



Speech by

Peta-Kaye Croft

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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STATE BUDGET 2004

Mrs CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (8.26 p.m.): It is my great pleasure to rise to speak on the 2004 state budget announced by the Treasurer on Tuesday. Tuesday was a great day for Queensland but more so for the Gold Coast. In terms of delivering real benefits to communities, this is the best Labor budget Queensland has ever seen. This budget delivers all our election commitments. It delivers a \$6 billion Capital Works Program for 2004-05 to meet the challenges facing Queensland as a rapidly growing state and, most importantly, it delivers record recurrent spending in areas such as health, education, disability services and child safety.

On reading the budget documents, we can see the hallmarks of a budget shaped and crafted by a responsible state government with both families and individuals in mind. There are quite a number of areas that I would like to touch on, but unfortunately time does not permit me to do so. I want to focus my comments tonight particularly on one election issue that residents raise consistently with me, and that is the issue of health. Health issues dominated the 2001 state election. In line with the government's commitment to deliver better health services to Queensland, the Health budget for 2004-05 has now been increased by 10.8 per cent over last year's budget. That is an increase of \$500 million. I must say that the minister has visited the Gold Coast on a number of occasions and is most impressive. He has responded promptly to the representations that I have made on behalf of constituents, and I am pleased to say that he is doing a fantastic job.

I am pleased to see that the budget includes spending over the next four years of \$20 million for cardiac services, \$44 million for cancer care, \$13.2 million for oral health care and \$37.8 million to relieve pressure on public hospital emergency departments. This budget also includes an additional \$8.5 million to ensure that Queensland patients continue to have access to a safe and sufficient supply of blood and blood products.

Gold Coast residents will benefit from almost \$10.4 million of new funding for health services in this budget. \$600,000 has been allocated to begin planning for a new emergency department and intensive care unit at Robina Hospital. The project will cost a total of \$9.5 million and will be worked out over the next four years. High dependency and coronary care services will be established followed by the opening of a 20-bed medical ward, and in 2005-06 an emergency department will be opened with the capacity of treating 30,000 people each year.

\$2.5 million has been allocated to set up a new catheter laboratory at the Gold Coast Hospital. \$300,000 has also been allocated to progress the establishment of a birthing centre at the Gold Coast Hospital. Over the next three years, the government will invest \$6.3 million in the Gold Coast renal service to open eight additional chairs. A new renal service will be established at the Robina Hospital, with expanded services at Southport Hospital. \$1.94 million has been allocated to purchase essential medical equipment, including a CT scanner and four operating tables.

I want to touch particularly on the issue of health as it relates to this budget, because it is of deep concern to residents of the Broadwater electorate. People see the Gold Coast as just glitz and glamour. However, I can tell members that there are a lot of people in my electorate who are very keen for money to

be spent on education and disability services. I am very pleased with the allocation in this budget to the Broadwater electorate. Under the High Priority Maintenance Program, \$181,000 has been provided for classroom upgrades at the Coombabah State High School, and Biggera Waters and Coombabah primary schools, and for reflooring at the Coombabah State High School, and the Biggera Waters, Coombabah and Labrador primary schools.

The provision of disability services is a huge issue for some residents in my electorate. I am very pleased that five grants, totalling approximately \$1 million, have been allocated to support disabled people and their families in my electorate. \$121,000 has been allocated to construct six medium-density units of public housing, with a total project cost \$1.32 million. This is a significant issue in my electorate. We are constantly seeing the increasing costs of rentals, particularly now that the area is becoming increasingly popular with developers. Those increases are putting a lot of pressure on residents in my electorate who rent, particularly pensioners who have lived in units for some time and every time their tenancy agreement comes to an end and they renew their tenancy agreements, their landlords are taking that opportunity to put up their rent, not just by five dollars but by a significant amount of money. A pensioner who lives in my electorate has seen her rent go up nearly \$60 in a year. That is putting considerable stress and strain on a lot of pensioners in my electorate.

