



Speech by

**KAREN STRUTHERS**

**MEMBER FOR ALGESTER**

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Hansard 5 June 2003

#### **STATE BUDGET 2003-04**

**Ms STRUTHERS** (Algester—ALP) (5.49 p.m.): I am proud to report to local residents in the suburbs of Algester, Forestdale, Calamvale and all other parts of my electorate that this budget is a very good one for them and brings a lot of benefits to our area. The hallmark of a good government is the extent to which it can score highly on both economic growth and its efforts to meet social needs, and this budget scores highly on both. It continues to advance the Smart State economic strategy whilst at the same time actively promoting Queensland as a state with heart—I know that is a bit clichéd, but I think that is a good way to sum it up—which has a government that does care about disability and families who are struggling to meet the needs of people in their families with disabilities; a government that cares about our health and education systems.

That is the clear difference between a Labor government and the conservative parties. When the conservative parties were in government in this state for a couple of decades, our spending and our level of service in the social services area was the lowest in the nation. We have significantly improved that in the 14 years or so that we have had Labor in government in Queensland. I am very proud to be part of a government that has that kind of record.

It is interesting to note on hearing a bit of talk around the place that this Treasurer is not only a tough guy but a tough guy with a big heart. That is what the public wants. The public wants a government that can handle economic management and handle that well, which is what our government is doing, but also cares about the day-to-day needs of people. I would suggest that while Joh was concentrating on how many cranes he had on the skyline a lot of people did not have a decent roof over their head, did not have decent access to education. This government has certainly turned that around.

In relation to the balloons that were given out this morning, I would suggest that the coalition budget balloons do not have any air in them at all. That is symbolic of them as coalition parties. They are going nowhere. It is a gimmick. At no point this morning in his budget reply did the Opposition Leader offer any strong, positive proposals, and that is the difference. There is a clear difference. People often question what is the difference between Labor and the conservative parties these days. I can rattle off 10 issues quickly, and I will go through some of them.

**Mr Wilson:** Here is the difference.

**Ms STRUTHERS:** As the member for Ferny Grove has said, the balloon with no air is symbolic of that difference; it is going nowhere. The strategies in this budget will surely make Queensland soar to even greater heights, don't members think? Look at the agreement I am getting here. There is one hand up even from the only opposition member in the parliament. He is supporting that point as well.

There are some great achievements locally in the electorate of Algester, and I know that education is one of those big achievements. In my electorate there are some wonderful school staff and parents who are actively contributing to the growth and development of those schools. They will be very pleased to hear that we have received another \$12.5 million to continue stage 2 at Calamvale Community College. What a wonderful state-of-the-art school that is under the leadership of Sue Bremner and others there. We have received some \$10.9 million for stage 4 and a further \$323,000 for stage 2 at Forest Lakes State High School—another magnificent school in my area. More money will be given to Algester for further painting. It is looking like a colourful and very productive school. Great things are being done in my electorate throughout all of the schools.

Serviceton South will be getting more money for special education, as with Algester. They are some very important areas for which our government provides. We care about special education, we care about the needs of students with learning difficulties and we are putting a heavy emphasis on that. In fact, the big increase in disability funding is being widely acclaimed in the community this week. I was pleased to see the non-government agencies giving due credit to Minister Spence, the Treasurer and the Cabinet Budget Review Committee members for the work they have done to make sure that disability, health, education and all those key areas get such a priority.

The Public Advocate, Ian Boardman, made a comment that he saw this budget as a breakthrough budget for disability. He said that the Beattie government has increased disability funding in every one of its budgets but this is the breakthrough with guaranteed increases over the next four years. He particularly applauded extra dollars for family support, innovative service models, quality assurance and other areas. It is not just me saying what a good budget this is; it is people in the non-government sector who are saying this. It is the Property Council, it is all those other interest groups that are acclaiming this budget in a very positive way.

Locally we are also seeing significant improvements to our roads. That is one issue on which I want to assure my local residents I will continue to go in to bat for them. We have significant problems with heavy vehicles and congestion, particularly along Beaudesert Road and the Ipswich Motorway. Some tremendous work has been done through the Brisbane urban corridor study, and I will continue to push for both state and federal governments to work cooperatively to make sure we implement very positive changes. Sadly, we are seeing a lot of politics being played out by the Liberal member for Moreton, Gary Hardgrave, who is all talk and no action when it comes to fixing our road problems.

I am also very pleased to see that there is \$165,000 for the indigenous community programs at the Murrie school in my local suburb of Acacia Ridge. Some very innovative things are being done at that school. It is very good to see that it continues to go from strength to strength. It suffered a fire a couple of years ago and it bounced back from that. It has a tremendous training centre, Kulkathil, doing great vocational education work with young indigenous people and the school itself is providing very good culturally appropriate education and support not only for the students but also for their families.

I am very proud to be part of the action that is happening in my local area. We have tremendous local people—people like Dave Harrison at Forest Lakes State School, an electrician by day who still finds the time to do an enormous amount of work for the school and the wider community. He recently received a Centenary of Federation medal, which was well deserved. There are many other people like that in my area. I know I am not the only member who has those sorts of people in their electorate; they are around the state. But they make this a great state. I am certainly very pleased to be part of this government that is making this state even greater. I commend the Treasurer and members of the Cabinet Budget Review Committee. It is a very balanced budget. It is a budget that keeps us on track for even greater things.