



Speech by

Margaret Keech

MEMBER FOR ALBERT

Hansard Friday, 19 June 2009

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT (ASSET RESTRUCTURING AND DISPOSAL) BILL; FUEL SUBSIDY REPEAL AND REVENUE AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Mrs KEECH (Albert—ALP) (11.01 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Treasurer's Appropriation Bill and congratulate him and our government on introducing a responsible bill that is framed against the toughest economic and fiscal times Australia has seen in more than 70 years. The Queensland economy, through no fault of its own, has experienced a king hit, with \$15 billion being stripped from our forward estimates as we see our major trading partners, such as Japan, South Korea, the United States and the United Kingdom, falling into recession. At the same time, revenue from the GST, coal royalties and transfer duties has plummeted.

In introducing this state budget, just three months after an historic fifth-term Labor win, the Bligh government had two choices. One was to do nothing and stick our head in the sand, as the LNP would have us do. The LNP would not even have us wait for the economic storms to pass because its leader is on record as believing that the global economic crisis is a myth. The Treasurer was spot-on when he said that the response by the Leader of the Opposition to his budget on Thursday lacked courage, vision and any solutions whatsoever.

I am proud that the Treasurer's Appropriation Bill, which we are debating tonight, is proof positive that as a Labor government we have the leadership who is up to making tough decisions in delivering on our election promise to put the jobs of families, like those of the tradesmen and women and the small business owners in my electorate of Albert, front and centre as the top priority. Premier Anna Bligh has showed strong leadership in ensuring that as a state we come through this time in a stronger position. That will be achieved by the massive \$18.2 billion building program, which has significant and welcome benefits for the working families of Albert.

Mr Wilson interjected.

Mrs KEECH: I take that interjection from the Minister for Education and Training. Infrastructure projects such as the \$1.76 billion for the world-class Gold Coast University Hospital about which, together with the member for Broadwater, I received an update briefing today from the Minister for Infrastructure and Planning; the \$1.88 billion upgrade of the Gateway Motorway; the \$1.95 billion upgrade of the Ipswich Motorway; the \$13.8 million across South-East Queensland to fluoridate the south coast water supply; and the \$464 million from the state government to build the Gold Coast rapid transit project are most welcome. Although those projects are not located physically in the Albert electorate, the flow-on benefits of the thousands of jobs they have created and will maintain for Albert electorate families and businesses cannot be underestimated.

As the *Albert and Logan News Quest* newspaper stated on Wednesday, 17 June—

The state government will pour millions into the local road network through projects funded in the 2009-10 budget.

As usual, the *Albert and Logan News* is correct. Unlike the opposition, that newspaper recognises that in tough economic times the Bligh government has its eyes set firmly on the right priorities, that is, creating and maintaining jobs through its \$18 billion infrastructure program.

I would like to extend my very best wishes to the editor of the *Albert and Logan News* Quest newspaper, Ray Goodey, who has taken leave due to illness. Also, my best wishes go to his wife, Frances. I, together with all the other members of this House who represent the Logan area, wish Ray all the very best in his recovery. Ray has made an outstanding contribution to both public information and social commentary and is widely respected throughout the entire community.

A government member: Hear, hear!

Mrs KEECH: I take that interjection from the member. The big winner in the 2009-10 budget is better services for Albert, particularly the electorate's busy road network and particularly the Pacific Motorway, which after the state redistribution now marks the eastern boundary of Albert. The budget will provide significant upgrades to the motorway itself as well as provide more in-house noise treatments for residents, \$12 million in joint state and federal funding for interchange improvements at the Foxwell Road and Pacific Motorway interchange, as well as \$3.19 million in joint state and federal funding for concept planning for the Coomera interchange. As well as improvements for Tamborine-Oxenford Road, I am very pleased to receive \$500,000 for intersection improvements on the Beaudesert-Beenleigh Road at the Tallagandra Road intersection, Beenleigh. As my colleague the honourable member for Waterford is very much aware, this intersection is feeling the pressure of additional congestion, particularly at peak hours and before and after school.

