



Speech by

GARY FENLON

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

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STATE BUDGET 2003-04

Mr FENLON (Greenslopes—ALP) (12.16 p.m.): It is a great pleasure to rise to speak in support of the bills before the House and indeed to compliment this Labor government and this cabinet on the state budget. The residents of the Greenslopes electorate will share in the benefits of the Beattie government's sixth state budget. It is a very good budget in that it builds on the great achievements that have been made already over the past five budgets and, indeed, on the great achievements of previous Labor governments dating from 1989. That indeed was a time of great change for the Greenslopes electorate, after 32 years of the conservative parties being in power in that electorate.

This is a strong, balanced budget. The centrepiece is a boost to public health care funding, welfare services and education, which will be seen very clearly on the ground in the way in which this budget will affect the schools in my electorate. This budget provides funds for real assistance to individuals and families and for resources that will enhance the quality of life of our communities.

My electorate will receive \$300,000 to replace the toilet block at Marshall Road State School. I am very pleased that when I was at the Marshall Road State School for assembly this morning I was able to announce that funding. I must say also that I announced the winners of that school's poetry competition to commemorate Queensland Day. Their poems were just fantastic. I compliment all of those children for their great effort this morning at Marshall Road State School. I know that that new toilet block will be very much welcomed at that school. I compliment the parents and school community for assisting me and backing me in lobbying for funding for that addition.

There is also funding to repaint school buildings under the Triple R program. This includes \$59,000 for the Coorparoo Secondary College, \$61,000 for the Coorparoo State School and \$52,000 for the Holland Park State School, and Seville Road State School receives \$32,000. In addition to this, I should also note that funding has been given to two of my border schools. Whites Hill State College will receive \$22,000 under the same scheme and the Camp Hill State School will receive \$27,000 under that scheme for repainting. Those school communities are very appreciative of this funding. Under this budget there is also \$20,000 to upgrade the special education unit at Cavendish Road State High School. I commend that school community for the efforts it is currently making. I am assisting it in its efforts to establish an independent living centre for students from that school which may also be used by other school communities. There is also \$82,000 for local road and drainage works.

Other highlights in relation to the Greenslopes electorate are \$5 million for road noise barrier works—these encompass a number of other electorates—and \$1.12 million to continue the intersection improvements and installation of traffic management devices on the South East Freeway. Again, that work covers a number of electorates and is estimated at \$4.12 million.

The third stage of the Coorparoo State School's master plan to prepare that school for the future amounts to \$2.35 million and includes a three-storey teaching block, an amenities block, staff parking and associated works. There is also \$145,000 for the music block as a result of carryover funding from stage 2 of the project, which is already under way. It is tremendous to see that work going on at Coorparoo State School. It is one of the oldest schools in Brisbane. At the end of this process we will be able to proudly boast that more than half of the school classrooms are brand new and there is a new pool and music block. There is also \$3.412 million for book stocks in public libraries in Brisbane, and my constituents who use the local libraries will be very appreciative of this.

On a wider basis, there is \$5.75 million in additional funding for the Princess Alexandra and Mater hospitals' service district to enhance health services such as oncology, intensive care and home based care. There is \$142 million for tactical crime squads to target known crime hot spots, with a strong emphasise on investigating property crime and drug offences. The tactical crime squad was established in South Brisbane with a strength of 14 officers in April 2003. I know through my Neighbourhood Watch communities just how much those new squads are appreciated. Neighbourhood Watch groups are briefed regularly on the operation of those squads. Today's police work, as I understand it, is very much about finding those hot spots, because they are the epicentre of crime—that is, when a new group moves into an area. Police try to get to those people quickly to ensure that they are not operating in illegal activities. That is very welcome. I wish those officers well in that great work. Some \$390,000 has also been allocated for the 14-officer tactical crime squad at Oxley to target those hot spots and investigate property crime and drug offences.

The greater Brisbane region will receive around \$26.4 million to create an estimated 4,230 jobs through the state government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative during 2003-04. We know that this is the best form of social welfare we can have to drive our employment rate forward and to create jobs for people. It is the best form of welfare for families. I commend the government for keeping its eye on this issue, which is the main gain for the wider welfare of our society. This builds on the funding already allocated to the Greenslopes electorate under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative. Approximately \$2.3 million was allocated between October 1998 and March 2003. This has resulted in 304 jobs being created in Greenslopes. I am very pleased to see that this budget will deliver a healthy cash surplus, maintaining Queensland's AAA credit rating and increased funding to services and capital works.

