



Speech by

Peter Lawlor

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

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CLEAN COAL TECHNOLOGY SPECIAL AGREEMENT BILL; APPROPRIATION BILLS

Mr LAWLOR (Southport—ALP) (2.31 pm): Firstly, I would like to make some general comments about issues raised by members opposite. Dr Flegg, the shadow Treasurer, has referred to the government incurring 'escalating debt for future generations'. If we do not borrow to incur debt to provide infrastructure—such as dams, the water grid, roads et cetera—for the future, what are the alternatives? One is that we put a freeze on capital works just as the coalition did the last time it was in government, or we pay for capital works out of current revenue and the surplus. That is probably impossible because of the size of the Capital Works Program. But, even if it were possible, it would be quite inequitable because we would be making the people of today pay for infrastructure that will benefit people in say 100 years time—for instance, dams that could last several hundred years. Although they would benefit from such a piece of infrastructure, they would get that benefit for free.

The only way that intergenerational equity can be achieved is by responsible borrowing which then allows the beneficiaries—that is, the successive generations—to be responsible for the interest and redemption costs. Nothing could be fairer. This budget proposes just such responsible borrowing of \$3.6 billion to fund a Capital Works Program of \$5.46 billion in the general government sector. Even with this borrowing program, the state continues to maintain low-debt servicing costs, with interest costs as a proportion of revenue averaging just over two per cent over the forward estimates. These borrowings will not adversely affect Queensland's AAA plus credit rating with Standard and Poor's.

If the opposition says that we should reduce borrowings and freeze capital works as it did when last in government, which of the following projects would it shelve—the Houghton Highway, the Gateway Bridge upgrade, QR central Queensland coal tracks, the water grid, the Gold Coast desalination plant, the Kogan Creek baseload power station, the Cairns airport upgrade? Perhaps it would scrap the lot. While other states have net financial liabilities of \$517 per head, Queensland has net financial assets of \$5,931 per head. That situation is not as a result of chance; it is the result of 10 consecutive responsible budgets by the Beattie government. Contrast the fiscal responsibility of the Beattie government with the irresponsible decision by the coalition when it was last in government to sell off Suncorp and blow the proceeds on recurrent expenditure. That money is now gone and what have we got to show for the sale of Suncorp? Nothing!

Mr Stevens: A great highway that you travel on.

Mr LAWLOR: That money was not used to fund the highway at all actually. That is as irresponsible as a government can get and it has the hide to presume to lecture us on financial responsibility!

This is the Beattie government's 10th budget and Southport has again done well. With a forecast state budget surplus of \$268 million and Queensland's economic growth outperforming Australia's growth for 11 consecutive years, we are definitely living in the Smart State. Unemployment is forecast to be lower than the rest of Australia, and this with 1,500 interstate and overseas migrants coming to Queensland each week. The government has abolished seven state taxes since July 2001 and another two taxes will be

abolished in the next four years. Motor vehicle duty will change from a flat two per cent rate to a rate dependent on the number of cylinders with no change for hybrid vehicles. The record \$7.15 billion health budget continues to drive the reforms of the Health Action Plan. With \$5.767 billion for Transport and Main Roads and \$2.5 billion in water infrastructure Queensland is moving forward, and thanks to this government Queensland's economic growth is secure for years to come.

I am proud that the electorate of Southport will share not only in terms of major programs but also with specific initiatives. These include \$6.45 million to the Gold Coast City Council to assist with the redevelopment of the Southport Broadwater Parklands. I have always been an advocate for the restoration and maintenance of the Broadwater for passive recreation—and I emphasise passive recreation. Only three years ago I campaigned and achieved funding for the construction of a new police station at Southport. I can now say that Southport will be at the forefront of emergency services facilities as this budget provides \$2.55 million for the redevelopment of the Southport Fire Station. Statewide, the budget also delivers an additional 200 police positions and 250 new ambulance staff at a cost of \$50 million to meet growing demand. Another \$15 million will go towards the commissioning of over 150 new ambulance vehicles across the state to replace the older vehicles.

The amount of \$31.09 million is allocated to the Queensland Academy for Health Sciences to complete construction of the Health Sciences Academy, which opens in 2008. This is a fantastic boost to educational opportunities on the coast. With the sort of population increases we are experiencing, it is vital that we have facilities like this. I am also pleased to announce \$2.5 million for the Southport State High School—one of my old alma maters—to complete development of its home economics block. Queenslanders everywhere deserve the very best in educational facilities.

The government has prepared for the future medical needs of the Gold Coast, and this can be shown through its support for university students and training of new doctors. At the planned 750 bed Gold Coast University Hospital at Parklands, \$14.5 million has been allocated for the development and planning of the \$1.23 billion facility. Griffith University itself has been given \$4.87 million, from a statewide commitment of \$60 million, to help train and support doctors to work in Queensland public hospitals and help staff the new university facility. The long-wait category for elective surgery patients has decreased by eight per cent through the increased number of surgeons working at the Gold Coast Hospital, and the funding will only further this achievement.

As well as the new facility, the Gold Coast Hospital will receive funding to upgrade its own services to accommodate the growing needs of a growing city. The emergency department at the hospital will receive \$5.12 million in upgrades, increasing patient capacity by 30 acute beds at a total cost of \$8.2 million. In addition to this, the government has put \$5.03 million into community support organisations under the Home and Community Care Program. This will help support home nursing groups such as Blue Care. This will enable them to continue their high level of care for their clients and provide support to their clients' family members and carers providing the care.

