



Speech by

Hon. Cameron Dick

MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Hansard Friday, 11 June 2010

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL; APPROPRIATION BILL; REVENUE LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

Hon. CR DICK (Greenslopes—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Industrial Relations) (5.25 pm): I rise to speak to the 2010-11 budget bills and to say a few words about the Bligh government's ongoing support for the state electorate of Greenslopes. The Bligh government is committed to making Queensland a stronger and safer place to live—and it is delivering on that plan with significant funding initiatives in this year's budget that will benefit the residents of Greenslopes.

This is a responsible budget that lays down firm foundations for a stronger economic recovery. At the heart of this budget is a massive \$17.1 billion building program that will support 106,000 jobs in the 2010-11 financial year. That is because the Bligh government is putting jobs first, and doing all it can to achieve its election promise of creating 100,000 new jobs by March 2012.

Job figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics just yesterday, 10 June 2010, highlight that the government's economic strategy is working. In just 15 months, the Bligh government is already almost halfway towards its jobs target, with 49,300 new jobs created since the state election in March 2009. This is evidence that when you have a well-developed plan and stick to it, even when things get tough, you can achieve your objectives.

With the economy showing signs of recovery and jobs growth improving, the outlook for Queenslanders in general, and residents of Greenslopes in particular, is looking far more positive this year. While the economic circumstances facing Queensland in 2010-11 are, fortunately, nowhere near as dire as those that confronted the government this time last year, there is no doubt that challenges still exist within the economy. Despite these challenges, the state budget has remained true to our ideals and values, with funding focused firmly on providing job opportunities for Queenslanders, securing a solid educational foundation for our children, and looking after the most vulnerable members of our society.

The budget recognises that Queenslanders are doing it tough, which is why compulsory third party insurance will be reduced by \$24 from 1 October. Families in the Greenslopes electorate will welcome this cut in CTP insurance.

The 2010-11 state budget provides further relief by increasing the electricity rebate for pensioners and seniors from \$190 to \$216 per household and will also deliver a new electricity subsidy program for vulnerable Queenslanders with medical conditions who have to use air conditioners. And pensioners will continue to enjoy a full 50 per cent discount on their vehicle registration fees.

The state budget also contains a suite of initiatives that not only protect our environment but also support new green jobs. In short, it is a budget that delivers on employment, education, community empowerment and environmental sustainability.

The 2010-11 state budget continues to deliver on Labor's promise to create jobs—and maintains the nation's biggest building program which will support 106,000 jobs. Employment is vital not just to the economy but also to families and individuals, and that is why this budget delivers on Labor's promise to

keep the economy growing through a massive Capital Works Program. The program of capital works is designed to meet existing needs, as well as cater for future growth.

We know that the challenges associated with Queensland's population growth create some issues in electorates such as Greenslopes with its long-established character suburbs. That is why the state government is devoting substantial funding to major public transport initiatives such as the Eastern Busway.

Residents of the Greenslopes community will benefit from \$150 million in funding to continue the construction of stage 2 of this important project which runs between Buranda and Main Avenue, Coorparoo and is due for completion in 2012. The Eastern Busway will link with the network of busways that have been built by Labor governments over the past 12 years which are making it that much easier to get around Brisbane's south side. When completed, it will improve our public transport system so that more people will be encouraged to leave their cars at home and jump on a bus.

I am also working closely with the local business community to find new tenants for the old Myer building and Coorparoo Mall at Coorparoo Junction. I believe that new tenants will help stimulate business activity in the area by attracting new customers. This is part of the state government's short-, medium- and long-term plans that are being implemented to revitalise the Coorparoo Junction area.

The Eastern Busway is not the only project that will benefit the people of Greenslopes that is being funded by this year's budget. Some \$1 million in new funding has also been allocated to undertake planning and design work on a major redevelopment of the Queensland Museum, a popular destination for Greenslopes families.

Two community housing projects in my electorate will also greatly benefit from more than \$2.8 million for the construction of a total of 20 community housing dwellings. These projects will not only provide accommodation for people who need it the most but also provide jobs for workers in our local building industry—an industry that has been doing it tough during the global financial crisis.

This budget will also provide funding of \$8.6 million to establish a bulk supply substation at Coorparoo and almost \$1 million for underground cables to increase network capacity at Holland Park West. These works will provide security of electricity supply for the residents of Brisbane's south side as well as jobs. Given that almost all members of the Legislative Assembly will be speaking on the 2010-11 budget bills, and in accordance with the Speaker's ruling, I seek leave for the remainder of my speech to be incorporated into *Hansard*. I have the approval of the Speaker to do so.

Leave granted.

Education

The Bligh Government is determined to ensure that young Queenslanders are given the flying start they need to meet the growing and challenging demands of an ever-changing society.

