



Speech by

**Evan Moorhead**

**MEMBER FOR WATERFORD**

Hansard Thursday, 7 June 2007

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## **CLEAN COAL TECHNOLOGY SPECIAL AGREEMENT BILL; APPROPRIATION BILLS**

**Mr MOORHEAD** (Waterford—ALP) (8.38 pm): It is with great pleasure that I rise to support the Appropriation Bill. The Waterford electorate, which I am proud to represent, is a growing area with many young families. As an outer urban area, we are reliant on local roads, schools and hospitals—all important government responsibilities. This budget delivers many new initiatives to support our community as well as continuing to deliver strong government services. These government services can only be delivered on the back of strong economic management. The Beattie government has again delivered a budget for economic growth and prosperity.

In the 2006-07 financial year, the state's finances showed a very healthy surplus of more than \$2.3 billion. At the same time, Queenslanders paid less in taxes than the national average. For this same period, Queensland's economy grew at 5.5 per cent, which is more than double the national average. This growth has provided more and more job opportunities, with Queensland's unemployment rate at a 30-year low of 3.5 per cent.

On 11 October 2006 I rose in this place to make my first speech and put on the record those issues that would be the priority for my time in parliament. At that time I said—

There is no more important challenge in managing this growth than ensuring that our community has access to affordable housing. Affordable housing is not just about roofs over people's heads; it is about an opportunity to move forward to meet the challenges of daily life.

I am delighted to be able to stand here today, only eight months later, and say that the Beattie government has made the most significant investment in social housing in this state's history—\$719 million for housing, including a \$500 million allocation from the Future Growth Fund. Put simply, this will mean 1,700 more units of accommodation to meet the demands from growing housing waiting lists. This massive investment will mean real improvements in the Waterford electorate.

This budget will see 77 public rental houses and 29 public rental units in Loganlea go through urban renewal upgrades at a cost of \$6.85 million. As well \$1.73 million will be spent on completing the construction of eight seniors units in Gray Street, Beenleigh. Two units of accommodation will also be built for severely injured persons as part of the spinal injury initiative. Those in private rental and home ownership will also receive great benefits from the budget. Mortgage duty will be halved in 2008 and will be abolished for 2009. The tax-free threshold for land tax will also be increased to \$600,000.

For those at risk of homelessness this budget provides the Waterford electorate \$466,000 to provide targeted short-term support and case management to keep people in private rental. Also included in the budget is more than \$800,000 to provide counselling and support for those at risk of homelessness, particularly young people. I congratulate the Treasurer and the minister for housing for this important investment in housing affordability. I wish the same leadership could be shown by the federal government. Under its watch housing has become less affordable than ever.

This budget will also continue the strong track record of promoting policing and community safety in the Waterford electorate. As a result of funding in last year's budget I am delighted to attend the official

opening of the Edens Landing Police Beat later this month. This police beat is ideally located in Loane Drive and will provide a great resource to deal with antisocial behaviour.

Beenleigh Police Station, which houses the Logan district communications centre, is a big winner from this budget, with a \$2.3 million upgrade for the police station in Kent Street. This will provide a refurbished police station to support the hard work done by our local police officers. The Logan police district will also have its own Tactical Crime Squad with 14 officers to target known crime hot spots.

These proactive measures will also be accompanied by the continuation of the successful school based police officers at our local high schools—Beenleigh, Loganlea and Marsden. This program is important not only to establish positive relationships between young people and our police officers but also to support our teachers and schools in dealing with the challenges they face. Our community will also be made safer with funding going to the Logan City Council for security lighting at Moffatt Road, Waterford West, and for the completion of the wireless safety camera network in Logan train stations and other hot spots.

