



Speech by

Barbara Stone

MEMBER FOR SPRINGWOOD

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CLEAN COAL TECHNOLOGY SPECIAL AGREEMENT BILL; APPROPRIATION BILLS

Ms STONE (Springwood—ALP) (9.52 pm): It gives me great pleasure to rise and speak in support of the state budget and its impressive investment in infrastructure which I am confident will improve the position of every Queensland. I applaud the Treasurer on her building budget which adds immensely to the strong economic climate in Queensland that has been fostered by this government's nine previous budgets. Our position as the economic engine room of Australia has been well served with this visionary budget, and I especially appreciate the government's renewed investment in road and transport infrastructure.

In the wake of a recent federal budget that has dangled financial carrots in front of voters, the Queensland state government has delivered a budget that, through sound economic management and careful planning, is designed to propagate growth by constructing new infrastructure and building services for the people of Queensland. I am proud to be part of a government that has chosen to show the initiative and build a greater place to live for the constituents it serves. As I recalled the federal government's recent budget, whilst sitting in a long line of traffic congestion on the Pacific Motorway, one of our nation's most frequented highways, I wondered what exactly Peter Costello had built. Nothing—and I am still wondering.

The Pacific Motorway is a major south-east transport corridor linking Brisbane and the Gold Coast and continuing on to the New South Wales border. The Pacific Motorway forms part of the AusLink national network and plays a crucial role in the overall road network in Queensland linking transport spines like the Gateway Motorway and the Logan Motorway. The present congested state of the Pacific Motorway is proving to be an oversight on behalf of the federal government as it has become inefficient, unsustainable and unsafe for all its users, weakening the available transport infrastructure on a local and statewide level. Yet the federal government has refused to help fund its acknowledged AusLink responsibilities.

The electorate of Springwood is in the middle of the traffic corridor between Brisbane city and the Gold Coast. As such, the electorate is dependent on, and intimately affected by, the Pacific Motorway and its arterial roads. At present the people in my electorate face problems daily as a direct result of the congested motorway. These problems include a real cut in family time, as local people get caught in traffic for hours at a time, and concerns for physical safety as the number of accidents increase.

I previously referred to this current situation as an oversight because I trust that no elected official would knowingly allow the continuation of a situation that is so detrimental to the people they serve. I am fully aware that AusLink is a cooperative venture between state and federal governments, and I inform the House that the Queensland state government has acknowledged the urgent need for the upgrade of the Pacific Motorway with a contribution of \$427 million to the project over the last five years.

No matter who is in power in Canberra, I will be lobbying for this urgently needed funding on behalf of my constituents. That is why I have written to the Prime Minister, all Queensland senators and the federal opposition leader requesting they lend their support to obtaining funding for this vital piece of infrastructure. I quote from two of these letters—

Prime Minister, I am formally requesting that your government re-examine the merits of this application, with a deep consideration for the people whom are most affected by the decision. I join with the people of Springwood and Logan and formally request that the Federal Government match the State Government funding commitment to this project.

To Mr Rudd I wrote—

I am formally requesting that you lend your support to the upgrade, and declare any intention to fund the upgrade should Labor be elected to government. This is an immensely important issue to the people of Springwood and Logan and I look forward to seeing our federal Labor team offer a strong alternative government that acknowledges our needs.

I look forward to a much-needed display of support for the people of Springwood and Logan City. Rather than keep repeating my continued resolve to lobby the federal government to make a commitment to the Pacific Motorway upgrade and its constituents in Springwood, I look to this state budget as a fantastic example of a government responding in a tangible and effective manner to the needs of its people. I intend to speak more specifically about my electorate. Given the hour and knowing that many more members in this House wish to speak in this debate and out of respect for the hardworking parliamentary staff, I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

This budget has delivered some tremendous physical results for the people in my electorate of Springwood. The two State Government operated roads in Springwood, the Pacific Motorway (part of a national highway which has traditionally been funded 50/50 by State and Federal Governments) and Beenleigh-Redland Bay Road have both received funds in this budget.

The Pacific Motorway has received \$1.89 million to complete concept planning between the Gateway Motorway and Logan Motorway, on the Pacific Motorway. This project will allow my electorate to enjoy greater accessibility to the rest of the State.

There is \$2.73 million for the construction of bikeways on the Pacific Motorway, between Logan Road and Logan River, Logan, with a total State Government contribution of \$8 million.

Furthermore the budget has invested in the safety of Springwood Motorists with \$557,000 in funding being allocated to complete traffic management devices between Underwood and Logan River Bridge, on the Pacific Motorway.