A good education prepares young people to develop their abilities and puts them in a position to continue lifelong learning, so that they can make the most of the opportunities that life presents.

Families with children make up about 20 per cent of the constituents in the State electorate that I am privileged to represent, so our government's investment in education is extremely important for the people of Greenslopes.

The Bligh Government's investment in education and training in 2010-11 has been increased by almost \$300 million, which helps fund up to 316 new teachers and teacher aides.

There are eight primary schools, five high schools and one State special school in the Greenslopes electorate, and I know that parents, staff and students will be pleased to hear of these funding announcements.

More than \$17.2 million in this year's education budget is being spent in the electorate of Greenslopes.

The largest portion of this funding is being provided for the relocation of the Brisbane School of Distance Education to Coorparoo Secondary College, with \$12 million allocated to this important project.

Cavendish Road State High School, Coorparoo Secondary College and Mount Gravatt State High School will each receive significant funding towards science laboratory upgrades, with more than \$3 million committed to improving facilities.

Cavendish Road State High School will also receive more than \$500,000 for a library restoration.

And just under \$1 million has been allocated to general learning area upgrades for Holland Park State High School and my old primary school, Marshall Road State School.

Both Marshall Road State School and Mount Gravatt State High School are proudly celebrating 50 years of educating southside children in 2010.

These schools are the training grounds for our next generation of Queensland leaders, who will have the future of our state in their hands.

This budget also makes substantial contributions to the government's commitment that all children will have access to a quality early childhood education by 2020.

More than \$120,000 will go to child care centres in and around the Greenslopes electorate, including the Adeona Early Exploration Centre, C&K Mt Gravatt West, Holland Park Child Care and the Greenslopes Child Care Centre, to provide an approved kindergarten program of 15 hours a week for children in the year before Prep.

I am very pleased this budget is delivering on significant funding to foster positive school environments to ensure the continued learning and development of today's students.

We want our children to have exposure to the best education and help them set the course for their own future.

Community empowerment

The Bligh Government does not turn its back on those people in our communities who need extra support.

This budget looks after Queenslanders in need, with new funding directed towards expanding the services required by some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

A particular focus of this year's budget is funding for the disabilities portfolio, which now totals \$1.6 billion.

The families of Greenslopes residents who care for a loved one with a disability will be pleased with statewide funding of \$28 million to help those with spinal cord injuries, while \$21 million will be provided statewide for young people transitioning out of school.

\$699,000 will go towards helping Greenslopes families care for family members with a disability who have high or complex support needs.

Vital funding is also being provided to community organisations to deliver improved social services to areas of greatest need.

Organisations who provide community awareness, education activities and non-clinical support to people with mental illness in Greenslopes will receive more than \$430,000 in funding to continue their important services.

Essential counselling and support services will also receive a boost of \$329,000 for young people at risk of homelessness and a further \$330,000 is committed to provide families with crisis or short-term accommodation and support to deal with issues placing them at risk of homelessness.

This funding will ensure families who are going through difficulties will have somewhere to turn.

A further \$170,000 has been allocated for the development of crime prevention projects targeting young people in Greenslopes.

This is to reduce the risk of our young people breaking the law and coming into contact with the youth justice system.

Health

Health is also a big component of this year's budget, with the total departmental budget reaching \$9.9 billion—almost one-quarter of the State Budget.

This funding will add another 1200 doctors, nurses and health professionals to the front-line workforce.

The record building program in health will deliver 22 new and redeveloped hospitals across the state, including \$110 million for the new \$1.4 billion Queensland Children's Hospital.

Expert clinical advice has repeatedly confirmed that a single children's hospital provides the best outcomes for children—and its location makes it much more accessible to southsiders.

The budget also provides \$6.9 million towards the \$134 million expansion of the Princess Alexandra Hospital's emergency department and other facilities.

This expansion will triple the size of the emergency department, delivering 30 extra beds, an additional short stay bed and 25 extra treatment and assessment bays.

The Princess Alexandra Hospital will also join a new persistent pain service network across Queensland.

This investment will reduce the waiting list for Queensland's only dedicated persistent pain treatment service at Royal Brisbane and Women's Hospital, and extend access to specialist help for sufferers of persistent pain on the southside.

Community organisations

Mr Speaker—Greenslopes is home to some very important community organisations and these have not been forgotten in this year's budget.

One valuable community organisation based in the Greenslopes electorate is Carers Queensland.

Carers Queensland does exceptional work throughout our state to support the one in eight Queenslanders who provide unpaid care to family members and friends with physical or mental illnesses or disabilities, or who are frail.

This year's budget will provide funding of almost \$2 million for Carers Queensland to extend home and community care services throughout the state.

