



Speech by

**RONAN LEE**

**MEMBER FOR INDOOROOPILLY**

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

**Mr LEE** (Indooroopilly—ALP) (12.07 a.m.): In rising to support the 2003 state budget, I thank the people of the Indooroopilly electorate for the trust they have placed in me as their local MP. It is always an honour to serve my local community in this place, and I am determined always to be an active and accessible member of parliament. Whether it is at a school fete, a P&C or P&F meeting, Neighbourhood Watch, a seniors gathering, a church picnic, on the University of Queensland campus or even just at the local shops, I want my constituents to feel able to approach me to discuss any issues that concern them. I believe that very little of an MP's work should be carried out from behind a desk in an electorate office; rather, our activities should centre on being out in the community meeting people and listening to their concerns, views and ideas. It is in the community that we find out just what projects and programs need government funding and it is only after listening to the community that we should act to promote the interests of our constituents.

I want to speak of this state budget not just in specific dollar terms but in terms of the underlying philosophies that I believe should guide participants in the democratic process. We live in an increasingly uncertain international environment. It is one where an evil few who do not share our common commitment to freedom, liberty and truth can terrorise the majority. The tragedy of the Bali bombing clearly demonstrated this. However, the way to make the world safer and the way to make our community safer is to promote our common democratic values. This is adequately captured by Australia's citizenship affirmation: as an Australian citizen, I affirm my loyalty to Australia and its people, whose democratic beliefs I share, whose rights and liberties I respect and whose laws I uphold and obey.

I do not think it can be put any more simply than that. That is why I think that it is possible here in Queensland to bring down a state budget that divides over \$2 billion without the consideration that those who disagree with any part of the funding arrangements might take up arms against the rest.

What makes our democracy strong is an active citizenry and I believe that it is education that makes for an active citizenship body. That is why it is crucial that we continue to boost education spending. This budget contains education spending of around \$4.48 billion—a boost of 5.8 per cent—and it includes around 600 new teachers.

This budget also contains significant funding for local Indooroopilly electorate schools. I will just talk of some of this funding. There is \$209,000 to repaint school buildings at Indooroopilly State High School, Indooroopilly State School, Ironside State School and Toowong College. There is \$131,000 for new toilets at Indooroopilly State School and there is also a special grant of \$250,000 which will assist with Indooroopilly State School's swimming pool upgrade. There is also a grant of \$8,000 to help Graceville State School renovate their swimming school canteen and around \$27,000 to install sun safe equipment at the Indooroopilly After School Care Association.

I am very pleased with this funding in particular. I am a patron of the Indooroopilly After School Care Association and I know that Jaime Simmonds and the committee that work very hard there will be absolutely delighted with this funding. I spoke to Michael van Baarle from the St Lucia Kindergarten Association yesterday and they are absolutely delighted with \$21,105 for new playground equipment. There is also significant funding as well for Smart State initiatives at the University of Queensland.

I am fiercely proud of my electorate's schools, as most members of this parliament know, and I would like to reflect briefly upon some of the achievements of the students and also of the parent bodies in some of these schools.

Indooroopilly State School in particular has done very well out of this state budget. I know that Hilary Bachus has worked very hard this year as the new principal. Last year Graham Giles retired after 14 years at the helm and Hilary had very big shoes to fill and I think she has managed to do that. I had an opportunity to catch up with Graham last week. I think he is enjoying his retirement but like most lifelong educators he does miss the laughter and the questions of the students.

Indooroopilly State School was recently a winner of the district maths team challenge where they competed against not just state schools but also private schools. I am also very impressed that Gopi Ravindran from year 6 won the District Harvey Norman Ozspell in the 10 to 14 years division. He is 10 but he won the under 14 division. He will now go to Sydney for the National Championships. Olivia Degn, one of the school captains at Indooroopilly State School, was also one of just two primary school captains to present at a young leaders day in front of a state wide audience of 2,500 people. That is quite an achievement for a very impressive young lady.

Ironside State School is already a centre of excellence and in fact the only centre of excellence in metropolitan Brisbane.

**Ms Keech** interjected.

**Mr LEE:** I take that interjection from the member for Albert. It is a very good school. I had the honour recently of launching at the school this year's Science Centre Travelling Roadshow, which showcases some of the exhibits that are available through the science centre and through the Queensland museum. The roadshow, while it was launched at Ironside, actually does the rounds of regional Queensland schools and communities, and provides students who would not get the opportunity otherwise to visit the museum to find out about science and science in action. It was a pleasure to be able to launch that at Ironside School, which is very proud of its achievements in the area of science teaching.

Fig Tree Pocket State School is also quite close to my heart, and I am looking forward to Saturday, 14 June and opening the school's fete. All moneys raised at the fete go towards the students and towards the school and I know that everyone has a great day. Fete day is a day at Fig Tree Pocket where the whole community gets involved. The school also links in with other community groups in the local area. I know that Neighbourhood Watch is always involved, as are the local police. I know that Fig Tree Pocket has had a number of break-ins in the last couple of years. I also know that the Department of Education and the local Neighbourhood Watch group are working hard to make sure that if there are people getting up to mischief on the school grounds they are reported to the police straightaway and they are also working towards an increased level of security at the school.

My neighbour is Nudgee Junior College and Patrick Colley is the principal at the moment. Sean Gordon has taken leave. Nudgee is a very impressive school with some very impressive young men. Recently a group of year 7 students from Nudgee Junior won the national championship for future problem solving. Since last year when they won this competition they have been working towards heading over to the University of Connecticut to take part in the world championships.

