



Speech by

Phil Weightman

MEMBER FOR CLEVELAND

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CLEAN COAL TECHNOLOGY SPECIAL AGREEMENT BILL; APPROPRIATION BILLS

Mr WEIGHTMAN (Cleveland—ALP) (3.51 pm): I rise to speak on the Appropriation Bill and the clean coal bill in this cognate debate. Since my election last year I have worked hard during my first term to make representations on behalf of the wonderful people of my electorate and to ensure that the Queensland government provides those people with the infrastructure, facilities and services they deserve.

The funding that this budget delivers for roads, schools and health services in my local area is a testament to that work and I am pleased to see that my electorate will receive a significant boost from the Queensland government as a result. This funding boost comes as a result of the good forward planning by our government, an essential component of budgeting for an area with a growth rate such as that experienced by the Redlands.

Based on current trends, medium series projections from the Department of Local Government, Planning and Sport indicate that within two decades over 40,000 people will have moved into and around my electorate—and for good reason. The Redlands is a beautiful area in which to live, work and raise a family.

Mr Choi: And a good local member.

Mr WEIGHTMAN: I will take that interjection from the member for Capalaba. This budget will help ensure that.

I am committed to maintaining the lifestyle enjoyed by Redlanders and their families. The budget has demonstrated a special commitment to the maintenance and restoration of local schools and I am sure that both teachers and students will be very grateful for the funding. The important challenge of education of our young people is greatly enhanced by providing comfortable and up-to-date learning facilities. This budget will deliver three quarters of a million dollars worth of funding for Ormiston, Cleveland and Wellington Point state schools and Cleveland District State High School and Wellington Point State High School.

Ormiston State School received \$500,000 worth of funding to fix amenities within the school, a project which will make the school more comfortable for the teachers and students alike. This money will be used to fix holes in the ceiling of one of the school's toilet blocks, the largest toilet block in the school. Ormiston is a historic local school which was opened in 1872 and now has 600 students. Its popularity requires that we continually upgrade its facilities.

Cleveland State School is another popular primary school in my electorate with over 800 students. The amount of \$65,000 for painting and maintenance at the school will help contribute to the wonderful school atmosphere that the teachers and students at the school generate.

Wellington Point State School will also receive maintenance funding of \$40,000 that will help restore another historic school in my electorate that was established in 1887. Including the students from

Wellington Point State School, nearly 2,000 primary school students will benefit from the maintenance projects delivered through this budget. No doubt over the next two decades thousands more primary school students in my electorate will also benefit from this commitment to the local schools and this will continue to contribute to my work in building a better community.

It is not only young children who will benefit from the funding for schools. High school students at both Cleveland District State High School and Wellington Point State High School will receive significant funding for maintenance projects. Cleveland District State High School, which was recently recognised as a result of its accreditation by the Council of International Schools, will also receive funding for reroofing. I am glad that a wonderful, forward-looking and internationally recognised education institution in my electorate will benefit from this budget, and I am confident that that benefit will be passed on to the students and teachers who work and learn in that school.

I am working hard to make the bayside a better community and provide for the future sustainability of that community. An important part of that is ensuring that our students have both the training and education required to continue to work and contribute to our local community. The schools in my area are home to some wonderful teachers and staff who work tirelessly for local students. I am pleased to see that the state government has contributed to that with an increased amount of funding for maintaining local schools.

As well as contributing to our valuable local human resource, the budget delivers funding for local roads that will also contribute to building a better bayside. The budget has delivered over \$1.5 million to road funding in my area to improve signalling at local intersections and improve roads in and around the electorate. Funding roads is another important aspect of building a better community in the bayside. Nearly \$1 million has been allocated to improving intersections where Bagden and Estelle Roads meet Birkdale Road. Birkdale Road is an important link between Birkdale and Wellington Point. I know that many locals will be relieved to hear about the improvements at those intersections. Improving roads makes people's lives easier and safer and is an important part of ensuring a safe local community. I am proud to note these significant budget funding announcements and the positive implications for the people who live in my electorate.

By far the biggest boost for Redlands from this budget is the significant commitment to increased health funding in my area. We have backed up the strong reforms of the Health Action Plan with record-breaking health budgets of over \$7 billion. Nearly \$6 million will flow into health services and health infrastructure in my electorate in amounts which I am certain will have enormous positive benefits for the local community and the health of my local constituents.

The funding allocated to the electorate includes \$18,000 to Child Health Services, \$3.06 million to community organisations under the Home and Community Care program and just over \$100,000 to support the trial of the Cleveland Drug Court. This follows on and supports the introduction of a Murri Court in Cleveland recently.