Another community organisation just outside the Greenslopes electorate that receives funding this year is the Mount Gravatt Neighbourhood Centre, which has been allocated \$100,000 for a major upgrade of the centre.

Holland Park and District Meals on Wheels also provides support for vulnerable people in our community—particularly those with a disability or who are frail.

I am very pleased that this year's budget includes more than \$120,000 for this organisation to continue with their charitable food delivery services to members of the community.

Centacare's Amelia House will also receive home and community care funding of more than \$1.3 million for centre-based day care, domestic assistance, personal care, respite care and social support.

And more than \$300,000 will be provided to Queensland Baptist Care to provide counselling services for families, children and young people referred by the Department of Communities.

I am proud to have such valuable community organisations in the Greenslopes electorate and am prouder still that this budget is providing funding, which is a true reflection of the generous work they do to make our local Greenslopes community, and our state, a better place for all.

Environmental sustainability

The environment is also very important to the people of Greenslopes and this year's State Budget contains some significant reforms that help ensure a sustainable future.

The budget supports the government's commitment to the solar industry through new measures such as the \$60 million Solar Hot Water Scheme, which will provide subsidies of up to \$1000 to householders to install solar hot water systems.

The government has also allocated \$5.8 million to the Solar Kindy Program and \$35 million for the solar boost project at Kogan Creek.

A new waste reform strategy will be introduced from 1 July 2011 to reduce the amount of rubbish generated and provide a pool of funding for environmental initiatives.

These will include \$159 million over four years to help businesses and the community reduce waste and \$120 million over four years to help local councils introduce waste reduction programs.

The budget also funds the acquisition of more national parks, which will help us achieve our long-term goal of increasing our protected-area estate by 50 per cent by 2020.

These initiatives will not only help protect our precious environment, but also stimulate job opportunities for Queenslanders.

Portfolio highlights

Mr Speaker—while I have the opportunity, I would like to speak briefly about the budget allocations made to the justice portfolio, for which I am responsible.

The Department of Justice and Attorney-General is receiving a record \$1.046 billion in 2010-11, with the focus this year on a court building program supporting thousands of jobs, more frontline staff and better services for vulnerable Queenslanders.

The key highlights of the 2010-11 budget for the department and associated portfolio agencies include:

- \$290 million in 2010-11 for the \$600 million Supreme and District Courts project, which exemplifies the Government's commitment to strengthen the state by delivering infrastructure that anticipates growth. This project will create nearly 5000 jobs during construction and sets a new benchmark in courthouse design, with a strong focus on the needs of vulnerable witnesses, victims of crime, citizens performing jury service and other court users.
- A further \$20.3 million over four years to fund an additional 41 guardians and frontline staff within the Office of the Adult Guardian to support the growing number of adult Queenslanders who require substitute decision-making because of serious accidents, dementia and mental illness.
- \$61 million over four years for Legal Aid Queensland to provide a more secure funding source for its vital services and reduce its reliance on funding from the Legal Practitioner Interest of Trust Accounts Fund
- \$1.6 million a year for Victim Assist Queensland to support non-government services to victims
- \$1.5 million a year for the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal to help resolve minor civil disputes and guardianship matters
- \$8 million over four years to fund a new program to improve the workplace health and safety practices at businesses with high accident and injury rates
- Extra funding for the Crime and Misconduct Commission to target the proceeds of crime, computer fraud and misconduct complaints (\$1 million a year)
- An extra \$460,000 for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to employ an extra prosecutor and four more legal officers
- \$6.7 million over four years to establish the new sentencing advisory council
- \$8 million over four years to fund a new program to improve the workplace health and safety practices at businesses with high accident and injury rates
- \$2 million in 2010-11 for the Murri Court and Queensland Indigenous Alcohol Diversion Program.

As you can see, these initiatives contribute directly to the budget's objectives of providing more jobs sooner and delivering services to those in our communities who are most in need.

Conclusion

Mr Speaker—in the past year, the State Government has been forced to make some tough decisions as a result of the difficult economic circumstances thrust upon us by the global financial crisis.

Fortunately, we are now starting to see the positive results of those hard decisions.

Overall, we have a State Budget that delivers lower deficits, lower debt, higher growth and more jobs.

That is good news for the people of Greenslopes.

This year's budget is not about massive handouts or sweeteners.

It is about delivering to the people of Queensland and continuing to make the tough, but right, decisions for the State's future.

The government made the hard decisions so that we could continue to invest in our job-creating building program and better services for Queenslanders.

I am very pleased that these decisions will also contribute to securing the future for the Greenslopes community through the creation of more jobs, improving education facilities, providing support for the most vulnerable members of our community, and keeping Greenslopes green.

As the state member for Greenslopes, I am very pleased to commend these bills to the House.