Beenleigh-Redland Bay Road (State Controlled) completed is the duplication from two to four lanes between Cairns Street and Bryants Road, total cost \$8.36 million.

I would like to again draw attention to the residents and businesses who have so patiently endured the inconveniences of construction. This project will greatly benefit our local community, and your patience and co-operation is most appreciated.

Other road works funding for the electorate include \$477,000 for asphalt resurfacing between Magill Street and Chatswood Road, on Springwood Connection Road.

Transport

Equally as important as the Pacific Motorway Upgrade and the roads that service Springwood is the issue of Public Transport. I praise the \$1.2 billion dollar boost to Public Transport in Queensland.

Springwood, Logan, and indeed Queensland as a whole, have experienced larger increases in passenger demand for public services, and this budget has responded magnificently to the growing need allocation \$70 million over four years to provide more services and better links between those services.

This funding will facilitate a world class public transport system, as it secures more and better buses and trains, identifies new and faster routes and builds a network of dedicated bus ways.

The opportunities this creates to construct a public transport service with greater connections and services between all modes of transport will benefit the people of Springwood and Queensland for many years to come.

Education

Education is undoubtedly a steadfast investment in the economic future of our great state, but is also an immeasurable investment in the lives of every individual and community, allowing them to overcome adversity and disadvantage to enjoy new opportunities.

This budgets provision of Education funding is an exemplary feature of a budget geared towards the future.

The 2007-08 Education and Training budget is \$5.928 billion, and I am pleased to see that Springwood schools continue to be included in this investment.

Springwood will be part of a new numeracy initiative, which will help build teacher capacity through professional development programs and the development of teacher resources and training packages, which builds on the Literacy—the Key to Learning: Framework for Action 2006-2008 program that was announced last year.

A further \$35.6 million will be invested over the next four years to improve literacy for students in all schools, with intensive literacy support being offered to upper primary students identified through the Year 5 National Benchmark Tests as needing assistance.

The budgets provision for an additional 192 teaching positions in Queensland in order to meet enrolment growth in our state schools and support students with disabilities is a prodigious investment.

The allocation of \$50 million dollars will support the statewide implementation of the Prep year through the employment of more Prep teachers and the providing professional development for teaching staff.

A particularly noteworthy addition in this budgets Education funding is the \$70 million dollar allocation for the provision of a laptop computer to every teacher in a Queensland State School or TAFE institute. I strongly welcome this step to improve our education system, by equipping our teaching professionals with the best information, training and resources. The schools in my electorate are littered with well intentioned teachers eager for the best resources, not for personal gain, but to enhance their ability to teach our children.

These Statewide initiatives will greatly impact on the quality of the education students in Springwood schools are receiving, however as indicated earlier specific schools in my electorate received money for their identified projects.

- \$33,000 to Springwood State High School for the upgrade of the Performing Arts Community Rooms.
- \$50,000 through the Triple R Maintenance Program for reticulation at Chatswood Hills State School.
- \$50,000 for high priority maintenance related to class rooms at Shailer Park State High School (\$40,000) and Chatswood Hills State School (\$10,000)
- \$29,000 for high priority maintenance related to flooring at Slacks Creek State School.
- \$29,000 for targeted maintenance of building structures and hard external surfaces at Slacks Creek State School (\$20,000) and Kimberly Park State School (\$9,000)
- \$5,000 for targeted maintenance of hard external surfaces at Shailer Park State School.

Police

The record \$1.437 billion dollars in funding for policing in the State Government's 2007-2008 budget will contribute to the safety and security of each and every person in the State. The budget has delivered an additional 200 sworn police positions, taking the number of sworn officers in the Queensland Police Service to 9,928 by October 2008. These additional officers are inline with the increases we have seen across the board to ensure Queensland's services are able to handle the increased population.

However further than this population adjustment increase in police officers, the people of Springwood will benefit from a number of new services. A \$46.7 million dollar call centre will be established to enhance the service delivery of the Police Force. This centre is designed to increase the level of information available to the public and link residents in need with the appropriate level of police assistance.

A new district office at Coomera will begin construction following a \$3.65 million dollar allocation in the budget, creating an increased local police presence on the M1 and faster response times to the traffic matters on the highway.

Both of these new ventures present every day benefits to the people of Springwood. As will the \$135,000 in continued funding for the Logan and Gold Coast based Tactical Crime Squad which targets known crime hotspots with an emphasis on investigating property crime and drug offences. The continuation of this funding speaks to the success of the Tactical Crime Squad and the substantial impact it is having on crime in the Logan and Gold Coast areas.