The communities within the Waterford electorate are growing outer urban areas with a need for transport infrastructure. This budget has delivered important transport infrastructure for the residents of Logan and Beenleigh. In the 2007-08 financial year almost \$15 million will be spent on completing the duplication of Beenleigh-Kingston Road from Kingston to Beenleigh. The final stage, from Fletcher Street, Bethania, through to the Boundary Street roundabout at Beenleigh is on schedule to be completed early in 2008. I must thank residents for their patience while this project has been carried out in recent years. However, I assure residents that traffic improvements will make the inconvenience worthwhile. To deal with the extra traffic demand from the duplication of Beenleigh-Kingston Road, Boundary Street will be widened, repaired and strengthened between George Street and the Soccer Club Park.

When I read the budget I was very excited to see that the initial stages of construction for an additional lane at the intersection of Loganlea Road and Kingston Road will commence in 2007-08. Growth in recent years has put significant pressure on the right-hand turn lane from Kingston Road into Loganlea Road during the morning peak hour. This project will relieve pressure during the morning peak by providing for two right-hand turn lanes into Loganlea Road.

Kingston Road will be upgraded in Slacks Creek, Kingston, Loganlea and Waterford West with the completion of intersection improvements at Jacaranda Avenue and Jeurs Street, resurfacing between Compton Road and Baldarch Street and from Queens Road to Chambers Flat Road, commencement of traffic signal improvements at Clare Road and improvements to the intersection of Paradise Road and Kingston Road.

I am sure those living in my electorate, particularly those who live in Loganholme and Tanah Merah, will be happy to see the state government continuing with the Pacific Motorway transit project. This project will improve public transport times and traffic flow between Eight Mile Plains and the Logan Hyperdome. This budget will see planning and consultation for section C, from Daisy Hill to Loganholme, commence in 2007.

The M1 motorway has previously been funded on a dollar-for-dollar basis with the federal government. The Beattie government could not sit by and wait for the federal government to pledge its \$400 million so has allocated \$400 million and commenced planning, design and resumptions. Along with the honourable member for Springwood, I will be making sure that federal election candidates, whether Labor, Liberal or National, commit to the funding for this project so that construction can commence.

This budget also continues the Health Action Plan reform of Queensland Health, with a record health budget of \$7.15 billion. This will mean more hospitals, more mental health services and a record number of doctors and nurses. The loyal staff of Queensland Health will be further recognised in this budget with \$215 million allocated to improve working conditions for staff in 2007-08 as part of a total package of \$3.48 billion over three years.

The Logan Hospital will also see more than \$400,000 of capital upgrades. More than \$338,000 will be spent to complete the \$7 million upgrade to the Logan Hospital emergency department. Some \$100,000 will be spent as the first stage of an upgrade for elective surgery at Logan Hospital. Logan Hospital has a proud history of providing quality mental health services. However, mental health services everywhere have found it hard to meet ever-increasing demand. This budget will provide more support than ever for those with a mental illness—a record increase of \$528 million over the next four years. This will mean 140 new mental health beds and the upgrading of wards, including 130 mental health beds.

Importantly, support for mental health services in our community will be improved with \$176 million over the next four years to employ more than 360 mental health professionals. Mental illness is one of the greatest challenges facing our community. Mental illness will affect so many people and their families. This is a great initiative for which the Minister for Health, Stephen Robertson, should be congratulated.

The Beattie government should also be congratulated on the recruitment program that will deliver 250 new ambulance staff in 2007-08 to meet increasing demand for ambulance services. This budget will

see a massive \$50 million injection, including \$15.65 million for the commissioning of over 140 new ambulance vehicles across the state and the replacement of older vehicles. This massive funding boost will mean that the ambulance officers in Beenleigh and Logan can continue to provide quality responses to local residents.

One of the key roles of modern government is to support stronger communities and assist those community organisations and volunteers who build the capacity of the community to be inclusive and supportive. This budget will see more than \$2 million for the opening of an early childhood education centre in Beenleigh. This will see the old preschool used to support child-care services in our area. We are a community with many young families. This initiative will take pressure off families caring for children.

