



Speech by

Paul Hoolihan

MEMBER FOR KEPPEL

Hansard Thursday, 8 June 2006

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL

Mr HOOLIHAN (Keppel—ALP) (5.47 pm): It is with pleasure that I rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill 2006 and the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill. At the outset, let there be no doubt in the mind of any Queenslander that the Beattie Labor government is intent on building a better Queensland. The good record of the government speaks for itself, and the people of Queensland reflect their support at the ballot box. It is a sad fact that the best resourced but laziest opposition in Queensland's history has no concept of what is necessary to care for the needs of the whole state when it cannot even put together a coherent and credible coalition, let alone form one party. We came in here on Tuesday and the coalition was knocking the budget even before it was presented, mostly because the coalition has no policy and no credible economic credentials.

I congratulate the Deputy Premier and Treasurer on her first budget. I believe it was a far-sighted and visionary document and it has made provision for the future building of Queensland. It is good to work with her in trying to build the Queensland that we want our state to become. I also commend her staff for the work they have obviously done in producing all the budget documentation.

It is a pity that the Leader of the Opposition wasted most of his speech in reply talking about failure. He did not give any real hope to Queensland by outlining any policies. Talk about back to the future! Hospital boards cost this state approximately \$500 million, which was paid out at the end of last year, because of their inefficiency and ineptitude, yet the opposition will reintroduce them. Poor Queensland! Is she to be raped again by incompetent opposition policies?

The business community accepts this budget as reasonable. It never ceases to amaze me that the opposition does not listen to the people who ultimately benefit from such an expansionary and effective instrument. To use the opposition vernacular, the sting for the people of Queensland is that the modern version of *Keystone Kops*, better known as the Liberal Party and National Party, claim that they can govern the state. If opposition members do not want to be part of the Kops, I wonder which of the Marx brothers will be played by the National Party and Liberal Party leadership. Whichever of them is to play Groucho will have to grow a moustache or leave it to members to work out who will play whom.

I suggest to all members of the House that the opposition consistently sets low-level achievement targets and then consistently fails to meet those targets. There was a point made regarding the income of the state. We all know that it is received from a number of sources and it matters not where it comes from. We heard criticism from the Deputy Leader of the Nationals, so I suppose the member for Callide would not take any of those funds if the budget had been brought down by a Liberal-National government. I expect to hear the same from the members for Chatsworth and Burnett if they maintain their usual whinges.

A perusal of the documentation shows that the people of Keppel—every man, woman and child whom I have the opportunity to represent—have benefited under the budget, as have the rest of Queensland. Their travel safety on road and water has been addressed, schools have been supported, health and emergency services have been enhanced, jobs have been targeted, accommodation for low-

income singles has been addressed and sporting facilities have been supported, amongst many other things.

An additional \$3.3 billion to support the health action plan, making a total of \$9.7 billion over five years, is the cornerstone of giving Queensland an even better health system. It is great now but it can be made better, and the additional funding will ensure success. The number of Queenslanders accessing our public health system is increasing, not only because of the increase from other states but also because of the quality of our public health system compared to the difficulties in the private system which are now beginning to occur. That could be because of underfunding from the federal government; it may also be because people have been forced into private health funds which they cannot afford and which return very little to them in respect of medical treatment.

Additional funding of \$1 billion for school renewal and upgrades over five years will greatly assist the continuing education of Queensland children. A proportion of that funding will be allocated to Catholic and independent schools. One of the important strategies for the continuing education of Queensland children is the introduction of prep year, which will greatly enhance the education of our children.

The major funding provisions for Keppel are a boost in water police equipment and major electricity infrastructure to provide for future expansion on the Capricorn Coast. A new police patrol boat and runabout will cost approximately \$2 million and a Tanby substation will cost \$8.5 million. Initial funding for that construction had been included in outlays.

