



Speech by


Hon. Jarrod Bleijie

MEMBER FOR KAWANA

Hansard Thursday, 13 September 2012

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Budget, Department of Justice and Attorney-General

 **Hon. JP BLEIJIE** (Kawana—LNP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.48 am): This week's state budget reaffirms the Newman government's commitment to providing a strengthened justice system for Queenslanders into the future. It is certainly a budget in a generation. One of the major announcements, of course, is a \$6 million commitment to establish the Queensland Child Protection Commission of Inquiry and provide support for vulnerable children and victims of crime. This inquiry will put the state's child protection system under the microscope and chart a new road map for protection for the next decade.

The Newman government will also provide \$750,000 to the Women's Legal Service, so it can continue to support women suffering from violence and abuse through legal advice sessions and a revived rural telephone support service. Under Labor the Women's Legal Service was forced to cut its services by 20 per cent, putting women suffering from violence and abuse further at risk. More than 5,000 women across the state benefit from the great work done by the Women's Legal Service every year and the government's aim is to ensure the future viability of this integral community service through this significant contribution.

I am delighted to report that I received the following message from Associate Professor Rachael Field, President of the Women's Legal Service—

We would like to take this opportunity to once again thank you for your Government's commitment to an extra \$250,000 per annum for the next three years.

This budget also provides increased funding of \$2 million over four years for organisations that support victims of crime. These organisations have been crying out for additional funding under Labor and this is funding that has never been seen before. Victim support organisations work tirelessly to help victims overcome devastating circumstances to get their lives back on track and contribute once again in their local community. At the Protect All Children Today AGM last night I was pleased to hear the president, Nick, say that he has already started to write his submission in relation to the additional \$2 million. They will certainly be putting in a submission to get some of that money.

We have also allocated \$2 million over the next two years to deliver a fresh approach to youth offending in the form of an early intervention boot camp on the Gold Coast and a sentenced boot camp in Cairns. These boot camps are part of an overall review of youth justice in Queensland and will provide juveniles and their families with an opportunity for early intervention and rehabilitation through mentoring and support services. They also make up a key element of this government's plan to tackle youth crime in Queensland and it is anticipated that their implementation will pave the way for similar programs throughout the state. I am pleased to inform the House that the President of the Queensland Police Union, Ian Leavers, has welcomed this extra money for boot camps. The current youth justice system is a failure because of the former Labor Party government.

Recurrent funding of \$1 million has also been committed to establish a permanent coroner's office in Mackay, which will help to reduce waiting times for the finalisation of inquests. On 13 August this year, Mr David O'Connell was appointed as a magistrate at the Mackay Courthouse where he will be the new coroner for all of Central Queensland. The appointment of a full-time coroner will free up regional magistrates, allowing them to deal with the existing court backlogs.

Mr Malone: Well done.

Mr BLEIJIE: I take that interjection. The current waiting times simply are not good enough and the appointment of a Central Queensland Coroner will help to improve efficiency in the regional court system. Backlogs and waiting times will be reduced further by the appointment of an additional Supreme Court judge to the Supreme Court of Queensland and three additional permanent magistrates, one particularly for the Southport electorate. The amount of \$46 million was allocated for the completion of the Queen Elizabeth II Courts of Law and \$30.4 million is earmarked for the refurbishment of the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre at Townsville.

This budget will contribute towards a justice system that will deliver more efficient and effective services now and into the future. Queensland now under this government has a bright future.