In perhaps the most important funding allocation for my electorate, \$2.8 million has been given to fund the completion of the Redland Hospital emergency department upgrade. This has come as part of a total of nearly \$14 million worth of funding for improving, redeveloping and upgrading the Redland Hospital. In March this year I mentioned how pleased I was with the commencement of the emergency department's expansion. To see the delivery of funding for the completion of that project is great news for the people of the Cleveland electorate. The upgrade of the emergency department at Redland Hospital will improve workflow, access and security by increasing the capacity of the waiting room and inclusion of an observation area. The benefits of this increased level of service provision for patients of the Redland Hospital are clear.

Further, as part of the broader hospital redevelopment, the emergency department will expand from 13 treatment spaces to 31, which will include five observation beds for short-stay type patients. Complementing the redevelopment, \$1 million has also been included to complete construction of the new Birkdale Ambulance Station, a project which, excluding any delays that may arise, should be due to commence construction in the middle of July and, barring any unforeseen delays, will see practical completion by the end of November.

When I first raised the commencement of the Redland Hospital renovations in this place I mentioned the increase in the number of people being treated by the hospital each year. I think it is important to note again how rapidly my electorate is expanding and the increased services that that growth demands. In the year 2000 just over 30,000 patients were treated by the Redland Hospital emergency department. In 2003 the number was closer to 35,000 and last year almost 40,000 people came through the doors. With growth rates like this in an electorate like mine it is a struggle to continue to provide the services that my constituents deserve. However, this budget demonstrates how we are working to build a better bayside community by planning for the future and expanding to accommodate the enormous growth that comes as a result of living in such a great state.

I am enormously pleased to see that this budget delivers on the promise of improving the health facilities of residents in and around the Redlands and will continue to work to build a better bayside community in this capacity. However, as important as it is to invest in services and facilities for our electorates, there is more to building a better community than providing for roads, schools, buildings and health and social services. On top of the \$8 million worth of funding in my electorate I have already discussed through investing in education, transport and health, there was nearly \$10 million more for community services, research facilities, public design, sport and recreation, community development and public housing initiatives. My electorate has a wonderful community spirit of which I am proud to be a part and I am pleased to see that this funding will be able to contribute to that.

Over \$1.75 million has been committed to Cleveland's community services, including over a half a million dollars to libraries across the Redlands area. Libraries are an important institute in a contemporary society. In particular, here in the Smart State it is pleasing to see that we are continuing to upgrade facilities that assist in generating greater public knowledge and understanding.

In terms of improving community services in my electorate, Cleveland will also receive \$222,000 to assist people with disabilities with the transition to living in the community and a further \$321,000 to provide post-school support to young people with disabilities. In my first speech in this place, I mentioned two issues that I was particularly passionate about addressing. The first of those issues was the capacity to advocate for people either living with disabilities or caring for people with special needs, and the second one was public safety. I have worked hard so far to address those concerns through making many representations on behalf of my constituents and helping out where I can. It is enormously gratifying to see the state government come to the table to provide over half a million dollars to make life easier for people in my electorate with disabilities. If we are serious about building a better community we need to ensure that everybody has an opportunity to contribute. I am pleased to note my government's contribution in this area.

Young people will also see the benefits of this budget for the future through counselling and support for young people at risk of homelessness and nearly \$50,000 being allocated to provide before school, after school and vacation care for school-age and under school-age children, making life easier for working parents as well.

Another important element of this budget is the contribution to sport and recreation in my local area. I have a long history with local sport in my electorate and I continue to believe it plays an important role in communities through developing social, fit, healthy and active people. This budget makes a further significant contribution to maintaining this culture in my local community by contributing to first-class sport and recreational communities and sports clubs. Mooroondu Sports and Recreation Club will see \$50,000 to complete extensions. An amount of \$160,000 will go towards the construction of a three-tier leisure pool at the Cleveland Aquatic Centre. On North Stradbroke Island—one of the greatest places in my electorate—\$35,000 will be given to assist the North Stradbroke Island Community Development Employment Program Aboriginal Corporation in employing a sport and recreation officer and \$15,000 will be spent in developing a strategy for sport and recreational facilities and services.

The Redlands Little Athletics Centre will receive almost \$20,000 to upgrade the long jump and triple jump pits and the run-up tracks and install a tartan surface. That will be greatly appreciated by the young people in my electorate.

Nearly \$25,000 will go to the Redlands Softball Association, an organisation which I mentioned here earlier this week as having a significant impact in my electorate. This money will enable them to install a multipurpose floor to support other sports such as hockey, boxing and aerobics. A further \$13,000 will go to the Redlands Lawn Tennis Association to enable them to upgrade an existing concrete court.

In total, nearly \$300,000 will be distributed amongst six different significant projects to improve facilities and services for health and recreation in my local area. These sorts of contributions have important ramifications for the long-term health of Queenslanders and are an important part of building a better community. I am sure that this will be the case in my electorate and that the people of Cleveland will benefit from the increased capacity for sports and recreation clubs to provide services.

