

FRIDAY, 22 JUNE 2001

Mr SPEAKER (Hon. R. K. Hollis, Redcliffe) read prayers and took the chair at 9.30 a.m.

OVERSEAS VISIT

Report

Hon. T. A. BARTON (Waterford—ALP) (Minister for State Development) (9.32 a.m.): I table my report on a recent trip to the United States.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Beattie Government Achievements; Salomon Smith Barney

Hon. P. D. BEATTIE (Brisbane Central—ALP) (Premier and Minister for Trade) (9.32 a.m.), by leave: Queensland is clearly a better place today than it was three years ago when my government was first elected. After three years of instability and uncertainty leading up to 1998, we brought back firm, stable leadership. We gave Queensland positive direction. Queensland did not have a vision then. Now we are the Smart State with a whole-of-government approach to innovation and new-age industries that involves education and training and a focus on research, biotech and IT.

In 1998 people felt distanced from government. We have taken government back to the people with 38 community cabinets—in fact, I think there have been 39 now—where anyone can walk in off the street and talk to a minister. We have taken away the confrontation that used to exist. Until 1998 people were warned that their backyards were under threat from native title. Now we have a process of native title consultation which is resolving claims and enabling major projects, such as the Hail Creek coalmine, to proceed. We have introduced Cape York Partnerships to give indigenous communities a say in their future.

Industrial relations were a battlefield before we came to government. Now we have the best system in Australia, which is fair to employers and employees.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: This government rejected the notion of the previous government that state governments can do nothing about unemployment and made job creation its major focus. We inherited a budget under which unemployment was going up. Under the previous government unemployment was around 10 per cent, but we have brought it down.

Mr Horan: The worst unemployment in Australia.

Mr BEATTIE: Under the Borbidge government and under previous conservative governments it was the worst in Australia; I agree with the Leader of the Opposition.

We have attracted major employment projects such as Virgin, Qantas maintenance, biotech companies, call centres, IT companies, AMC—the biggest light metals project in the world—the Hail Creek coalmine and many other projects. I could name a lot more but I will not because of time constraints.

Breaking the Unemployment Cycle has helped 28,000 Queenslanders find apprenticeships, traineeships and job placements. Before June 1998 apprenticeships were declining, and 80 per cent of Queensland engineering companies reported shortages of skilled workers. Our Apprenticeships and Traineeships in the Private Sector initiative has resulted in more than 10,400 young people learning skills with which they can earn a living for the rest of their lives.

Mr Seeney: Five per cent, you said.

Mr BEATTIE: Not only that; we are well mannered, unlike some members opposite.

All these policies have helped generate 110,000 new jobs for Queenslanders since June 1998. Reforms to Queensland's workers compensation system have restored coverage to all workers, ensuring they have protection against injuries at work.

Mr Horan: The worst unemployment of any state in Australia.

Mr BEATTIE: We are also happy with the Leader of the Opposition, too. We think he is doing a great job! We want him to stay there as long as possible.

Reforms to Queensland's workers compensation system have restored coverage to all workers, ensuring they have protection against injuries at work. At the same time, Queensland is leading Australia with the lowest average employer premium rate of all Australian states, saving Queensland employers more than \$120 million in the last three years. We are ensuring that Queensland children will be better equipped to take advantage of the opportunities of the Smart State through Education 2010 to make education relevant so that, when today's students leave school after 2010, they will have the best chance of finding a new-age job.

We injected \$100 million over four years into the child protection system, the biggest increase in funding in the history of the state. Queenslanders are enjoying a better quality of life now than they did three years ago. We have improved waiting times in hospitals. More than 900,000 Queenslanders are benefiting from free ambulance services. Queenslanders involved in an emergency can now depend on better response times for ambulances, with 70 per cent of calls responded to within 10 minutes.

More than 1,000 extra police make Queensland a safer place today than it was three years ago. Drug courts and other initiatives from childhood right through the age range are helping to combat the link between drugs and crime. Initiatives such as positive parenting and school nurses are improving our quality of life. People with disabilities have benefited from an extra \$100 million pumped into disability services, the biggest increase by far from any Queensland government.

In every walk of life, in every part of Queensland, my government has improved people's lifestyles. That is the mark of good government, a can-do government—a government that has made a real difference for the people of Queensland.

I have here a detailed list of extra achievements, but because we have only an hour for question time, I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my remarks in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Overview

The last three years have seen major advances in the social and economic development of Queensland.

The development of The Smart State vision has delivered a framework for positioning this State in the 21st century. The Smart State ensures a whole-of-Government approach to innovation and new-age industries that involves education and training, and a focus on research, biotech and information technology and telecommunications.

The Smart State vision is complemented by a Government determined to involve the community in dialogue about local priorities and issues. From 1998 to June 2001, 39 Community Cabinets, where anyone can walk in off the street and talk to a Minister, have been held around the State. A series of Ministerial Regional Community Forums have been held to undertake more detailed planning with community leaders on regional priorities.

Over the past three years, the Government has tackled a number of difficult issues. The resolution of native title has been a high priority with a process of consultation which is resolving claims and enabling major projects such as the Hail Creek coal mine to proceed. Cape York Partnerships has been initiated to give Aboriginal communities a stronger say in their future.

Industrial relations is one area of major importance to this Government. The Government has continued to introduce reforms that establish new and fairer industrial laws.

This Government believes that State Governments can play a pivotal role in alleviating unemployment and has made job creation its major focus.

Key achievements include the attraction of major employment projects such as Virgin, Qantas maintenance, biotech companies, call centres and IT&T companies.

The last three years have seen a new commitment to the creation of a skilled workforce. Breaking the Unemployment Cycle has helped 28,000 Queenslanders find apprenticeships, traineeships and job placements.

The Apprenticeships and Traineeships in the Private Sector initiative has resulted in more than 10,400 young people learning skills with which they can earn a living for the rest of their lives.

All these policies have helped generate almost 111,000 new jobs for Queenslanders since June 1998.

Reforms to Queensland's workers' compensation system have restored coverage to all workers, ensuring they have protection against injuries at work. At the same time, Queensland is leading Australia with the lowest average employer premium rate of all Australian states, saving Queensland employers more than \$120 million in the last three years.

Education has been a top priority for the Government. Queensland children will be better equipped to take advantage of opportunities created by our Smart State strategies through:

- Queensland State Education 2010 to make education relevant so that our students are equipped for the workplaces of the future;

- trial of New Basics—38 Queensland State schools are leading the world with our New Basics curriculum which requires students to undertake tasks cutting across disciplines and preparing them for the reality of the workplace; and

- establishing eight new centres of excellence for education in Maths, Science and Technology to foster excellence in these areas.

The Government established the Commission of Inquiry into Abuse of Children in Queensland Institutions (Forde Inquiry). As a result, the Government has committed \$100 million over four years to address recommendations, including the employment of 250 new direct service workers by 2003. It has also provided an apology to victims of abuse as children in Queensland institutions and established the Forde Foundation, a perpetual trust set up to provide financial assistance for children formerly in care with \$2 million in funding from the Government. The implementation of the Inquiry recommendations continues.

Queenslanders are enjoying a better quality of life now than they were three years ago.

Waiting times in hospitals have been improved so that more than 95 per cent of people are getting their urgent surgery within the recommended time, and 90 per cent of people are getting their semi-urgent surgery within the recommended time.

More than 900,000 Queenslanders are benefiting from free ambulance services we introduced for pensioners, Seniors Card holders and their dependants for urgent, non-urgent and casualty room cases.

Queenslanders involved in an emergency can now depend on better response times for ambulance cases such as heart attacks and child drownings. Seventy per cent of calls are responded to within 10 minutes—a major improvement on 1998.

More than 1000 extra police make Queensland a safer place than it was three years ago.

Drug courts and other initiatives from childhood right through life are helping to combat the link between drugs and crime—initiatives include positive parenting and school nurses.