Attention has been paid to advancing the job targets of the government for the Fitzroy region to maintain the low unemployment rate achieved by Labor. Members should not forget that it is currently around five per cent—an unachievable target according to the opposition. A total of \$47.3 million will be invested in over 2.9 million hours of vocational education and training. A total of \$1.1 million will be provided to increase both trade apprenticeships and certificate IV and above training places. An amount of \$6.1 million will be allocated to create an estimated 960 jobs through the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative. A total of \$2.4 million is to be used to fund TAFE institutes, including the relocation of Yeppoon TAFE, which would have been relocated by now had the Livingstone Shire Council been able to complete a road which will allow access to the site. The budget will also establish three Skilling Solutions Queensland customer service centres, which will attract a total cost of \$3.77 million.

Education in Keppel attracted a total of additional funding of around \$1.5 million for air conditioning, classroom upgrades, repainting and buildings in nearly every school in my electorate. I have had a look at the schools which have received that funding and there are very few schools that have missed out. We have three schools alone which have been funded to continue to air-condition classrooms: Yeppoon State School, The Caves State School and Taranganba State School. Farnborough State School received funding for additional amenities and also \$20,000 to construct a set-down and parking area. This is good news for the schools and it confirms the government's commitment to education which I mentioned earlier.

The Emu Park Ambulance Service has attracted further funding to meet the increased cost of construction. It was originally estimated to cost half a million dollars, and the final cost will now be \$1.13 million. A further \$395,000 has been allocated to continue the construction. The whole electorate will benefit further from increased numbers of paramedics across the state.

Roads and transport did not miss out and the funding, both in its own right and jointly with Livingstone Shire Council, will continue to upgrade our road system and hopefully help to prevent the continuing road carnage. A balance of \$9.39 million will allow the completion of the Yeppoon western bypass, which was a \$16 million election commitment by me in 2004. An amount of \$1.8 million has been allocated for a cattle underpass at the Teys Brothers meatworks which will remove the bottleneck caused by the gates on the Rockhampton-Yeppoon road which gives cattle access to the meatworks. Along with smaller commitments to enhance various roads in Keppel, two of the larger projects are \$847,000 to complete the \$10 million Yeppoon-Tanby road and \$2 million to complete passing lanes at Jim Crow National Park and from Neils Road to the Yeppoon dump access.

Health initiatives across the whole region will benefit Keppel and, in conjunction with the Rockhampton Hospital, those funding initiatives will increase staffing and will greatly enhance facilities. An additional \$2 million has been allocated to the Capricorn Coast Hospital at Yeppoon and that should ensure its early construction. The total of that proposal is \$17 million. There has been some delay caused by difficulties with the site. Hopefully that will be resolved in the very near future.

Sport and community needs, including public housing, have not been forgotten. Child safety and communities, families and disability services have not been overlooked. An amount of \$4.17 million in total has been allocated to upgrade public housing and commence construction of rental accommodation for low-income single people. In Yeppoon itself there will be 20 units constructed for low-income singles.

Child safety and community programs for families and disability services have attracted funding of approximately \$7.5 million directly and a share of funding across the region. An allocation of \$201,000 to

the Capricorn Tourism and Development Organisation and a share of \$1 million over four years will meet the needs of the tourism market.

In total, in excess of \$100,000 has been allocated to the Capricornia Cruising Yacht Club, the Yeppoon Tennis Club, the Sporting Shooters Association and the Suncity Sports Club for various projects.

While keeping state taxes at \$1,927 per head, compared to other states and territories being in excess of \$2,000, the Treasurer has also achieved the abolition of five state taxes. A further four will be abolished over the next five years. Record infrastructure spending of \$10.1 billion will result in approximately 60 per cent of that amount being spent in the regions.

The budget is being criticised because some of the funding is borrowed. When income and assets are at a satisfactory level, borrowing is a sensible alternative. There can be no doubt from looking at the figures that Queensland's income and assets are at a satisfactory level. If that economic fact was not recognised, people would never, ever purchase a dwelling. Queensland is in a good financial position and maintains its AAA credit rating through the good financial management of the Beattie Labor government. As I said at the outset, people recognise that management and accept Queensland's governance. That is shown by their unwillingness to accept the policy vacuum and the constant whingeing and carping of the coalition.

To the Treasurer I say that I believe she got the budget right. She got the consideration of the people of Queensland right in her spending priorities, and hopefully we can proceed to build the type of Queensland its citizens seek and deserve. I commend the bills to the House.