There are several other important projects that I would like to put on record, including nearly \$5 million to continue the construction of the high-security glasshouses and in vitro growth facilities for world-class plant research, nearly \$1 million for the completion of the installation of a third transformer at Cleveland and \$1.33 million to continue to assist with the development of the Redlands Performing Arts Centre—a facility which I am sincerely looking forward to enjoying. An amount of \$160,000 is available to Redland Shire Council to improve lighting as part of the security improvement program and \$200,000 will be used to begin construction of public housing as part of the spinal injury initiative. This budget is a good budget for my electorate and a good budget for Queensland. The foresight shown by the Treasurer in building for the future will be significant over the next two decades. In my electorate the funding we have been allocated will go a long way to building a better bayside community.

The area I represent is growing and this budget will play an important role in ensuring that we can accommodate more people while maintaining the lifestyle we enjoy. In accommodating the growth occurring in my electorate, the budget will help make schools more comfortable for teachers and students. It will help improve health facilities including expanding emergency departments and completing a new local ambulance station. It will help fix some of the busiest roads in my electorate. It will significantly contribute to many community groups and the community programs will help ensure my constituents continue to enjoy the wonderful bayside lifestyle that we enjoy at present.

The allocations for schools, roads and health will provide services that are vital in building a better community. The funding for my local area of community development will have an enormously positive impact on various sectors within my electorate through the participation in sports and recreation activities, technological development, better built environments and cultural development. I look forward to continuing to serve the people of Cleveland as we build a better bayside community throughout these projects.

I would also like to speak on the Clean Coal Technology Special Agreement Bill 2007. The purpose of this bill is to establish the Clean Coal Council. The council will consist of representatives from Queensland's black coal industry, the Queensland government and other relevant experts in the area of clean coal technology. Clause 7 provides for the council to consider and provide advice on clean coal technology projects that it has identified through its own operations. This bill will enable the Queensland government to formalise an agreement with Australian Coal Association Low Emissions Technologies Ltd.

Queensland is the world's largest exporter of coal and we have enough coal to last many generations to come. Coal generates over 40 per cent of the world's electricity and two-thirds of global steel production depends on coal. Global consumption of coal is currently rising faster than that of oil or natural gas. Queensland's population is booming, placing further pressure on energy delivery and increasing demand for energy resources. However, Queensland, like Australia and the rest of the world, has a problem: global warming. We as individuals and, more importantly, as a state need to do everything possible to fix this problem. One way for us to do this is to invest in clean coal technology. The Beattie government has invested \$300 million in the budget for clean coal technology as well as \$600 million from the coal industry, allowing for deep cuts into greenhouse gas emissions. This investment, coupled with a \$414 million backed commitment to cut carbon emissions by 30 per cent by 2020, means that in total the state government has invested \$1.3 billion in climate change.

Furthermore, we are committed to an emissions trading scheme by 2010. The government is recognised as a world beater in other research industries such as biotech, and now we have set our sights on becoming the leader in clean coal technology.

Because of our status as the world's leading coal exporter, we have a responsibility to ensure that we make coal as clean burning as possible. This is not a dream; it will be a reality. With enough research and given our huge stocks of coal, developing clean coal means that we can maximise the resources we have while reducing the current impact we are having on the environment. We can export clean coal and we can export clean coal technology, and this will secure jobs not only in our coal industry but also abroad. It means that we can maximise our exports to large coal users such as India, China and the United States and ensure environmental sustainability at the same time.

The bill before the House will complement the initiatives that the government has already undertaken in reducing our emissions by 30 per cent by 2020. Importantly, the bill allows for collaborative investment between industry and government by creating a group which includes representatives from the government and the private sector. The Clean Coal Council will allow better communication and closer ties between industry and government. This will lead to a unified approach to achieving our goal—that is, clean coal. The council and the Queensland Clean Coal Agreement have been formed after consultation with numerous government departments and non-government organisations. It will help the government make the right decision and allocate money to where it can be best spent. It will expedite this process to ensure that money gets to where it is needed fast.

The council will be responsible for overseeing a range of functions, including advising the minister about priorities for funding and assessing and making recommendations about proposals. The council has been granted the power to use its own initiative to examine requests for projects; this is an initiative to think for itself and then work out the best advice for the minister. Perhaps most importantly, the council will coordinate the state's involvement in international research projects.

Clean coal and climate change are priorities for this government. Clean coal is better for the environment, it is good for jobs, it is good for the economy and it is good for Queensland. The council provides, in effect, an appropriate body to ensure that we have collaborative investments and closer ties between industry and the private sector to ensure that we get money where it is needed and when it is needed. I commend this bill and the appropriation bills to the House.