More than 5000 Queensland parents have taken part in our free parenting programs.

People with disabilities have benefited from an extra \$100 million pumped into Disability Services—the biggest increase by far from any Queensland Government. In all, 789 adults and 820 school leavers with disabilities—as well as 290 families of children with disabilities—enjoy better and more independent lifestyles with the help of customised funding packages.

Legislation has been introduced such as the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act to protect consumers and lift industry standards—the most important legislation for the industries in the past 30 years.

For the first time, a complete audit has assessed the condition of every one of the Department of Housing's 50,000 homes and is guiding a Statewide upgrade program that has so far seen more than \$270 million allocated to improving the quality of life for low-income households and generating jobs in the building industry.

Strong environmental safeguards have been introduced through the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency, strengthening our focus on improving air and water quality, reducing pollution, and protecting our natural capital, simultaneously delivering economic benefits, improved nature conservation and enhanced quality of life.

Thousands of Queenslanders have found their towns and cities are more livable through major lifestyle projects such as The Strand in Townsville, The Esplanade in Cairns, the swimming lagoon at Airlie Beach, and Roma Street Parkland and South Bank in Brisbane.

More rural and remote communities have greater access to Government services and more communities are working with the Government to explore new opportunities for development. With a greater focus on consumer needs and the application of leading research and development, Queensland primary industries are delivering better quality, clean, safe and ethically produced food and fibre to local and international customers in a more productive and sustainable manner.

The best sport and recreation policy in Australia, Getting Active—The Lifestyle Choice, is helping build sporting and recreation venues across Queensland, assisting community sport and recreation organisations develop and deliver services and initiatives, and support the employment of more than 40,000 people.

Sound financial management has resulted in a AAA credit rating.

Queensland business benefits from our new State Purchasing Policy that makes it easier for the Government to buy locally—strengthening our regions and generating jobs by linking the Government's \$5 billion buying power to our priorities.

Strong economic growth has boosted the number of Queensland jobs in the tourism industry to about 150,000 and we won the rights to hold the 2001 Goodwill Games which will showcase Queensland's attractions in 450 million homes all over the world.

The \$599 million South-East Transit project is helping to stop Brisbane's roads seizing up, easing pollution and getting people to and from work quickly.

The Airtrain City link now takes people to and from the CBD and Brisbane Airport in 22 minutes—with a direct link to the Gold Coast.

Queensland Rail is being taken into the 21st century with a Citytrain contract worth \$283 million a year for seven years including \$47 million to improve access for the elderly and people with disabilities at stations. Over \$120 million is being spent on inter-urban and regional trains.

Twenty women have been appointed to the bench, ensuring the judiciary is more representative of the composition of our society and helping to reduce the community perception that our courts are a male bastion.

Participation in the arts has increased with the establishment of the country's richest awards for writers—the Queensland Premier's Literary Awards.

Funding for the Regional Arts Development Fund has been doubled to \$3 million to enable local arts and cultural workers to produce more than 2400 projects throughout the State.

We are also installing works of art into all new State Government capital works projects, with two per cent of the cost of projects dedicated to permanent artworks.

This Government has made a difference for all Queenslanders, no matter where they live.

We have made Queensland an even better place in which to live and work.

Mr BEATTIE: I table for the information of the House a full three-year report on the record of my government entitled *The Future is Queensland the Smart State*. This publication will be used by the Queensland government in our biotech 2001 conference. We will be using it to promote Queensland to highlight the sort of government this state has. This is the sort of promotion that we will use to advance jobs and opportunities. I table that for the information of the House.

While we are talking about a can-do government, earlier today I announced that the United States' second largest retail broker, Salomon Smith Barney, has chosen Queensland as the base for services to the Asia-Pacific region, providing 50 new jobs. This confirms Queensland's growing reputation as a Smart State and an ideal location in the Asia-Pacific area for back office operations, shared services and call centres. Based on existing growth projections, the number of new jobs is expected to grow from 30 in the next year to 50 or more. Salomon Smith Barney is part of the Citigroup, one of the world's largest financial institutions. It provides brokerage—

Mr Horan: What are all the empty pages?

Mr BEATTIE: We thought we would make it so that even the Leader of the Opposition could read some pages. Even he can understand that.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: He does not want to hear good news. That is typical.

Mr Mackenroth: That is so you can bring your copy over here and the Premier will autograph it.

Mr BEATTIE: I am happy to sign it for the Leader of the Opposition. The blank pages are for my signature and everyone else's. There are 66 of us; we need all that space for our signatures.

Based on existing growth projections, the number of new jobs is expected to grow from 30 in the next year to 50 or more. Salomon Smith Barney is part of the Citigroup, one of the world's largest financial institutions. It provides brokerage, investment banking and asset management services around the world. The call centre will provide a multilingual contact point for Asia-Pacific based participants and stock plans administered by SSB on behalf of both US and European multinational companies.

Queenslanders with skills in Japanese, Mandarin, Cantonese and a range of other languages will assist broker clients throughout the Asia Pacific. The benefit of this is very simple. It means that by attracting such a notable organisation such as Salomon Smith Barney we are able to attract the attention of the world, and that means venture capital and investing that venture capital in projects in research, particularly in IT and biotech. Biotechnology means jobs for Queenslanders.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Professional Misconduct Rules, Lawyers

Hon. R. J. WELFORD (Everton—ALP) (Attorney-General and Minister for Justice) (9.39 a.m.), by leave: Yesterday our government stepped in to change professional conduct rules for Queensland lawyers to provide stronger protection for legal consumers. We took this action in the interests of the more than 2,200 Queenslanders who have funds invested in solicitor runout mortgage investment schemes for loans taken out before December 1999. Our action will provide a strong incentive for lawyers who are operating these schemes now or may have operated these schemes in the past to notify their indemnity insurer before 30 June of any suspect loans. Those who fail to do so will face charges of professional misconduct and are liable to be struck off.

This step was not taken lightly. It followed advice to the government from the Australian Securities and Investments Commission, ASIC, that there could be a high level of default on loans with runout mortgage investment schemes. An exemption from regulation by ASIC under Corporations Law for solicitor mortgage investment schemes was removed in December 1999 following a number of scheme failures. The runout schemes must comply with Corporations Law or wind up by 31 October this year. In February this year ASIC commenced a review of solicitor mortgage investment schemes throughout Australia. It established a national team for this exercise and engaged insolvency experts to conduct the review. In March a liquidator was appointed to the contributory mortgage scheme operated by Triscott and Associates through its nominee company, Lex Nominees Pty Ltd. It identified this company as having outstanding loans estimated to be in the order of \$36 million.

Three weeks ago ASIC advised me that its audit of the runout schemes in Queensland, which is still under way, had indicated that there remain approximately 2,200 investors in more than 209 loans valued at around \$123 million. ASIC was concerned that there could be a very high level of default on these loans. Many Queenslanders have invested their life savings or superannuation nest eggs in these investment schemes. Our government has been concerned to do everything it can to ensure these people are not left high and dry should these schemes fail.

After advice from ASIC, I began a series of meetings with the Queensland Law Society and its indemnity insurer. I also called a meeting of the Queensland operators of these runout mortgage investment schemes. From these meetings it became clear to me that unless our government stepped in nothing would be done, or at best what might be done would be too little too late. I was particularly concerned that after 30 June this year there would be no professional indemnity insurance coverage for any lawyer-operated mortgage investment scheme. This meant investors faced the prospect of not having access to their lawyer's indemnity insurance if a loan failed due to the lawyer's negligence. The action taken by our government to change professional conduct rules means that if a loan fails and negligence is found to be the cause of that failure investors will now have access to the indemnity insurance for all loans notified prior to 30 June this year.