Four boys are currently in the USA with Nudgee Junior's librarian Mrs Roz Peters and they are competing to become world champions in future problem solving. Their topic, and I think it is quite appropriate for a school from the Smart State, is 'World Wide Communications'. These boys have very big shoes to fill. Last year the team from Nudgee Junior actually became the world champions of the future problem solving competition. This is a competition that schools from all over Australia take part in. It is a competition that I know schools in America take incredibly seriously. There are schools in the United States that employ staff full time to train their students and to coach their students to do well at the future problem solvers competition. Our boys from Nudgee Junior went to Connecticut and absolutely trounced them.

Holy Family School in Indooroopilly is also doing very well. It recently received a grant of \$30,000 from the state government for some new toilets. I know that Margaret Gallen, its hard working principal, was delighted with this. The school has tremendous support from its parent body and that is no more the case when it is doing some fundraising. It had a very successful fundraiser recently at the Indooroopilly Hotel where they organised a trivia night with dozens and dozens of tables. I am also looking forward to meeting the year 7s from Holy Family next week. They are going to have a tour of parliament on Wednesday. It was a delight to visit their classroom two weeks ago to talk about the work that I do and also to answer their questions.

For many years I have been a parishioner at Christ the King Catholic parish in Graceville. Christ the King School means a lot to me. I know that John Wilson, the principal, works very hard with the community. It is a great school. They are also expanding the school at the moment. To do this they are having to move the church. The church, which was originally at Toowong, was literally floated on rafts down the river about 100 years ago. It is being moved again. It is something the church is used to, I guess. It has done it before, but it is going to give the students a much larger play area. The fete at Christ the King is on Sunday, 15 June. I can see a wry smile from the Treasurer because he opened the fete at the school last year and was a very popular attendee.

I would like to express my sadness though at the loss of Mary Tormey, the school's librarian. Mary passed away almost a month ago. Mary was taken well before her time. The outpouring of community support and sympathy for her family is indicative of the esteem in which she was held by the community at Christ the King. I know the staff and parents miss her and I also know that her family miss her. More than that, I know by the reactions of the students that they really miss her too. The school and the community have lost a great lady in Mary.

This year is the 75th anniversary of Graceville State School. Many activities have been carried out this year at Graceville. Graceville has received a lot from the government as of late, particularly its swimming club, which has received a number of grants recently. Also, the wonderful Graceville State School hall received a grant not so long ago to build a new stage, which is absolutely wonderful.

Sherwood State School has recently received significant funding to upgrade its swimming pool, which is absolutely wonderful. It is worth noting that this swimming pool virtually did not receive a cent of funding under the conservatives. The pool was built in 1967 and I think it barely saw a lick of paint since it was opened. The school has a great pool now and I know the swimming club is absolutely delighted.

Montessori school in Fig Tree Pocket under the leadership of Allen Kloeden is opening a new secondary section next year and is accepting year 8 students. The combination of the Montessori philosophy and the international baccalaureate programs, which involved middle years program and diploma, and the Dalton Plan make this a world first. The school will be the only school in Brisbane offering this international program in 2004.

Glenleighden school, which runs through the CHI.L.D Association, has been servicing the needs of children and adolescents who have severe speech and language impairments since 1979. With the recent addition of an outreach program, this has enabled CHI.L.D to offer services to children, their families and educators at a statewide level. This is a quite remarkable school that does remarkable things with its students.

This year Toowong College is celebrating its 40th anniversary and under Jeanette Gentle it has developed a new direction for the future which the school community is enthusiastically embracing. The new vision for the school is 'Toowong College: Your way to a Brighter Future.' St Peters Lutheran College, which recently held its annual fete herbsfest, has done very well recently, with its film and television students, Julia Billington, Adriane Hayward, Nicola Andrews and Bonnie Holloway winning the Best Secondary Documentary category at the Queensland New Film Makers Awards. It is the fifth time that St Peters has been a finalist if not a winner at these prestigious film industry awards.

I want to say a few brief words about the young ladies from Brigidine College. Many of the year 12 students at that school visited parliament recently to meet with other members of my local youth advisory committee and also the state Minister for Youth, Mr Matt Foley. The girls always make a quite valuable contribution in meetings of the youth advisory committee and I think they demonstrate an understanding of local issues beyond their years. I hope they keep that up in the future.

I want to speak also about some of the wonderful things that are happening at Indooroopilly State High School. This is a school of which Professor Peter Doherty is a past pupil. That school is really living up to the example that he has set. Grace Moss and Eleanore Bridier are delegates this July to the United Nations Youth Association and National Youth Conference in Perth. They are the only two students from state schools who are representing Queensland.

Vicki Van Der Walt recently received her pilot's licence. She received her wings from the Royal Queensland Aero Club and I am told she did that before she got her driver's licence. Jodi Gardner, who is a student leader at the school, won the regional final of the Lion's Youth of the Year competition and the year 9 debaters remain undefeated. Indooroopilly State High School has a great track record in debating. A year 12 student and a friend of mine, Jack Fuller, won the Queensland Debating Union Best Debater Award last year.

I want to reflect briefly upon Milpera State High School. Milpera now has its highest enrolment in four years in this semester. It is undertaking a joint project with year 5 students from Graceville State School through a discovering democracy grant. Eleven students have successfully completed a trial program at the Construction Training Centre in Salisbury and a TPV Afghani IT trainee has just completed his traineeship with Milpera with the Benarrawa Community Development Association paying his wages, which I understand were denied to him by the federal government because of his temporary protection visa status. Milpera has over 100 volunteers working there every week and I think it is a great sign for the future of the Smart State.

I would like to finish on a positive note in commenting that the Sherwood Police Station received significant funding in this budget. This is a station that the National Party government sought to close and the community fought against. This government has committed significant funds to it. It is a reaffirmation of our desire to provide the best quality police service to the Sherwood community. I am delighted with this budget.