I congratulate the Treasurer and her staff on an excellent budget. I seek leave to incorporate the balance of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Other specific initiatives include:

- \$5.7 million on the Skilling Queenslanders for Work program targeting employment assistance specifically at disadvantaged Queenslanders in the region from Logan to Gold Coast, including Beaudesert and creating 914 jobs in 2007-08.
- \$1.18 million to provide training for disadvantaged Queenslanders in the Logan and Gold Coast area to improve their skills and employment prospects at a total cost of \$3.55 million over 3 years.
- More than \$500 million has been allocated to build and upgrade schools and training facilities across the state.

This electorate will benefit from—

- Approximately \$112.8 million will be invested in over 7.2 million hours of vocational education and training in the region during 2007-08.
- \$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.
- \$555,000 to complete concept planning between the Gold Coast Highway and Southport-Nerang Road, on Labrador-Carrara Road, at a total cost of \$600,000.
- \$4.47 million for duplication from two to four lanes between Government Road and Robert Street on the Gold Coast Highway (Helensvale-Southport), at a total cost of \$57 million. This includes Gold Coast City Council contribution of \$4 million and contribution from TransLink (Queensland Transport) of \$1 million.
- \$125,000 for bikeway linkages at various locations in Gold Coast City, with a total State Government contribution of \$225,000.

- \$9 million for widening to six lanes between Pacific Motorway and High Street (in sections), on the Smith Street Connection Road, at a total cost of \$68 million. Includes Gold Coast City Council contribution of \$1 million.
- \$886,000 to complete the resurfacing of asphalt on Southport-Burleigh Road, between Winchester Street and Rudd Street (in sections), at a total cost of \$2.6 million.
- \$2.11 million to complete bus priority works between the Gold Coast Highway and 4km west along Smith Street, on Smith Street Connection Road, at a total cost of \$6.55 million.
- \$1.23 million for widening to four lanes between Minnie Street and Queen Street, on Southport-Nerang Road, at a total cost of \$38 million.
- \$11.46 million to complete widening to four lanes between Robert Street and Stevens Street, on the Gold Coast Highway (Helensvale-Southport), at a total cost of \$21.63 million. Includes Gold Coast City Council firm contribution of \$1.3 million.
- \$28.3 million to continue planning of a Gold Coast Rapid Transit System from Parkwood to Broadbeach at a total cost of \$901.92 million.
- \$12.65 million to continue work on the bus and high occupancy vehicle priority measures for three major road corridors on the Gold Coast at a total cost of \$83.57 million.
- \$488,000 supports the drug court trial in Southport at a total cost of \$1.7 million.
- \$215 million to improve the working conditions for Queensland Health staff, including Visiting Medical Officers, Clinical Staff and Administrative Staff in 2007-08 as a part of a total package of \$3.48 billion over 3 years.
- \$1.86 million allocated to libraries in the Albert/South Coast area as part of an ongoing commitment to improve the stock of books in public libraries.
- \$201,000 for ongoing regional tourism marketing.
- \$631,000 for ongoing promotion of major conventions.
- \$460,000 in continued funding to the Society of St Vincent de Paul State Council of Queensland under the Home and Community Care Modifications Program which provides information and financial assistance with bathroom adaptations, for people who are eligible, at a total cost of \$920,000.
- \$964,000 to Gold Coast Community Housing Association Inc under the Community Rent Scheme to provide short and medium-term accommodation to public housing applicants in need of immediate housing in the private rental market at a total cost of \$2.89 million.
- \$699,000 for the Gold Coast North Home Assist Secure program, which provides free information and referrals regarding home maintenance, falls prevention, repairs and modifications and home security as well as financial assistance to eligible people, at a total cost of \$2.15 million.
- \$1.54 million to complete construction of 16 public housing apartments units for low-income earners at a total cost of \$3.47 million.
- \$286,000 to assist Gold Coast Turf Club Ltd with costs of maintaining training facilities.
- \$207,000 to provide a sexual abuse counselling service to children and young people in care and their non-offending family members and carers with total funding of \$622,000.
- \$3.59 million to provide post school options for young adults with a disability and their families as part of an ongoing commitment.
- \$114,000 to trial innovative support options for people with a disability that foster community capacity in Southport as part of an ongoing commitment.
- \$320,000 to improve the sustainability of non-government organisations delivering services to people with a disability and their families and carers in Southport.
- \$875,000 to provide a counselling support service, counselling, referral and support for women and children affected by domestic and family violence, women accessing in court services and to work with men to encourage them to modify their violent behaviour.
- \$301,000 to provide an accommodation and support service for women and children escaping domestic and family violence.
- \$29,000 to provide before/after school and vacation care for school age and under school age children.
- \$303,000 to provide, counselling and support for young people at risk of homelessness.
- \$278,000 to provide families with crisis or short term accommodation and support to deal with issues that put them at risk of becoming homeless.
- \$56,000 to provide outside school hours care activities for young people (13-15yrs).
- \$42,000 to provide support services for older people, including enhancing safety and well-being.

The Government is undertaking an unprecedented expansion of urban water infrastructure, with the \$9 billion SEQ water grid. Once completed, the Water Grid will not only secure more water for the region but also enable it to be moved to areas of most need. \$81 million for the Home Waterwise Rebate Scheme, which offers rebates for water-saving devices such as rainwater tanks, washing machines, shower heads, dual flush toilets and pool covers, across South-East Queensland and the Darling Downs at a total cost of \$175 million.

I therefore commend the budget to the House.