I am delighted that \$626,000 has been allocated to community organisations in my electorate under the HACC program. That program provides support and maintenance services for needy people in their homes and for their carers, so that they can remain in the community and avoid premature admission to residential care.

Another issue of concern to residents, which is constantly raised with me as I move about my electorate, is that of roads. I talk about roads all the time in this House and I know that members have heard me mention Frank Street numerous times. I take this opportunity to thank the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, Paul Lucas, for his recent visit to the Gold Coast. In fact, I was very impressed with him. He came down and met with Peter Lawlor and I and we went to visit Frank Street. We stood at the corner of Central and Frank streets and showed the minister the congestion. I am delighted that the minister has obviously worked very hard for us in this budget. He has delivered \$500,000 to upgrade the intersection of Central and Frank streets. That will make a significant difference to the congestion problem and safety at that intersection.

A big surprise—and I must admit that I am certainly impressed by the minister—is the delivery of \$900,000 towards a \$15 million project to duplicate the Lodgers Creek Bridge and to upgrade from Robert Street to Stevens Street. Also, \$100,000 has been allocated towards the concept planning for Frank Street. I am delighted. I acknowledge the member for Southport, who is present in the House, and I thank him for the work he has done with me. I also thank the working party with the councillors, who worked very hard to come up with concept plans as to what could possibly be done at Frank Street. I am delighted for the residents of the Gold Coast, particularly the northern Gold Coast, and certainly for the residents of Southport and those living along Frank Street. They will be very pleased that this government has put Frank Street on the agenda. It has had problems for some time and they have been exacerbated by the number of developments occurring in that area. I also thank the previous minister, Steve Bredhauer. This government has definitely put Frank Street on the agenda and is delivering to get those changes under way.

Gold Coast residents will also be pleased that the remaining \$6.4 million of the \$11 million Oxley Drive project has been delivered in this budget. That project is under way and, from all reports, residents are looking forward to its completion. It will take some time but so far, so good. The project is under way and we look forward to its completion.

I am also pleased that \$400,000 has been allocated for concept planning on Oxenford Southport Road, with a total project cost of \$800,000. That road runs from the M1 through Hope Island to Boykambil. It is a significant area which involves a huge development. There is a desperate need for the council to hurry up and come up with a plan and to deliver that plan to the residents so that they know what to expect from that potential development.

I take this opportunity to bring to the attention of members some comments made by the federal member for Moncrieff, Steven Ciobo. He has said that he is disappointed that the Queensland Premier has failed to demonstrate his commitment to the Gold Coast by delivering some big-ticket items in this budget. I refute those comments by the member for Moncrieff. He obviously has not taken the time to properly read the *Gold Coast Bulletin* which came out on Wednesday. I invite him to visit my electorate, because there is certainly a lot happening there and a lot has been delivered. I encourage the member for Moncrieff to do something himself. One issue the member needs to put on his agenda is to stand up for the residents of Broadwater and to speak to his federal colleagues about organising some more GPs for our electorate. For many reasons, a number of GPs have retired or moved on. Senior citizens and families in my electorate are struggling to find a GP, let alone a bulk-billing GP. It is a major issue in my electorate.

During the last three sittings I have tabled petitions in this House which call on the federal government to recognise the needs of the Broadwater electorate and to look at recognising Runaway Bay as an area with a shortage of GPs. The member for Moncrieff should stop criticizing and start delivering. He should put into action some of his commitments to the residents of the Gold Coast.

Residents of the electorate will benefit from a range of other initiatives undertaken statewide. For instance, this government will abolish credit card duty, reduce the rate of insurance duty and raise the concession thresholds for home buyers purchasing their principal place of residence. This is a strong budget with a record Capital Works Program. There will be an unprecedented \$6 billion worth of projects statewide in the next financial year—the highest amount ever committed by a government in the history of Queensland. The Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth, has delivered a state budget for all Queenslanders. I look forward to the funds delivering positive outcomes in my electorate.