to meet and access services, resources and information. The centre makes a major entry statement to the area, rising like

a beacon as you come over the river into Leichhardt. The centre houses a range of facilities and programs, including a community garden, a tool-lending library, playground and community bus. Residents can access job-searching programs, literacy and numeracy programs, counselling services and a range of health and welfare information through the centre.

Whilst the previous centre only provided a limited-hours child-care facility, the new centre provides long day-care, making it easier for parents to pursue education and employment opportunities. In fact the long day-care facility has been well received that it is already operating near capacity, with just a few places left. Proceeds from this service will help to sustain the centre over the long-term.

Also helping to ensure the sustainability of the centre are its tool-lending library and community garden, as residents will be able to maintain the grounds, which have been beautifully landscaped by locals under a community jobs plan initiative.

The Leichhardt community's 'can-do' attitude has seen them prevail over many challenges. And it is this attitude, together with an ongoing commitment from the department of families that will ensure the centre remains a vibrant, accessible and relevant resource for this and future generations. Leichhardt's community spirit was ignited well before community renewal came to the area, and will remain after community renewal is gone. And this bodes very well for the future indeed.