When I was doorknocking during the last state election campaign just three months ago, I promised the families of Albert that if I were re-elected I would look to the future and work hard to ensure that state government services keep up with the projected population boom. That is why I have told the Minister for Main Roads, the Hon. Craig Wallace, that whilst I welcome the \$500,000 for the first stage of planning by his department for the intersection, I will continue to fight to ensure that the funding for the installation of the traffic lights is brought forward. In doing that, I have personally invited the minister to join me and residents to visit Beenleigh-Beaudesert Road so that he can see for himself the need to fast-track the traffic lights and the duplication of this very busy major road. When the minister visits the electorate, I will be able to thank him for the \$100,000 in federal Black Spot funding to complete shoulder sealing on a section of Beenleigh-Beaudesert Road between Mount Warren Boulevard and Windaroo Valley State High School.

The Albert electorate is home to many young working families. They will benefit from a \$4.5 million boost across the south coast for the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative, including Queensland's Green Army to create 530 jobs for young people and those disadvantaged in the labour market.

With 2,000 people coming to Queensland each week—and most of them, it seems, stopping once they get over the border and settling in Albert; and why would they not—this budget is particularly focused on planning for the future and seeing substantial investment in energy infrastructure and jobs for the region. I welcome the \$5.8 million allocation for the Coomera bulk substation to establish a second feeder to the Hope Island substation, the \$1.28 million at Pimpama east to build two subtransmission feeders to the Gold Coast sewage treatment plant, the \$2.7 million at Cades County for a new high-voltage feeder to increase network capacity as well as the allocation of \$885,000 at Beenleigh towards the upgrade of two transformers, which will significantly boost network capacity.

As a parent of three wonderful children—and happy birthday today to James—and also as a registered teacher, I am so proud of the great schools in Albert and the strong educational leadership that is shown by their principals. I know the Minister for Education and Training shares my passion for and my recognition of their great work, because recently he visited one of the newer schools.

Mr Wilson interjected.

Mrs KEECH: I appreciate the minister's interjections. Like their P&Cs, I welcome the extra \$200,000 in maintenance funds for Beenleigh Special School, Cedar Creek State School, Gaven State School, Upper Coomera State College and Windaroo Valley State High School. As well, \$200,000 for planning of stage 2 at Coomera Springs State School—one of the state's newest state schools, with principal Mike Ennis, who is very passionate about young people achieving their potential—is most welcome.

I have worked long and hard with previous ministers in planning for a new TAFE facility for the northern Gold Coast to provide much needed training facilities. After all the hard work, the Premier and the Treasurer have more than delivered. That is why I know that the constituents of the new seat of Coomera would be most disappointed with the speech tonight by their new LNP member, who does not consider the \$28.85 million for the Coomera education precinct for a new TAFE as worthy of even a mention.

It may not have made the headlines, but international research shows that building a foundation on a child's love for reading brings great future educational outcomes. That is why I applaud the Treasurer's

\$1.9 million for the purchase of books for public libraries in the Gold Coast region and more than \$1 million towards the purchase of books for public libraries in the Logan region.

Whilst I have been in parliament this week debating the Appropriation Bill, my electorate office has been as usual extremely busy. I would like to pass on my thanks to my hardworking electorate office team of Natalie Main, Brent Davidson, Judy Hendrix and volunteer Ruth Keenan, who regularly go above and beyond the call of duty in supporting me to finding solutions to the many challenging social, community and planning problems a fast-growing region like Albert is faced with.

In the public gallery I would like to acknowledge my husband, Peter, and our son Joshua, a Sydney lawyer and community activist, who, together with our other children, James and Helen, have worked very, very hard indeed during the campaign. I am very pleased indeed that they have been able to join me tonight as we support the Treasurer's Appropriation Bill.

The budget is focused on jobs, building infrastructure and front-line services. I congratulate the Treasurer and commend the bill to the House.