My negotiations have drawn cooperation from the Queensland Law Society and its indemnity insurer in our efforts to strengthen the position of these investors. In addition to the measures I have outlined, the Queensland Law Society has contracted audit teams to attend each of the mortgage practices meetings over the next week to identify those whose schemes may be at risk and ensure proper notification is given to the indemnity insurer. Further, negotiations with the indemnity insurer will now mean that the insurer will accept notification by the Law Society on behalf of any practitioner if necessary and honour that notification. I want to assure investors in these mortgage schemes that our government will be maintaining close contact with both ASIC as the national regulator and the Queensland Law Society and that we will continue to do everything in our power to ensure scheme operators put investors first.

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Child Abuse

Mr HORAN (9.45 a.m.): I refer the Premier to the tripling of serious child abuse cases not investigated by the Department of Families between last July and March this year. I also refer to his government's citing of the cabinet exemption to conceal documents about the workloads of child abuse officers in the department. I ask: is the Premier trying to cover up the incompetence of Minister Spence and the state's neglect of its duty of care to these endangered children? Is this another arrogant abuse of process so that the government can hide from public accountability?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the member for his question. I have absolute faith in Judy Spence as a minister in my team. This government performs as a team, and she is a key part of it and has my full confidence. Let us talk about this FOI application. As I understand it, the FOI officer indicated to the *Courier-Mail*—and I explained this to the *Courier-Mail* last night—that there would be material provided. Unbeknown to the officer, cabinet had requested that there be consideration of matters surrounding the issues involved. That is a cabinet process that has been around since the member opposite was in cabinet for that short period. He knows all about it, because when he was Health Minister—was it Mount Isa?—he rolled in trolleys full.

A government member: A truckload.

Mr BEATTIE: Truckloads—call it what you like. The member opposite hid waiting lists. He made Aladdin look like an amateur: he had a bigger cave full of secrets that he shared with no-one, a big cave full of secrets. He was the Aladdin of the Borbidge government hiding it all. But let us get back to the issue.

Opposition members interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: No, do not be rude. Let me get back to the issue.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Do not be rude, Mr Nasty; behave yourself.

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Has the member finished or does he want an answer? He is being the village idiot. It is easy; anyone can do it. Does he want an answer? I will give him an answer. The reality is that the officer involved—

An opposition member interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Does the member want a serious answer or does he just want to be the village idiot? I am easy. The bottom line in this situation is that the FOI officer indicated a particular position, not being aware, as I understand it, that the matter was being considered by cabinet. When matters are considered by my cabinet, all relevant material is provided. The converse of what those opposite are saying is that cabinet should not consider properly resourcing officers who are helping people in need. My government will help people in need. If cabinet needs to consider material to properly resource our departments and our officers, then it will.

I am not going to allow some stupid, petty political game to stand in the way of officers who are out there at the coalface every day helping people in need. Those opposite can play silly little games about this. The bottom line is that my cabinet and my government will look after people who matter, not play stupid politics. The bottom line is that my cabinet needs to be fully briefed and will be fully briefed by Judy Spence and the department. If action needs to be taken to increase the resources, then we will take that action. Those opposite can whinge and complain, but we will get on with the job. We will look after people. The difference between the member opposite and me is very simple: I believe in people and he believes in politics. Let us see how people judge that in the long term.

Synchrotron

Mr HORAN: I refer the Premier to the Queensland bid to house Australia's first synchrotron and to the rival \$157 million proposal just announced by Victoria into which the Victorian government has put \$100 million. I refer also to the independent assessment process of the synchrotron proposals, which will be finalising its decision by the end of July or early August, and I ask: what amount of state government funding did the Premier put into the Queensland proposal and will he now revise that bid so that Queensland can be truly competitive in this forthcoming assessment process?

Mr BEATTIE: I am absolutely delighted with this question. Australia embarked on the synchrotron proposal because a few years ago, along with key officers, I visited a synchrotron in Japan. I came home and said that Australia needed one. We started a debate because we are and will remain the Smart State of Australia. There is a federal structure being considered now for synchrotron bids. There is a process. I met this week with Dr Peter Johnson, who is the head of that bid process.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Can the Leader of the Opposition for one minute stop being rude and let me give a serious answer? I actually want to answer this question. If the Leader of the Opposition has some manners I will give him a decent answer, but if he wants to be a galah I will not.

I met this week with Dr Peter Johnson, who is head of the process. He is the person appointed by the federal government to determine it. We discussed the process. We have the best bid in the process for the synchrotron. The Victorian government went outside the process to put up a private sector bid. A few weeks ago a number of private sector people came to us and suggested that we could do the same thing, which we could. And who knows—next week when I am in San Diego we may announce that. We may go down that path. I also met with the new head of CSIRO this week to discuss these matters.

One of the arguments put to us by a range of scientists around the world is that the synchrotron is simply a piece of equipment. What we need to look at is whether we go to centres of excellence to achieve the critical mass of research to get the Smart State outcomes that we want. It is therefore a comparison. Two or three weeks ago we could have done what Victoria did yesterday. All Victoria did yesterday was fire one shot in the bid for the future of biotechnology in this nation. Let me be very clear: one day's headline will not determine the Smart State. We will be the Smart State and Victoria can follow all it likes.

When we examine these centres of excellence it is important to determine the research outcomes. We are a primary industries state. Food is important. We want the best research outcomes in food to look after the people that we and those opposite represent. We could simply put together a fund and provide airline tickets for scientists to go to Melbourne, Singapore, Japan

or the United States. All the synchrotron is is a light beam. Why were we interested in the synchrotron? Because we wanted to attract the cluster industries that go next door to it. The advice I have is that we can achieve the same outcome, the intellectual critical mass, associated with research by centres of excellence.

If the Leader of the Opposition understood this, he would support us. All I say to him is: stay tuned. There will be a lot of announcements next week and he will be left in our wake, applauding our brilliance.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr Mackenroth: All those white pages will be filled. Don't you worry about that.

Mr BEATTIE: The white pages will be for next week's announcements.

National Party

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: Since the Leader of the Opposition has asked the first dorothy dixer I wanted to ask, I refer the Premier to his earlier comments that, love us or hate us, at least the people know what this Labor government stands for. Can Queenslanders have the same confidence in the opposition?

Mr BEATTIE: I thank the honourable member for this question. I will share a secret with all honourable members. It is a very important secret. The National Party has had a crisis meeting called. The reason for that is that its research shows that it does not stand for anything. Worse than the fact that the research says it does not stand for anything, its research shows that the three Liberal members are outsmarting the 11 National Party members. There are only two here today, but the three Liberals are beating the 11 Nationals on the front bench. Do honourable members know what the meeting is about? It is in search of a direction.

A government member: There will be a steering committee.

Mr BEATTIE: And they have set up a steering committee to find some direction!

Government members: Ha, ha!

Mr BEATTIE: This is very serious indeed. I understand that there is a normal scheduled meeting of the National Party management committee today, which is going to focus exclusively on identifying what the party stands for. That is the item on the agenda. A number of people will be attending, but the entire parliamentary wing has been summoned to National Party headquarters to find their way. I do not know whether the government needs to put on drivers to drive them there so that they can find their way.

A government member: One minibus.

Mr BEATTIE: One minibus will do. I assure the Leader of the Opposition that if the 11 of them cannot find their way to National Party headquarters then I will pay for the bus.

The entire parliamentary wing has been called together. Who is going to be there? Ken Croke, Terry Bolger, George Price, Jenny Russell and Andrew Bibb! Do members know what is going on? There is a riot going on amongst National Party members in Brisbane because Mike Horan said that they are going back to the bush. The National Party membership on the Gold Coast has gone absolutely off their faces. They are getting absolutely no money for the federal campaign. Ken Croke has gone ape because he cannot get any money through the normal donors on the Gold Coast. All this because Mike Horan said that the Nationals are going back to the bush! We can give those opposite some direction. All they have to do is sign their names to *The future of Queensland*, because this is Queensland's future. We have a direction and we are going to show those opposite what the direction is.

