



Speech by

**Michael Choi**

**MEMBER FOR CAPALABA**

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## **STATE BUDGET 2004**

**Mr CHOI** (Capalaba—ALP) (11.59 p.m.) It gives me immense pleasure to deliver my budget reply on the 2004-05 budget by the Beattie Labor government. In every sense of the word, this is a record budget: a record in terms of revenue, a record in terms of surplus, a record in terms of spending, a record in terms of its service delivery and a record in terms of meeting the government's commitments and obligations.

I wish to address the economic performance of this government and our Treasurer. The benchmark for the economic performance of any government and any business, for that matter, is in the management of its finances. The Beattie Labor government's 2004-05 budget for the state of Queensland is a record \$23 billion, with a budgeted surplus of \$2.37 billion this financial year. It is indeed the best financial result in a Queensland state budget and should lead us to a strong position into the coming year. We should be expecting a strong and good review card from major financial institutions and it is expected that the triple A rating of the state will continue.

The surplus is the result of several factors, including strong financial management from the government, increased returns on investments, and the continuing strength of our property market and the economy. As a result of the Queensland government's long-term commitment to fully fund our superannuation—the only state in the country to do so—we have received a decent return from our investment. We have moved away from the negative returns we experienced in the past towards a positive return.

The increase in revenue is also due to a strong property market. In the last three years we have seen remarkable growth in the property sector and that has underpinned half of our tax revenue. Even with a substantial tax revenue increase, we are still the lowest taxed state in the nation. However, we are also giving tax cuts to Queenslanders with the abolition of credit card duty, a reduction in insurance duty and new transfer concessions for home buyers.

The budget clearly indicates that the Beattie Labor government has the experience, the track record and the skill to manage the financial affairs of the great state of Queensland. Let us look into how the government has spent our revenue. The Queensland government will increase health spending by more than \$500 million, or 10.8 per cent, to a record budget of \$5.1 billion. Such an investment gives the government the opportunity to help improve the health of all Queenslanders. This is in contrast to the federal government's record on looking after the health of Australians and Queenslanders. Under the coalition federal government, bulk-billing has declined a further 20 per cent since 2000. In fact, a recent survey by Donna Webster, the Labor candidate for Bowman, indicated that 49 per cent of doctors in the Redlands no longer bulk-bill and that the majority of the remaining service providers partially bulk-bill for health care card holders and children under the age of 15. This is an awful indictment on a federal government that has given up on working families and the community.

In contrast, the Queensland government continues to improve the health of the citizens of this great state. Last year we injected \$20 million on an elective surgery program to reduce waiting lists in Queensland. This year we will provide \$40 million to further reduce waiting lists. These funds are part of a \$110 million program aimed at reducing waiting lists.

The Redlands will also receive its fair share, with \$7.38 million allocated over three years to establish and operate a nine-chair renal dialysis unit at the Redland Hospital. An extra \$2.4 million has been allocated to the Bayside Health Service District to enhance services, as well as \$434,000 for the purchase of medical equipment including defibrillators and ventilators. There is an extra \$2.15 million to purchase and operate a CT scanner at Redland Hospital.

\$460,000 has been budgeted for community organisations in Capalaba under the Home and Community Care program. This program provides support and maintenance services for people in their homes and for their carers so that they can remain living in their community and avoid premature admission to residential care.

The government continues to invest substantial new funds in education to give Queensland's young people the best chance to achieve success throughout their lives. A record \$4.8 billion has been allocated for current expenses, an increase of 7.3 per cent from last year. This year the government will begin to deliver on its commitment to invest additional funds in building, upgrading and maintaining school facilities. It will also progress the landmark reforms on the learning and earning program as well as a preparatory school year throughout the state.

Coolnwynpin State School in Capalaba will receive an upgrade to the Special Education Unit to support inclusion. Capalaba State High School will receive \$101,000 to commence a major upgrade to classrooms to enhance catering and music initiatives, at a total cost of \$1 million. \$191,000 is allocated to the Alexandra Hills State School for reticulation and to the Coolnwynpin and Alexandra Hills state schools for repainting under the Triple R maintenance program. \$132,000 for classroom upgrades at Alexandra Hills State High School and Capalaba State School are most welcome.

A record \$4 billion is allocated for transport and main roads, which will enable the Beattie government to continue establishing a world-class transport network in Queensland. This is a massive 14 per cent on last year's budget. Public transport in south-east Queensland will be revolutionised from 1 July through the introduction of integrated public transport services and ticketing. Last weekend I helped Translink introduce this new system to Capalaba by assisting them with a display in the Capalaba Park Shopping Centre.

The Capalaba electorate will receive \$3.8 million to complete a \$4.6 million project to upgrade the lanes from two to four between Windemere Road and Vienna Road on Capalaba-Victoria Point Road in 2004-05. We will also receive \$2 million towards a \$26 million project to provide four lanes on Redland Bay Road between Panorama Drive and Cleveland-Redland Bay Road, and four lanes on Capalaba-Victoria Point Road between Vienna Road and Redland Bay Road by 2006-07. We will receive \$200,000 towards a \$1 million project for an upgrade at the intersection of Old Cleveland Road East on Birkdale Road, a major black spot in my electorate.

A record investment in policing of more than \$1 billion demonstrates the government's commitment to be tough on crime and on the causes of crime. By September 2005 there will be over 9,000 police officers in Queensland, with modern equipment and technology support, focused on ensuring the safety and security of the Queensland community and a continued downward trend in crime. This is a record budget on law and order, representing a 9.2 per cent increase on last year's budget.

As Australia's fastest growing state, it is vital that Queensland strike the right balance between environmental protection, sustainable development and the creation of new Smart jobs and clean industries. I am pleased to be a member of a government which has legislated against the wholesale clearing of trees in Queensland. We have achieved this without the support of the federal government. This budget is continuing that good track record. \$2 million is allocated to upgrade visitor facilities in Queensland's national parks. \$2 million is allocated to improve fire, weed and feral animal management in our national parks. \$6 million is allocated for the acquisition of land of high conservation value to add to the protected estates.

For a community to prosper and grow, it needs to feel empowered and safe and to have common values. In a culturally diverse and decentralised state like Queensland, it is important that people have opportunities regardless of their geographic location and individual circumstances. In recognition of this, the budget has provided a record \$290 million to meet our community's needs, with a particular focus on Queensland's children, youth and seniors.

Disability Services has received an increase in its budget to \$454 million, a record increase of 18 per cent. Hopefully this will provide support for more adults and young people with disabilities and increase support for families caring for children or adult family members with a disability. Creating opportunities to improve and strengthen disability services will be the top priority of this government. I accept that the disabilities funding has a long way to go and will continue to support any increase in this area.

Queensland is a state of business opportunities and small business is the backbone of this state. The Beattie Labor government will continue to implement the Small Business Policy, which involves a commitment of \$2.6 million over four years for the development of a small business web site, the

implementation of the Women in Business Coaching program and the enhancement of services provided to small business by the state's development and innovation offices. An additional \$2.4 million will be provided over three years for the Small Business Accelerator program to target an extra 480 grants to be offered over the next three years to small businesses with identified growth potential.

Overall this is a budget prepared with skill, underpinned by experience and delivered with heart. This is a budget which supports economic growth, creates employment and yet, at the same time, provides better education, better health outcomes, better roads and better policing for our community. This is an excellent budget for a proud Treasurer. As a proud member of this government, I proudly commend this budget to the House.