This budget will also see the state government deliver on its promised contribution to the community and sporting centre at Tudor Park, Loganholme. This financial year will see \$800,000 spent on the construction of an indoor multipurpose recreation centre, with a total state government contribution of \$1.4 million. I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

At this point, I must also recognise the strong advocacy of Councillor Pam Parker in having the Logan City Council contribute the remainder of the funding for this project, despite opposition from some other Councillors.

Mr Speaker, the Budget will also see the continuation of Community Renewal in Beenleigh and Logan. Community Renewal has been a flexible program providing funding to projects that are tailored by and for local communities.

Community Renewal has seen millions of dollars in community facilities, programs and celebrations invested in our area. This program has seen tangible changes to communities that have faced challenging social issues.

The Budget will also continue to support the Referral for Active Intervention services in Beenleigh, Eagleby and Loganlea. Through this program, St Vincent de Paul has been funded to provide families in crisis with support before they come to be the subject of intervention from the Department of Child Safety.

This program ensures that the Department of Child Safety can refer families for support if the Department believe that, while children should not be removed, families can be supported to ensure that they do not return to the attention of the Department of Child Safety in the future.

This Budget will also continue to provide almost \$300,000 in the 2007-08 funding for community centre-based development and support services.

At this point I must declare my interest as a member of the management committee of the Beenleigh District Community Development Association, the organisation which runs the Beenleigh Neighbourhood Centre and the Beenleigh Supported Housing Service. This organisation is one of the three community centres who will continue to receive funding under this program.

The Neighbourhood Centre provides great community services. I encourage Beenleigh residents to pop in to the Neighbourhood Centre, located behind the Police Station, to take advantage of this service.

### **Schools**

Mr Speaker, the schools in the Waterford electorate will also be winners from this budget, with significant money for facilities upgrades.

Since my election in 2006, I have been working with Lou Ware and Cheri Doherty of the Waterford State School Parents and Citizens Association to improve the traffic and transport safety at the Waterford State School.

This Budget delivers on improvements at the School with \$100,000 for the State Government to upgrade the bus set down areas on Nerang Street.

This will mean better visibility and traffic flow for parents and teachers trying to leave Jordan Street of an afternoon.

I was also excited to see that the Beattie Government will invest \$70 million over the next four years to provide every school and TAFE teacher with a laptop computer.

This will mean that teachers will be given the resources needed to teach the children of the twenty-first century. This will also make it easier for teachers to prepare lessons, the hard work of teachers that is unseen and often goes unrecognised.

School facilities in the Waterford electorate will also benefit from the more than \$500 million to build and upgrade schools and training facilities across the State.

There is a long list of projects including, to name but a few:

- Repainting at Loganholme State School, Loganlea High School and the Mabel Park State Pre-School Centre; and
- Re-roofing at the Mabel Park State School; and
- High priority maintenance at Mabel Park State School, Loganlea High School and Waterford State School.

I must thank the Minister for Education and his Parliamentary Secretary, Bonny Barry for Bonny's recent visit to the schools in my electorate.

During her visit we discussed with local schools and parents and citizens the Tomorrow's Schools for which this Budget has allocated \$733 million in coming years.

I will be working hard with local schools to ensure that the Waterford electorate gets its fair share of this funding in coming years. Many local schools are aging and will benefit greatly from this massive investment in Queensland's schools.

### **Sporting Groups**

Finally, Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate two local sporting groups for their success in receiving funding to upgrade their facilities.

This Budget will see the City of Logan Sporting Association receive \$133,665 for an upgrade to the Meakin Park, Slacks Creek facility. As well, Springwood Little Athletics, based at Meadowbrook, will receive just under \$47,000 to construct a high jump apron, long jump run up, sand pits, javelin pad and a discus and shot-put cage.

Mr Speaker, these groups play an important role in promoting healthy and active lifestyles, particularly amongst the young people of Logan.

**Conclusion**

Mr Speaker, I would like to conclude by congratulating the Premier and Deputy Premier on this great budget. I think the Deputy Premier said it all when she said in her second reading speech "in a Labor Budget, no one will be left behind".