Do honourable members remember a news release from Mike Horan in which he said that Paul Clauson was going to help them? Mike Horan announced that Paul Clauson was going to help the Nationals re-establish themselves in the bush, but Paul Clauson was not asked and he put out a statement saying that he knew nothing about it and he did not want to have anything to do with any of them.

Virgin Blue, Aircraft Maintenance

Mr JOHNSON: Mr Speaker—

Mr Beattie: Do you know where National Party headquarters are?

Mr JOHNSON: I certainly do. We have not been summoned there, old mate.

I refer the Premier to the secret deal to attract Virgin Blue to Queensland, which has the highest unemployment rate in Australia, and I ask: is the Premier aware that Boeing 737 Victor Gulf Bravo is currently in Singapore, where it is undergoing its scheduled C service, and that a second aircraft, Victor Gulf Delta, leaves on Saturday for the same reason? Was part of his deal with Virgin Blue a requirement that regular scheduled maintenance be undertaken in Australia? If not, why not?

Mr BEATTIE: I am not aware of Virgin's maintenance arrangements—that is a matter for the airline—but we are establishing a centre of excellence not only for maintenance. The Qantas maintenance facility, which we have attracted here, has not yet been established, but it will be.

I will explain why we are doing this. We want the best technology and engineering in the world. Too often this has gone offshore. I agree with the member. That is why we are setting up a centre of excellence here. The Qantas maintenance facility will obviously maintain the 26 767s for the Qantas fleet, but it will be able to enter into contracts with other airlines also. We want that critical mass here. I know I am not supposed to mention it here, but in that 'hypothetical/pretend' budget that may or may not have been brought down on Tuesday there was \$10 million to provide skills for the work force to train people so that we are in fact the centre of excellence for aviation.

There are two major industries that we have been developing here. One is light metals, with AMC. That is totally new value adding and new technology. The second industry relates to aviation. We are riding on the back of Boeing, because it has a regional headquarters here; Qantas, with its maintenance facility here; and obviously Virgin. I am not aware of their particular maintenance arrangements, but we would hope that once the Qantas facility—

Mr Mackenroth interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: The Treasurer is right. Boeing worked with us to get the centre of excellence. We would hope that once that centre is up and established—and it means 500 jobs right here—all aircraft would get maintained through that facility.

Mr Johnson: Will you follow that through?

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, of course. We would hope that all that maintenance work would be done here. That is why we are trying to get that centre of excellence here. But let me talk about Virgin. The Virgin proposal for us—

Mr Mackenroth interjected.

Mr BEATTIE: Yes, of course. The Treasurer just reminded me that it is important that they maintain their planes. That is true. But the bottom line for us is that not only will there be those 500 jobs; it is also about ensuring that we have competitive airlines.

The government's decision to attract Virgin Airlines here has led to the most competitive situation that Queensland has had for a long, long time—better than Compass—when it comes to competition in the airlines. The big winners out of that have been all those major routes in this state. So far we have had Virgin flying between Sydney and Coolangatta; and Virgin have been flying to Townsville. Eventually we will get Virgin to all those centres with populations of 50,000 and more—Cairns, Mackay, Rockhampton. They will all benefit. That means jobs for Queenslanders.

Queensland employs 150,000 people in the tourism industry. By bringing Virgin here, we have contributed in the most dramatic and significant way as the catalyst to our airlines being competitive. There are people who now travel on Virgin who previously could not afford air travel. Battlers and family people who could not afford it now can travel thanks to us and Virgin.

Education

Mr PURCELL: I direct a question to the Minister for Education. This week the Australian Bureau of Statistics released its national report on schools for 2000. Can the minister please inform the House about the report's findings in relation to state education in Queensland?

Ms BLIGH: The honourable member's interest in education in his own area is well known. I am delighted to inform the House that the annual Australian Bureau of Statistics schools report shows that public education in Queensland is not only in a strong position, but it is in a much stronger position than is the case in other parts of the country. There are many positives highlighted in this report about Queensland state schools.

Firstly and, I think, most hearteningly, in contrast with the national trend, between 1998 and 2000 Queensland government schools have had a larger increase in students of 9,365 compared with 8,921 students in non-government schools. This trend actually defies what is happening in every other state of Australia. In New South Wales, for example, the number of students in non-government schools increased in the same period by 16,536 and fell in government schools by 3,776. Similarly, in Victoria the rate of growth in government schools is less than the rate of growth in non-government schools. In my view, this represents a very big vote of confidence in Queensland's public education system, and particularly the teachers who make that system what it is.

The next significant and positive indicator of our system in Queensland is that, in comparison with other states and territories, our apparent retention rate of students in the government system ranked third highest in Australia for years 10 to 12 at 73.9 per cent. This compares, for example, with 64.2 per cent in New South Wales and 67.3 per cent in Western Australia. Across all of our schools—both private and public schools in Queensland—the years 10 to 12 apparent retention rate for Queensland is 78.7 per cent, significantly higher than that for Australia overall.

Under Queensland State Education—2010, our government has committed ourselves to increasing the proportion of young Queenslanders in state schools completing 12 years of schooling by 20 per cent, from 68 per cent in 1998 to 88 per cent in 2010. The data in this report indicates and confirms similar trends showing in our own data published in this year's MPS—both of which show that in Queensland we are heading in the right direction to achieve that goal.

The report also shows very healthy student-teacher ratios that are generally above the national average. For government schools, Queensland ranks third in ratios for both primary schooling, behind only Tasmania and the Northern Territory, and secondary schooling, behind only South Australia and the Northern Territory. We have made a commitment to improve our student-teacher ratios and reduce class sizes. We are doing well, but we have further to go. We are committed to build on this positive trend with the addition of 800 new teachers above and beyond growth over four years.

Contrary to the national trend, Queensland is also building new government schools to meet demand in high growth areas in places such as the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast is a good example of where we are building new schools and expanding existing schools against the national trend, which has seen the closure of state schools.

WorkCover Panel Solicitors

Mrs LIZ CUNNINGHAM: I direct a question to the Minister for Industrial Relations. Based on information I have received, WorkCover intends to reduce in my electorate alone the number of panel solicitors from four firms to one solicitor only. This is happening throughout regional Queensland, with WorkCover solicitors being almost totally centralised in south-east Queensland. I ask: why is his department reducing access to legal advice for employers and employees in regional Queensland, and what transitional arrangements have been put in place for legal firms which, as required by government, have had to undertake not to represent any clients against WorkCover for the past several years?

Mr NUTTALL: My understanding is that, at the moment, there are approximately 50 solicitors firms that are involved in their work with WorkCover. What WorkCover has said is that it will reduce that number to 40 solicitors throughout the state. Of those 40 solicitors, there will still be a number in regional Queensland. The reason we are doing this is simply that WorkCover is settling cases much earlier than in the past to avoid the litigation process. So WorkCover is about resolving the issues before they get to court. That is the aim.

There is a strategy in place by the board of WorkCover to reduce the number of common law claims by settling them earlier. And if they settle them earlier, they need fewer solicitors. So instead of having 50-odd firms, that number will be reduced to 40-odd solicitors. People will still have access to lawyers. There is no problem with that. They will still have access to common law. There is no problem with that. But if we reduce the number of common law claims, we therefore do not need as many solicitors. It is as simple as that.

In terms of regional Queensland—I have given strict instructions to the board of WorkCover that regional Queensland is not to be forgotten and that, of the 40 solicitors who will be selected, they are to ensure that there are a number of those throughout regional Queensland.

Alternative Fuels

Ms JARRATT: I direct my question to the Honourable Minister for Environment. I refer him to the Premier's ministerial statement yesterday relating to alternative vehicle fuels, and I ask: what does he have in the tank of his car?