I am very pleased to be able to say this, because Queensland is very proud of the history of financial integrity we have maintained. Queensland is a state that did not fall into some of the financial traps that other states fell into, particularly through the 1980s. Queenslanders are very aware—the people in my electorate in particular are aware—of the sound financial foundations in this state. Without needing to elaborate any further, they are also very conscious of the fact that this government has maintained that tradition in Queensland very well and built upon it by doing the right things. That is the reason we can deliver services in electorates like Greenslopes.

This budget indeed builds on great achievements in the Greenslopes electorate over recent years. I want to elaborate on those, particularly in relation to education. I am very proud to be able to claim that the Greenslopes electorate has not seen this level of funding for education in generations. I am very proud and very pleased to make that claim, because that is exactly what has happened through the various programs that have been driven through the electorate, particularly the Secondary Schools Renewal Program that has been in place in recent years.

We have seen \$3 million for the Secondary Schools Renewal Program at the Coorparoo Secondary College, \$802,000 towards a swimming pool at the Coorparoo State School and \$523,000 towards the new music block. Some \$5.3 million has been put in place for site redevelopment of the Cavendish Road High School. That is now basically completed and includes the new biosciences area. Some \$700,000 has been provided for school refurbishment and conversion at the Holland Park High School and \$428,000 for the construction of a new C block at Marshall Road State School after a fire. Whites Hill State College received \$700,000 for upgrade of that school under the Secondary Schools Renewal Program and has also seen the establishment of a P-12 campus.

Outside school hours care has also received a great boost in the Greenslopes electorate. It incorporates such schools as Coorparoo State School, Marshall Road State School, Mount Carmel, Whites Hill State School, St Joachim's and Holland Park State School. I was very pleased when I opened the St Joachim's school fete last Sunday to be given a tour of the after school hours care facility to see how that money has been so well spent. I can certainly assure the government that it has been well spent, and seeing the very proud carers and parents at that school when they saw that facility was very satisfying to me.

Camp Hill State School also received \$200,000 for a special education unit. Holland Park State School received \$150,000 for a resource centre. About \$343,000 has been allocated to Mount Carmel school to construct a library and provide extra learning areas. There is \$33,000 for Wellers Hill State School for a new assembly hall under the capital subsidy scheme. There is \$48,000 for Seville Road State School for a car park and \$386,000 for IT computer grants, and there are many other specific and individual contributions to many of these local schools. I am very proud of them and we just keep building on them.

Education in the Greenslopes electorate has done very well. However, I must say that I will continue to remind ministers that the schools within Greenslopes are old schools. They are some of the oldest schools in Brisbane. While we have built on this foundation, we need to continue to roll out these programs and ensure that these schools continue to be upgraded. The older teaching blocks, pathways

and other facilities need to continue to be upgraded. I will continue to be a strong advocate for my school communities to build on this foundation of continuing to improve our facilities.

One other area of this budget announced by the Treasurer that is very important to the Greenslopes electorate is land tax. I am referring to the fact that a bracket creep situation has developed in Queensland where more and more ordinary land-holders and investors have been impacted upon by land tax who have never experienced it before. The government has recognised that rising land values will have a significant impact upon some 11,000 new taxpayers expected in the 2003-04 year under existing tax provisions.

In order to provide a measure of land tax relief, particularly to those with lower land tax holdings, the Treasurer announced that the statutory deduction for residents will be increased from \$200,000 to \$220,000. The minimum tax payable by taxpayers will be increased from \$100 to \$350. This will ensure that the tax liability for those persons liable to pay land tax is less than \$350. The exemption threshold for companies, trustees and absentees will be increased from \$150,000 to \$170,000, with the consequential extension of the phasing in rebate. This is a very important move. It certainly recognises the concerns of many residents alarmed at the increases in levels of valuation in the suburbs in the Greenslopes electorate.

I must also compliment the efforts of the Brisbane City Council under new Lord Mayor Alderman Tim Quinn in recognising community concern in the council budget this week by taking measures to reduce the impact on rates of these valuation increases. This is a very fine budget. This is a budget which delivers to communities in a concrete way services that are important areas for electorates such as mine—health, education and security for our local residents. I commend this bill to the House.