I would at this point like to draw attention to our remarkable State Emergency Services Volunteers. These are a group dedicated individuals whose continual altruistic efforts save lives and assist our emergency services.

Before I discuss the commendable budget allowances for our SES volunteers, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the Logan SES team, and team leader Kevin Martin, who recently rescued a group of 15 exchange students from Finland who had become lost in Lamington National Park for two days. The SES volunteers involved in the search located the group after three hours, replenished their supplies and provided them with warm blankets before leading the group out of the bush the next morning.

One of the lessons that we have learnt from recent disasters is that we cannot do without the extraordinary work of Queenslanders volunteers, and our Logan SES volunteers are without a doubt some of our most dedicated emergency responders.

It is then extremely pleasing to note the State Government's funding boost to this group.

This budget includes \$4.1 million as part of a \$17 million dollar commitment over five years to boost preparedness and capability through enhancing the volunteer equipment and improving communication equipment.

Increasing communication equipment will not only boost response capabilities, but will also safeguard our volunteers, and the provision of new equipment like Kevlar helmets and protective clothing will also dually increase the areas our volunteers can search and ensure their safety.

This economically responsible budget is also practical and functional, as demonstrated by its allocation of \$14.3 million over the next five years for upgraded training for our SES volunteers, including online training and first aid training.

Health

I note the State Government's commitment to the Health with a 12% increase in funding as compared to last years budget, swelling the 2007-08 the health budget to \$7.151 billion. This includes \$224.9 million in new funding approved in the 2007-08 State Budget and new capital funding of \$132.2 million in 2007-08.

This reflects this Government's keen intent to deliver to the people a robust health system to the people of Queensland, and the people of Springwood will benefit directly from the increase in funding initiatives like:

- \$1.43 million has been allocated to community organizations under the Home and Community Care program, which provides support and maintenance services for eligible people at home to prevent early admission to residential care.
- \$215.4 million has been provided to improve the working conditions for Queensland Health staff, including visiting Medical officers, Clinical Staff and Administrative Staff in 2007-08 as part of a total package of \$3.48 billion over 3 years.

Sports and Recreation

Springwood's sports and recreation clubs have not been overlooked in the Budget. I mention a few—

- The Springwood Electorate has received \$23,000 towards the construction of a new training field including irrigation and installation of irrigation to an existing field to support Rochedale Rovers Soccer Club at Underwood Park, Rochedale South, with a total State Government of \$47,000.
- The Rochedale South Cricket Club has received \$57,245 to upgrade existing cricket practice facility under the Minor Facilities Program.
- The local bowling community also received a boost with \$115,876 to the Springwood Bowls Club to upgrade one existing grass bowling green to artificial green for lawn bowls under the Minor Facilities Program.
- These projects represent Springwood's eagerness to enjoy high quality sport and recreation facilities in the most environmentally appropriate and water conscious manner.

Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme

The State Government is recognising those people who are doing their bit to save water by buying water-efficient products.

While Logan City Council has withdrawn its rebate scheme, I am pleased that the State Government has acted to continue their commitment to the Home WaterWise Rebate Scheme.

The Beattie Labor Government has committed over \$100 million for the Home Waterwise Rebate scheme.

The scheme will continue to offer rebates for water-saving devices such as rainwater tanks, washing machines, shower heads, dual flush toilets and pool covers.

Taxes

The Benjamin Franklin adage that 'In this world nothing is certain but death and taxes,' is a popular commentary on any government's taxation regime. I am delighted however to note this government's commitment to lower the taxation burden on Queensland families.

As the adage implies, taxes are certain, but I am heartened with figures illustrate that per person, taxes are \$131 lower than the average for other states and territories. With the Fuel Subsidy Scheme taken into account, Queenslanders are on average \$257 per person better off.

The 50% cut in mortgage duty from 1 January 2008 will save homebuyers between \$360 and \$500 on home loans between \$250,000 and \$320,000. Followed by a full abolition of mortgage duty from 1 January 2009, this is welcome news for all home buyers, especially those new home buyers attempting to enter a buoyant property market.

The Land tax relief package effective from 1 July 2007 includes cap on land value increases and increased thresholds, providing welcome relief to the people of Springwood.

As I draw to the end of my speech, I would like to note the net tax cuts of \$49 million in 2007-08 due to Budget measures. These cuts are an impressive government commitment to ease the financial burdens on families.

Mr Speaker, I would like to conclude by re-iterating that this government's tenth budget is a strong commitment to build a better and stronger State, and is truly representative of the wants and needs of every Queenslander.

I commend the bill to the House.