Mr WELLS: Ethanol—E10. The government, as members would gather from the Premier's ministerial statement yesterday, is seriously investigating alternative forms of fuel for use in vehicles in order to reduce greenhouse gases, and this is the first car to be equipped in this way. This is smart green fuel in a smart green state.

I have been driving the car this week, and honourable members will be pleased to note that there is the same fuel consumption, despite the fact that my driver has had to do much more city driving because he has been going backwards and forward from here to the ministerial office. There is good acceleration, and the car handles just as well.

Let me tell honourable members about E10 which BP has provided to me. It is a 10 per cent ethanol solution and 90 per cent petrol, and it means a significant reduction in greenhouse gases. This is the point of it—not just that it is manufactured from sugar, and not just that it gives us the opportunity to replace imported fossil fuels with sugar products, which actually employs Queenslanders and reduces our dependence on imports, but it is something which significantly affects everybody in this state who breathes.

If every car in Queensland was running on ethanol, it would mean that there would be 1.1 million tonnes a year less CO₂ in the atmosphere. And if every car in Australia was running on it, my department advises me it would mean 6.5 million fewer tonnes.

The reduction on imports which is possible as a result of a move in the direction of the use of ethanol in our petrol would be very significant. It would mean an enhancement of employment in that industry. It would mean the substitution of an Australian product for one that was imported. It would mean the substitution of a green product for one that was a fossil fuel. It would mean more employment and more stability in the sugar industry, because it would mean that there would be an internal market rather than such a reliance on exports, and it would be beneficial all around.

Mr Beattie: Hear, hear!

Mr WELLS: I thank the Premier. And it could be done with the support of the conservation movement. I have had discussions with the conservation movement, who of course will speak for themselves. They would have a concern about how the sugar industry was expanded—were it to be expanded—and they would have a concern that it should be done with environmental consequences that would be known rather than damaging to the environment. But that can be achieved. And honourable members who come from areas where they grow sugarcane could see this as a significant possible benefit for the future.

GPS Monitoring of Prisoners

Mr SEENEY: I refer the Minister for Police and Corrective Services to his TV appearance last night, along with photos of 11 prison absconders, highlighting the ongoing problem of prisoners absconding and committing crimes while on leave from prison. I refer also to the commendable initiative displayed by Brisbane's Lord Mayor, Jim Soorley, in insisting on the use of GPS technology to keep track of the whereabouts of his council workers. I ask: why has the minister not been prepared to display similar initiative and use GPS technology to monitor the movements of prisoners granted leave from jail, or does he prefer to make appeals on the 6 o'clock news pleading for prisoners to come back?

Mr McGRADY: To be brief—such a scheme would cost about \$85 million. To come back to the real issue—the notice which the Queensland Police Service put out yesterday was a routine notice which comes out every six months. I support this and I welcome it, because the facts are that approximately 10 people have absconded over a period of years. Some of those people may be overseas, but the important point is that the people of Queensland know that those people are out there, and if they can assist the Police Service, I ask them to please come forward.

The question which the shadow minister asks is a very sensible one, and indeed, it is a responsible one. It is about time that our community had a debate about what we do with people in the Queensland prison service. We could sentence them, lock them away and throw away the key. But, of course, one day every single one of those people who are inside our system will be released, and they may perhaps live—when things are going bad—next to the member for Callide, or indeed, next to Mr Speaker. So one of the options we have is that when people are

due to be released from the prison system, we start to allow them to come out and get used to living in society.

Approximately 95 per cent of all prisoners on these schemes do the right thing. That fact never hits the headlines, but when five per cent do the wrong thing, obviously it is a headline and it is a news story. I am not passing the buck. I accept the fact that, as the minister, the buck stops with me. But the bottom line is that neither the government nor the minister has any say whatsoever in who goes out on parole. That is done by the independent parole board.

The suggestion which the shadow minister has put forward today would cost us \$85 million. We are undertaking a trial system at the present time. But if I am going to spend \$85 million of taxpayers' money, he should nominate to me where that \$85 million comes from. Does it come from the hospital budget? Does it come from the housing budget? Does it come from the primary industries budget? The fact is that there is not a bottomless pit and, at the end of the day, the vast majority of prisoners who are out under the parole system do the right thing.

Computer Crime

Mrs SMITH: I direct a question to the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. The increasing uptake of technology in our society has many in the community concerned about the problem of computer crime. Can the minister inform the parliament whether the Queensland Police Service is taking any steps to combat the growing problem of cyber crime?

Mr McGRADY: I thank the member for the question. It is a matter which she has raised with me on many occasions. This problem was brought home to me just a couple of weeks ago at our community cabinet meeting in Toowoomba. A lady came to the Police Commissioner and me with a major problem. Unknown to her, somebody was tapping into her credit card and literally taking thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars out of that account. Obviously the Queensland Police Service, in cooperation with her bank, is working hard to find out who the perpetrator of this crime is. It is something which you do not understand and appreciate until the matter is brought home to you.

The Queensland Police Service is a modern organisation, and it strives to keep up to the minute with emerging crime trends. As I have just said, this is one of the major concerns we have. To try to combat this, last year a special crime investigation unit was set up within the Queensland Police Service to tackle this growing problem. The unit's officers have been working hard since its inception and usually have about 25 to 30 job investigations on the books at any specific time. These include a wide variety of computer crime, including fraud, computer hacking and cyber harassment.

Business and consumer fraud using computer technology is a growing problem. It is a new crime trend. The Queensland Police Service is well aware of these new trends, and we are doing all we can to tackle this new crime in our system. Having investigated exactly what the Queensland Police Service is doing to tackle this major problem, I am delighted with the results that we are getting, but it is something we have to keep putting our mind to, and I believe that we have this matter in hand.

Indigenous Communities, Alcohol Abuse

Mr QUINN: I refer the Minister for Tourism and Racing to comments made by her almost one year ago today, on 20 June 2000, when she announced the state government's so-called blitz on sly grogging in remote Aboriginal communities and promised that 10 communities would benefit from the development of alcohol management strategies and that they would be supported with the appointment of six indigenous officers within the Liquor Licensing Division. I ask: why did her department fail to appoint all six indigenous officers, as she promised, and why did her department provide assistance to only seven communities to develop alcohol management plans, as opposed to the 10 communities she promised last year?

Mrs ROSE: Firstly, the number of officers was not six; it was five. Those five indigenous licensing officers obviously had to go through a training program. They began work in January this year. The number of communities involved in the pilot program was not seven. I am not quite sure where the member got that number from.

As I said yesterday, you cannot measure the success of the crackdown on sly grogging just by the number of prosecutions. We have made significant progress over the last 12 months. As I said yesterday, I have visited a number of communities myself. We have also, through the Liquor

Licensing Division, set up some alcohol management programs where we have been working with the community council and with local police. The liquor licensing officers, mostly through the indigenous licensing officers, have been able to identify 40 people whom they believe have been involved in the sly-grogging trade.

The names of people from various communities have been given to police and the police are now keeping an eye on them. They have to gather the information before they are able to actually charge anybody.

Sly grogging is just one part of a number of very serious alcohol-related problems on Aboriginal communities, and one in particular is domestic violence. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander task force on women and domestic violence identified sly grogging as one of the problems. However, each community needs to have the issue dealt with quite differently. There is no single solution that we can use across all communities.

When I visited the communities, I found that the response from councils was very good. They felt that they had been trying to deal with the problem and that they had the support of the government. As I said yesterday, the Department of Health has been extremely good.

An honourable member interjected.

Mrs ROSE: The member asked me.

Mr Beattie: With that voice, do you want to be Treasurer?

Mrs ROSE: I do not think that it is anywhere near as becoming as the Treasurer's voice. However, I want to assure the member that we are really working to try to address some of these serious alcohol-related problems on Aboriginal communities, and that includes sly grogging.

