



Speech by

Paul Hoolihan

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

Hansard Friday, 18 June 2004

STATE BUDGET 2004

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (12.03 p.m.): First and foremost in speaking to this budget, I acknowledge the Treasurer's vision, which can only enhance the quality of life for all Queenslanders by creating infrastructure and continuing to strengthen those services which underpin our society. I believe that all members of this House would recognise that he had to endure the brickbats of the deficit budgets in order to produce a genuine community oriented Labor budget this year. At the post-budget breakfast Paul Clitheroe, of television's *Money* fame, described it as a budget of social conscience. In the six years of the Beattie Labor government working to that social conscience, Queenslanders have benefited from government policies, and Queensland has become one of the powerhouse states of Australia. They gain further benefits from this far-sighted budget.

I will deal with the specific areas in the budget that assist my own electorate later. Firstly, I must welcome the general reduction in stamp duty, bank account debits tax, credit card duty and insurance duty. Most if not all of our citizens have insurance and credit cards, operate bank accounts and purchase property in which to reside. These initiatives will assist every household.

The record capital funding of \$6 billion for capital works and infrastructure initiatives will continue to assist growth in this state, particularly regional Queensland, with 60 per cent of these funds allocated outside the Brisbane Statistical Division. Road funding of \$1.9 billion over four years exceeds the paltry funding of \$1.5 billion over five years promised by the federal government in its recent allocation. It might be interesting to the other side of politics to realise that the Beattie government recognises that roads do exist outside capital cities.

When the only initial criticism of the budget from the Opposition Leader was that the government failed to spend the whole of the surplus, I felt there must have been many aspects of the budget with which he agreed. But we have now heard further criticisms in his reply. They sound more like envy that the voters of Queensland endorsed this Labor government on 7 February because they believed that it was able to continue programs commenced under previous budgets and to deliver on election commitments. They showed they did not want a Springborg government. He also exhibited his mathematical difficulties, which first surfaced in his lack of knowledge of the increase in building costs. But when he started on his 'zero, zero, zero' routine, we could have been forgiven for thinking we were watching a replay of the movie *Tora! Tora! Tora!* I think he got up to a squadron.

We have seen the aspirations and hopes of our citizens met by the budget, with major increases in Health, Education, Transport, Child Safety and Disability Services, amongst others, and a continuing of the commitment by the government to meet the various needs of society. Funding for Smart State initiatives and technologies to provide for future advancement in medicine, science and education has been allocated over a sensible time frame.

The growth of this state over the next 10 to 20 years requires funding now to position the state for its place in the world. This is reflected in the \$20 million contribution towards the Queensland institute of brain research, \$33.8 million under the Smart State Research Facilities Fund for animal science, pre-clinical drug development and medical engineering research and \$63.4 million for information and communication

technology. The massive budget for Education, \$5.9 billion, and Health, \$5.1 billion, underlines the deep commitment to a well-educated population who have a superb hospital and health system. Only a society which is supported by government in that way can look to the future with optimism and an ability to make their way in an increasingly complex world. Other provisions will position this state to take a leadership role in and to increase its input into international tourism and trade.

In relation to my own electorate of Keppel, substantial funding allocations have met election commitments as well as continuing necessary capital and recurring funds. Certain of the commitments, such as the amount in excess of \$4.6 million for additional renal chairs and other equipment and the provision of extra staff and enhanced services at Rockhampton Hospital, will cover the Rockhampton health district and will benefit both Rockhampton and the Capricorn Coast.

One of the biggest boosts to my region is the approximately \$6 million to create 767 jobs. This will be of great assistance, as one of our major employers, Lakes Creek Meatworks, has been closed for over two years. But it is scheduled to reopen at a future date. Other allocations which will impact directly on Keppel include \$6.1 million for roads and \$3.09 million as an initial grant for work on a new sewage treatment and waste water reuse plant at Yeppoon. That recognises the government's commitment to conservation of water.

The amount of \$507,000 of a total project cost of \$1.98 million for housing will continue the commitment to public housing exhibited by the Minister for Public Works and Housing, the Hon. Robert Swarten. Those units will assist both able-bodied and disabled citizens as the proposed project has four units for people with disabilities.

A million dollars for TAFE relocation and \$310,000 for CQU will provide additional skilling and research capabilities for central Queensland. \$2.4 million for capital and recurring education funding includes further airconditioning under the Cooler Schools program, and that will cover most schools on the Capricorn Coast and better facilities for other schools both in Rockhampton and the Capricorn Coast. Election commitments to additional toilets for Taranganba State School of \$330,000, an initial allocation of \$97,000 to Yeppoon State High School for classroom upgrade for arts of a total project cost of \$963,000 and \$51,000 to Frenchville State School for initial work on a major upgrade to the resource centre for information and communication technology initiatives of a total project cost of \$756,000 have been met, and they will continue over the life of this parliament during which they were initially promised.

There will be \$520,000 to Yeppoon State High School, which is a public school of some excellence, although it seems to have its quota of knockers, and that is of a total cost of \$600,000. There is \$400,000 for Taranganba State School for stage 2 of its music area, \$400,000 to Frenchville State School for a toilet upgrade, \$214,000 for a classroom upgrade at Mount Archer State School and for reflooring at Yeppoon State High School and Frenchville, Mount Archer and Taranganba state schools, and \$158,000 for reroofing at Yeppoon and Nerimbera State School and repainting at Mount Archer, Mount Chalmers and Yeppoon state schools. The last two schools—Mount Chalmers and Yeppoon State School—are two of the oldest schools in the Keppel electorate.

Our children will also benefit from the enhanced child safety provisions. There is \$910,000 for ambulance funding which will provide a new station at Emu Park and additional paramedics which may not have been possible without the guaranteed funding base of the community ambulance cover, despite the knockers from the other side. There is \$2.5 million for disability support and home and community care, which will assist both our aged citizens and people with a disability to enjoy their lives without the need for admission to residential care.

\$500,000 for a fisheries patrol building and \$125,000 for a boat ramp upgrade will ensure a safe environment for our large group of boat users and fishers. \$200,000 for tourism funding will assist in showcasing our region to the world, and so the list goes on. The Gambling Community Benefit Fund allocated \$70,000 to groups which included the Capricornia Respite Care Association and the Capricorn Coast Landcare group. They are both groups which benefit central Queensland. Sports funding also in excess of \$109,000 will include support for local clubs and the boating fraternity, with vessel storage and washdown facilities for yachting at Rosslyn Bay. That will also assist our boat users.

All in all, this budget is a budget for Queenslanders. It is a caring budget which we will all endorse and each member of this House, even some of those in opposition, would realise that. I heartily support the measures set out in it and commend it to the House.