



Speech by

**GEOFF WILSON**

**MEMBER FOR FERNY GROVE**

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Hansard 6 June 2003

**STATE BUDGET 2003-04**

**Mr WILSON** (Ferry Grove—ALP) (12.52 p.m.): I congratulate the Premier and the Treasurer on this fantastic sixth Beattie Labor government state budget. It gives me great pleasure today to tell members about how local residents living in the Ferry Grove electorate will share in the benefits of this budget.

This is a strong, balanced budget and the centrepiece is a boost to public health care funding and to welfare 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. This is a great traditional Labor budget.

Labor Premier T. J. Ryan, who led Queensland about 80 years ago, was one of the greatest Premiers of this state. Labor Prime Minister Ben Chifley, whose federal Labor Government rebuilt Australia after World War II, was one of the greatest Prime Ministers of Australia. Each was a leader without peer in their time, and I believe even now. Their place in history was secured by the years of widespread public support for the programs they initiated. The values and principles of equality of opportunity, fairness and equity, compassion and tolerance which marked their leadership are also found in this budget.

Locally the Beattie Labor government has allocated \$3.3 million to commence the duplication of the Samford subarterial road from two to four lanes between Ferry Way, Ferry Hills and Cobalt Street, Keperra, at a total project cost of approximately \$11.8 million; \$3.49 million for the establishment of a community health centre in the north-west Brisbane area; and \$1.26 million for four new classrooms and a toilet block at Patricks Road State School, Ferry Hills. There is also \$230,000 for local road and drainage works and \$600,000 to upgrade 15 public housing dwellings.

Other Beattie Labor government initiatives in the Ferry Grove electorate and surrounding suburbs include—

- \$1.95 million to complete construction of a climbing lane on Samford Road between Wahminda Park and Upper Camp Mountain Road;
- \$50,000 for mine shaft repairs and capping as well as environmental works in Pine Rivers Shire;
- \$34,320 to install change rooms at the Samford and District Rugby League Football Club;
- additional car parking spaces at the Ferry Grove Railway Station, something that I have been campaigning about for some time;
- \$23,000 to install lighting and benches and construct a kicking wall at the Westside Sports Club;
- approximately \$8,000 to repaint school buildings at Ferry Grove State School; and
- \$3,000 to begin renovations totalling \$122,000 at Bellbird Grove in the Brisbane Forest Park.

Bearing in mind the time, I seek to leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Greater Brisbane region will receive around \$26.4 million to create an estimated 4,230 jobs through the Government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative during 2003/04.

This builds on the funding already allocated to the Ferny Grove electorate under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle, where approximately \$2.3 million has been allocated between October 1998 and March 2003. This has resulted in 399 jobs being created for Ferny Grove.

The Beattie Government has increased police numbers in the Metropolitan North Police Region by an extra 154 officers since coming to office (1998). This is part of our election commitment to increase police numbers by about 300 extra officers each year until 2005. All Queensland communities, including the electorate of Ferny Grove, will continue to benefit from this program.

Other initiatives in the Greater Brisbane Region also include:

- an estimated \$16.83 million allocation to help create 1,928 entry-level jobs in crucial, skills-shortage industries and the public sector through a range of apprenticeship and traineeship programs
- an estimated \$9.6 million to provide jobs for 2,298 long-term unemployed people, and people at risk of long-term unemployment through a range of community employment programs
- \$1.177 million for continued development of information and communication technology infrastructure to enable training delivery that meets current industry standards
- Integration of Brisbane and North Point Institute of TAFE means more efficient and effective VET delivery for the Brisbane North Region. The savings achieved will realise an additional 1400 student places over a 3 year period. (\$0.6 million)
- Training and resource development for emerging training priorities that respond to identified community and industry needs (\$0.3 million)
- Additional funding (\$4.16 million) to manage demand for cancer treatment services in Royal Brisbane and Royal Childrens Hospital Health Service Districts
- Additional funding (\$1.8 million) to manage demand on cardiac services in the Prince Charles Hospital Health Services District
- Additional funding (\$1.7 million) to manage demand on intensive care units in Royal Brisbane, Royal Children's, and Prince Charles Hospital Health Service Districts
- Additional funding (\$0.55 million) to manage demand on emergency departments in Royal Brisbane and Royal Children's Hospital Health Service Districts
- Additional funding (\$0.222 million) to provide new community mental health positions commencing in 2003-04 to manage increase in demands on mental health services in the Royal Brisbane and Prince Charles Hospital Health Services Districts
- Additional funding (\$0.1 million) to realign and expand renal dialysis services for hospital, in-patient and home based care in Royal Children's Hospital Health Service District
- Responsive and planned maintenance (\$45.443 million) to public rental dwellings (includes repainting)
- Refurbishment of dwelling interiors ie kitchens, bathrooms, etc and provision of security screens (\$23.026 million)
- \$0.331 funding provided to the Regional Tourist Organisation for destination-based marketing.

Having addressed the budget benefits locally and in Brisbane, I want to briefly outline some of the key State-wide features:

- an increase in 2003-04 of \$300 million (7%) bringing the increase in spending on health over four years to over \$2.6 billion (1.6 billion contributed by the State)
- 636 additional classroom teachers. This will bring the total number of new teachers appointed since 1998 to around 3,000.
- an extra \$338 million over four years on the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative to help the unemployed get jobs
- Disability Services funding will grow to \$385 in 2003-04, an increase of 16.3% over last year's Budget
- 528 million for housing assistance programs, representing an increase of 11% over last year
- 300 extra police as part of the plan to have 9,100 officers by 2005 (up from around 7000 in 1998). The Police budget increased 6% to over \$1 billion for the first time ever.
- an extra 110 ambulance officers
- \$5.3 million on capital works such as roads, dams and bridges. This is an increase of \$400 million or 8%— 62% to be spent in regional and rural Queensland.

The Budget provides for a net operating surplus of \$153 million. Queensland retains the top triple A credit rating by the international credit rating agencies and is in a sound financial position.

The Queensland economy is estimated to grow 4% this year, 1 percentage point faster than growth forecast for the rest of Australia.

Employment growth this year was an estimated 3.25%, 1 percentage point faster than growth in the rest of Australia.

This means we have created an additional 55,000 jobs in 2002-03, 12,000 more than forecast, and a total of 200,000 since June 1998.

Unemployment has continued to fall during the year, even with our strong population growth. At 7% it is at its lowest level since 1990. The hard work to bring it even lower will continue. Employment is forecast to increase by 2.25%. Business investment is forecast to increase by around 9.5%

While there are significant local benefits in the Budget, it is important that work continue on a wide front to improve services and facilities for my local community. This I will do. For example, I will continue my strong lobbying for additional car parking (both interim and long term) at the Ferny Grove railway station; improved access to public transport for people in Samford Valley and the Hills District; additional capacity and assistance at various schools, particularly in the high growth areas. I am also dedicated to extending the very worthwhile Neighbourhood Watch Programs to more areas of the electorate.

This Budget is a great Labor Budget. It focuses on services to the broad population, and much needed assistance to many of those in need. At the same time, the State's finances are being carefully managed to protect the long-term wellbeing of the whole State.

I think Premier T. J. Ryan and Prime Minister Ben Chifley would be proud of this Labor Budget.

I commend the bill to the House.