HIH Insurance

Ms MALE: My question is to the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing. I refer the minister to the collapse of the HIH insurance company and the impact that has had on the building industry in other states, and I ask: has the minister had any approaches from the federal government in relation to mandatory warranty cover for people engaging builders for new constructions, renovations, or other work?

Mr SCHWARTEN: I thank the honourable member for the question. All members would be aware that the meltdown of HIH has had a dramatic effect on the building industry in Australia, with some \$2 billion worth of building work tied up and some 14,000 builders who have not been able to access sites because of a lack of warranty provisions. However, as Greg Quinn from the Queensland Masters Builders Association points out, that situation stops at the border of Queensland; it has not become an issue in Queensland. Why not? Because in this state we did not relinquish the statutory obligation that we have to home owners and home builders in this state. Again I want to place on record my thanks to my predecessor, Judy Spence, for her foresight in resisting the temptation to do that. Of course, we know that the previous government had that on the chopping block for privatisation and that HIH was indeed the preferred provider.

So I have to say that it was with some consternation and bemusement that I found a letter on my desk from Ian MacFarlane, the federal Minister for Small Business, who suggested to me that the way to fix the problem was to up the ante in terms of the statutory cover for home owners. He suggested that as Western Australia had a \$12,000 threshold on value of the work and Queensland had a \$3,300 threshold, we should be able to repair the problem by simply getting a common agreement across states as to what level of coverage would suit. Clearly, the imputation was that home owners should not be covered under the figure of \$12,000. That is a bizarre suggestion and shows exactly how out of touch the federal government is. In reality, that would simply mean that the people who are currently covered in the \$3,300 to \$12,000 range in Queensland would miss out on cover altogether.

One of the great things that our system has done is to look after those people. Now the federal government, through the Minister for Small Business, says that in the interests of reducing red tape we should get rid of that system. I am here to say that I am all for cutting out red tape from the building industry, and we have a variety of working parties doing just that, but I will not do that to compromise the consumers of Queensland, who are currently covered in the best scheme available in Australia, the Queensland Building Services Authority. I will not follow Ian MacFarlane's lead in his suggestion to us that the way to fix an insurance problem is to sell out consumers. That will not be happening in this state.

Again, I say the folly of the previous government in going down the privatisation route, as it was going to do with Q-Fleet, as it was going to do in this instance, and as it was going to do with Goprint and all of those other issues will come home to haunt them. The people of Queensland should be delighted that we did not do that.

Mr SPEAKER: Before calling the member for Keppel—and may I ask that he maintains control of himself when I make this announcement—can I welcome to the public gallery the Acacia Ridge 60 and Better group from the electorate of Algester.

Feral Pigs

Mr LESTER: I thank you, Mr Speaker, and with the utmost control I say that I am proud to be a member of 60 and Better on the Capricorn Coast. I welcome them. My question to the minister—

Mr McGrady: You have been a member for 20 years.

Mr LESTER: There is nothing wrong with being 60 and over and still doing a very effective job. It is about time some of the members opposite had some respect for us who are over 60.

Mr McGRADY: I rise to a point of order. I have 20 years before I can apply.

Mr LESTER: I hope all members make it. My question is to the Minister for Environment. Does he recognise that the growing number of feral pigs in national parks throughout the state is creating a flow-on problem for neighbouring properties and a real risk of spreading diseases such as foot-and-mouth disease—should that disease spread to Australia? Does the minister acknowledge the need for a more effective culling program than programs such as trapping? What progress has the minister made in developing these in order to address this urgent problem? If so, when will these programs be implemented?

Mr WELLS: The answer to the first question is yes. The answer to the second question is that culling may be part of the solution, but it is not the whole of the solution. The answer to the third question is that I thank the member very much for giving me the opportunity to talk about the \$10 million initiative that—

Mr Seeney: Don't shoot them.

Mr WELLS: I am sorry?

Mr Seeney: What is the answer to the problem if culling is not the answer?

Mr WELLS: I am telling the member.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! We will hear the answer to the question.

Mr WELLS: I am awfully sorry to interrupt the member's monologue, but—

Mr Seeney: I am interested to hear the answer.

Mr WELLS: I am happy to have a conversation, but it needs to be two ways. So the member will ask the questions and I will answer them. I thank the member very much for the opportunity.

Mr Seeney interjected.

Mr WELLS: The member's scepticism will fall flat on its face.

The honourable member has given me the opportunity to speak about the \$10 million program for 140 new park rangers over the period of the next few years. Those new rangers—

Mr Seeney: What are you going to do about the pigs?

Mr WELLS: They are going to address the problem. Why does the member think I am telling him this? I am going to continue to interrupt the honourable member, because obviously he aspires to be seen as a great wit and he has already achieved half of his ambition.

Those additional rangers who are going to be put on over the next few months will have, as part of their duties, the control of feral animals and also, as part of their duties, the preservation of the pristine nature of our national parks. This is going to be the most significant injection of human resources that has taken place in our national parks service for a long period and will enable these issues to be addressed. Those pests in our national parks need to be dealt with, and this is going to be part of our strategy for dealing with them.

There is a program of removal of these pests from our national parks system at the moment. That program will continue. If the honourable member would like details of recent achievements in respect of that, I say that the other day I wrote a letter to one of his colleagues and I am happy to

send him a copy. It sets out the full details. We are making significant progress, but it is undoubtedly the case that there is a problem with imported pests in our national parks, and it is one that is being addressed.

Mr SPEAKER: Order! The time for questions has expired.

DALRYMPLE BAY COAL TERMINAL (LONG-TERM LEASE) BILL

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (10.30 a.m.), by leave, without notice: I move—

That leave be granted to bring in a bill for an act to facilitate the granting of a long-term lease over the Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal by providing for the exclusion of certain leases from the application of the Property Law Act 1974, section 121.

Motion agreed to.

First Reading

Bill and explanatory notes presented and bill, on motion of Mr Mackenroth, read a first time.

Second Reading

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (10.31 a.m.): I move—

That the bill be now read a second time.

In December 2000, the government commenced a competitive bid process for the long-term lease of the Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal near Mackay. The lease provides an opportunity for significant private sector participation in the expansion of port infrastructure in Queensland. This is consistent with the government's desire to foster private sector participation in Queensland's infrastructure.

The government has a range of objectives that it requires the lessee to meet and that will be embedded in specific lease arrangements in order to attain the best outcome for the central Queensland coal industry and the Queensland community. In particular, the government will ensure that the efficiency of the total coal supply chain is enhanced and that the competitiveness of the central Queensland coal industry is sustained.

The government is committed to ensuring that the current users of the terminal are not adversely affected. In addition, the government will ensure that this vital link in the Goonyella coal supply chain will continue to be managed, operated and maintained at a high standard to meet users' needs.

Importantly, the lease will free up government capital in the terminal, ensuring the government can put taxpayers' money where it belongs— in schools, hospitals and roads. It will also relieve the government of the need to meet the terminal's future capital investment requirements of some \$600 million over the next 10 to 15 years, transferring this responsibility to the private sector.

This bill protects the state's ongoing interests in the terminal. In particular, it allows the state to retain a vetting right over the lessee's assignment of the leases to a third party, should such assignment ever be contemplated. It is important that the state retains this ability so that it can ensure that, in the event that the lessee wishes to assign the leases to a third party, a prospective lessee has the capacity, capability and commitment to develop and operate the terminal in accordance with the government's objectives.

Specifically, the bill exempts the leases from the operation of section 121 of the Property Law Act 1974. This will restrict the lessee's ability to assign the lease to a third party without first demonstrating that it can meet the government's objectives for the lease.

In closing, this bill protects the state's ongoing interest in DBCT and ensures that, throughout the term of the lease, DBCT will be operated and developed in a manner which optimises the efficiency of the coal supply chain and the central Queensland coal industry. I commend this bill to the House.

Debate, on motion of Mr Horan, adjourned.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL
APPROPRIATION BILL

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed from 21 June (see p. 1816).

Ms MOLLOY (Noosa—ALP) (10.34 a.m.): I would like to congratulate this government for achieving what it set out to do, that is, to keep its election promises and more. Well done! This is a government with a conscience, caring for everyone, not just sectional interests. The people of Noosa have shared in this year's budget allocation, and I thank the government on their behalf.

The Departments of Transport and Main Roads have devoted funds handsomely to the electorate of Noosa. I seek leave for that breakdown to be included in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

Queensland Transport

\$195,000 across South East Queensland for plant and equipment maintenance and upgrades for service delivery networks, including Customer Service Centres.

\$300,000 to upgrade Tewantin Customer Service Centre.

Main Roads

\$36 million to continue the \$110 million duplication of the federally funded Bruce Highway between Yandina and Cooroy. (Involves Electorates of Gympie, Nicklin and Noosa.)

\$4.254 million to complete two-lane Eumundi bypass on the Eumundi-Noosa Road.

\$150,000 for at-grade intersection improvements at Duke Road on the Eumundi-Noosa Road.

\$5.0 million contribution to Noosa Shire Council for roads demaining package in Noosa Shire.

Under the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme (TIDS), the following State Government contributions are provided for local government projects:

\$111,717 to upgrade Cooyar Street/Leslie Drive in Noosa Shire, with a total subsidy of \$235,000;

\$20,000 to upgrade to two lane seal Sister Tree Creek road in Noosa Shire.

Ms MOLLOY: Other features of the Noosa budget in a snapshot include: \$172,700 for a relocatable building at Noosaville State School; \$120,000 for the completion of track development at Noosa National Park; and \$841,000 for the public housing capital works program in the electorate and a new police station for Eumundi, which I believe will assist the local police in their efforts to provide an efficient and effective service for this community. Finally, Noosa is to gain a long-awaited TAFE facility. I thank the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts and the Treasurer. In Noosa, we are extremely happy to receive this new facility.

There are always issues associated with the delivery of a budget. I believe that this government has shown its true colours brilliantly. It has delivered to the people of Queensland key initiatives that look to the future. It will protect our natural assets and look after our families, including our aged, with a \$120 million upgrade to state government nursing homes, and create jobs. The budget addresses issues of safety and justice. It gives our youth a chance to skill. In addition, \$27.89 million will be provided for expenditure in 2001-02 to improve TAFE facilities, which will directly benefit young students. Yes, it is a sound and responsible budget.

Of course, I must rejoice in the proposed development of a new campus of the Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE at a site owned by the Department of Employment and Training on the Cooroy-Noosa Road, Tewantin. In a letter from the Minister for Employment, Training and Youth and Minister for the Arts, Matt Foley, it is proposed that the campus will meet the emerging training and employment opportunities of people in the Noosa community and the Sunshine Coast region. There are several stages involved in the development of the building. It is anticipated that construction will commence in 2002-03, with a budget allocation of \$2.4 million. On the basis of this start date, a further allocation of \$3.65 million will be provided in 2003-04, and the project is expected to be completed in June 2004. The main focus of the campus will be in delivering training in ecotourism, the arts and information technology.

I now look forward to working with the community to foster further initiatives that will enhance the future of our community. The proposed TAFE is a link into so many other community areas, such as the highly developed arts and cultural aspects of our electorate. Our hospitality industry linking tourism and the TAFE can only act as a platform for our people to take off from. Our already small but growing ecotourism industry will be nurtured and catered for by the training provided by our new TAFE.

Furthermore, there are other links to community with the presence of this kind of learning centre— those links are in business, retraining of women for the work force, as well as a psychological support in our community's psyche. No longer will it be merely primary and secondary schooling for us in the Noosa electorate; we can also look forward to a TAFE learning centre as part of our landscape. This is a key factor in providing a future for our young people and those wishing to retrain or reskill, or those simply wishing to enhance their lives by the learning process. Learning is a lifelong pursuit. The possibilities for our community are immeasurable. The TAFE will be one of those links to our community's future.

If Mr Horan believes that investing in education means doing nothing for the youth, what then does he believe to be the alternative? Would he prefer our youth to be illiterate, cheap labour, or atrophying in never-ending dole queues? Or is Mr Horan's angst really hiding the fact that if we educate our youth and give them jobs, the conservatives will not have any more unemployed, uneducated youth to beat around the head with accusations of dole bludging or laziness as a way of deflecting attention from their vacuous policies as regards youth, education, employment and the welfare of our people in general? I think that Queensland has a bright future because of the intelligent vision this budget nurtures for all Queenslanders.

Mr HOBBS (Warrego—NPA) (10.39 a.m.): It is my pleasure today to speak to the 2001-02 budget. I must say that some budgets do stand out for various reasons, and I suppose opinion varies according to different members and the issues that pertain to their particular electorates. We all realise that Queensland is a very large, decentralised state. In the previous budget, 64 per cent of funds were spent outside the metropolitan statistical division. This year, that figure will be 58 per cent. We understand that those ratios go up and down, but I just make that observation. We will see what happens next year. It is really a matter of long-term trends.

Mr Mackenroth interjected.

Mr HOBBS: Yes, it does vary. I accept that. It is a matter of the trends. We all use these figures; it is just a matter of how we interpret them.

I do not think that local government has fared particularly well in this budget. The Local Government Department is one of the departments that has missed out. Others have gained some funding, and that is fine; there are always ups and downs, and winners and losers. An amount of \$437 million is allocated in the form of grants and subsidies to improve local government. That is down from \$449 million the previous year. I understand that sometimes councils do not always send in their applications. By the same token, I think that the previous year's estimate was low because the government wanted to try to keep the budget down. I believe that we are probably looking at a decline in grants overall for the—

Mr Mackenroth: The issue with councils is that they can get 40 per cent for water and sewerage. If they put applications in, they will get the money. If in fact there is a greater number of applications, we will have to supplement that budget. There is no sense in just putting money there in the hope that councils may apply for money. What the Local Government Department does is provide us with the information of what they have forecast. If it's greater, we will provide the money.

Mr HOBBS: So the Treasurer is saying that he is prepared to put extra money up. That is okay. That is good.

Mr Mackenroth: Yes, and local government can trust me. They know that.

Mr HOBBS: That is very good. We will see how things go, but that does clarify a few points. I am pleased I raised that particular issue.

The Treasurer, who was also the previous Local Government Minister, failed to address in this budget a lot of the key election issues that were raised by the LGAQ and councils throughout Queensland. He has not really done that. The government should be on notice that a lot of issues out there in relation to local government—substantial issues, which would not necessarily cost a lot of money to address—need to be addressed. Those issues were well canvassed at the last election, so I will not go through them again now.

A lot of worthy projects have been mentioned in the budget, such as road funding, the Queensland Heritage Trails Network, resource planning for sustainable use of water resources, regional tourism, \$100 million for the Smart State, teachers and police. However, it does not mention a lot of new and innovative things, except for the \$100 million for the Smart State Research Facility Fund.

Mr Lucas: That's pretty good.

Mr HOBBS: Yes, that is good. We accept that. I am not arguing about that at all. However, the government should not forget that a lot of the other things that are in the budget are basic things that government has to provide anyway. Where there is an increase in police numbers, teachers and so on, that is only countering the trend in population growth and the numbers of students at schools. That is the government's duty. Sure, it can claim some praise for increasing teacher numbers, but unless it is actually making some significant effort to address a long-term lag, it is a little bit false to claim what a great budget it is in that respect. As I have said, there is not a lot in the budget in relation to new and innovative things. Quite frankly, the majority of funding in the budget is recurrent funding.

This is the first time since I have been a member of this parliament that a budget has ended up with an \$820 million deficit, or operating loss. I suspect that it occurred in one other budget in Labor's time—and I believe it was under a Beattie Government as well—but I think the government did a pretty good job of brushing over the figures. It may have snuck by us because in the following year there was quite a significant rise in revenue that pulled it over the line. The trend is there, and I think it is important that we understand that. The government cannot keep on doing that.

We understand that the HIH collapse had ramifications for this budget. I got caught with HIH myself in relation to my aeroplane. When I crashed it, I had to pay 14 per cent of the bill because HIH is part of the aviation underwriting pool. So I know all about it.

Mr Hayward: You understand the problem.

Mr HOBBS: I understand the problem, absolutely. The government has been caught up in that situation, and we accept that. However, I still think that that \$230 million net loss from HIH is not the real reason why we are \$820 million in deficit. Standard and Poor's have backed that up. They have said that they have concerns with the government's financial management. The AAA rating that we have cherished for so long is in some doubt. They have again given Queensland that rating. However, they have raised the flag and they have said to us here in Queensland, 'Hey, we're watching you fellows. Just make sure that you do a good job of financial management in the future.'

There is another trend as well, and I think that long-term trends are really the only way that we can judge budgets. Queensland used to be the lowest taxed state in Australia. Everyone used to say that and the Premier still says it, but apparently he is wrong.

Mr Hayward: True.

Mr HOBBS: No, apparently he is wrong. Tasmania is in fact the lowest taxed state in Australia. Queensland is among the lowest, which is good, but we are losing that status. Queensland also used to have the highest job participation rate in Australia. We have now been beaten by Western Australia, which has 66.8 per cent with Queensland at 65 per cent. Western Australia has 7.3 per cent unemployment, yet Queensland has 9 per cent. The trend is going the wrong way. We need to be very concerned about that and monitor it.

I had hoped that more would be provided in this budget to stimulate existing Queensland industry to grow. It is all very well to be obsessed with attracting business—and we want business to come to Queensland and we support in general the principle of encouraging industry to come to Queensland—but you also have to make sure that you consider the impact of that. I cite the example of Virgin coming into the Australian market. We accept that there has been a reduction in the price of air travel throughout the eastern parts of Australia—no doubt it will cost a whole lot more shortly—and that has had a beneficial effect. However, there has also been fallout. In that case the fallout was in the form of the collapse of Impulse and Flight West. Flight West indicated that one of the causes of its collapse was the increase in competition. That has meant that people who perhaps would have flown to regional Queensland or the outback with Flight West now find it cheaper to fly to Cairns, Tasmania or Melbourne.

Mr Hayward: You don't believe that.

Mr HOBBS: No, that is true. That is what happened. Flight West was the biggest regional airline in Australia. Obviously there were other reasons why Flight West got into trouble, such as the Australian dollar versus the American dollar and fuel prices. However, they also flew other routes up and down the coast. The introduction of renewed competition meant that they could not compete as well as they had in the past, especially taking into account the structure and size of their aircraft.

The big airlines use 747s and other such aeroplanes because they standardise their fleet and they can benefit from economies of scale when so many passengers are flying with them. Smaller airlines which have to meet the needs of those smaller communities cannot land bigger planes in those areas and use Brasilias, Jetstreams, Metros and the like. Because smaller planes have a different passenger capacity to larger planes, the price per seat will not be as low. So there is an impact. It is fine that there is an impact, so long as we know what the impact is. If that impact is going to affect regional Queensland, the subsidy goes up. The benefit of having Virgin in Queensland is great, and we accept that. But, at the end of the day, compensatory assistance may have to be given to those smaller airlines flying to the smaller centres. That is all I am saying.

Whilst it is great to have new companies coming to Queensland to operate, it is particularly important to look after the existing businesses, like Flight West. That is only one, but there are many others as well. Those companies have a head start on the rest, because they have the expertise. We have to encourage those companies to upskill their workers and use modern technology. Towns in regional and rural Queensland need to grow, and they want to grow. They need to be assisted to help themselves take on expanded business and community projects. This can often be done, simply because business can expand and value add in smaller areas. Those towns have the resources in many instances, whether it be the timber industry, the mining industry or technology industries. There are numerous ways in which industries can value add. That is one of the great secrets to success, particularly in regional and rural Queensland.

The federal government introduced a great Regional Solutions Program that Queensland should be tapping into more readily. Some communities are and some are not. The state government started off on the wrong foot in relation to the Regional Solutions Program, because at the regional summit I was the only representative of the Queensland parliament to attend. That was a very valuable summit, because people from all walks of life across Australia meet in Canberra with one common purpose—to try to rejuvenate regional and rural Queensland. It involved no politics. Rather, it tried to put together the best way to do that. The Regional Solutions Program has put a lot of effort into doing that.

Before I turn to issues relating specifically to my electorate, I want to comment about the mining industry. As I was saying earlier, the mining industry is an existing industry that we need to assist. The majority of Australian mining companies are mining overseas. They have said to me in meetings, 'A rock is a rock, but we haven't got a mine in Australia because the cost structures are hard. The native title legislation is impossible.' A number of operators of mines which have opened in recent years have said that they would never have started the operation had they known they had to go through all the rigmarole. It is hard to get a permit and there are cost imposts. That is an issue. Australian companies are mining overseas because it is easier. We have to be able to make it simpler. The federal government also has a responsibility in relation to native title to make it easier, and the Senate has delayed changes to that legislation. We can either keep importing products or produce those same products here which can be value added in Australia and exported. We should be able to do that.

Apart from the bigger picture issues which I have already mentioned, the government has to maintain and improve the government services we already have. I will give the House examples of things that have happened in some areas which I have concerns about. Environment protection officers have left Roma to take up positions in Toowoomba. There is also a rumour that 14 staff will be moved from the Queensland Rail maintenance gang in Roma to Toowoomba. Toowoomba is a long way away, but that is what is happening. That is 14 jobs from Queensland Rail and three environment officers. That has impacts down the line, because it takes people out of town and kids from the schools. This is very concerning. If this is to happen, we need to be able to plan ahead to put in place other incentives to counteract those moves which may be of benefit to both the government and those areas.

The Living Away from Home Allowance is an initiative that has been very well received for many years in the education of rural students. Many students throughout Queensland receive scholarships, and that helps them with their education. If they did not receive that scholarship they might not have the opportunity to attend a major school. However, there is talk at the moment that if a student receives a scholarship they cannot get the Living Away from Home Allowance. The reason for the scholarship is to help for education expenses, not living expenses. If a child has to leave home to attend a school, they should receive that allowance. The government will have one hell of a fight on its hands if it wants to try to take a Living Away from Home Allowance from a child who has received a scholarship.

Schools in the west have still not received airconditioning under the Cooler Schools program. Schools from Mitchell to Bollon to the west have received—

Mr Fouras: We're doing more than you ever did.

Mr HOBBS: That is not entirely right. The coalition government covered a lot of country. The government is giving more money to this program, but the reality is that more schools could be airconditioned with evaporative airconditioning because it is cheaper. So far the government has used reverse cycle airconditioning, which costs a lot of money. We know that the government has to do this. Every school in Queensland should be airconditioned. We are not arguing with that. The reality is that a whole lot more schools could be airconditioned in one fell swoop if it used evaporative airconditioning. Rather than just doing one area at a time, every school in the state could be done for the same amount of money. The government is not even giving a brass razoo for it. Something would have helped, and people would have been satisfied because they would have seen that something was happening. However, the government is not fair dinkum about it.

The Great Artesian Basin Rehabilitation program is \$4 million in the red. The government did a deal with the federal government for \$15.8 million over five years, and this government has wshed on it. It is \$4 million in the red and no money has been allocated to this project in this budget. The Great Artesian Basin is one of the world's wonders. It needs to be maintained and looked after, as does the bore piping scheme. However, the money is not there. I ask the government to look at that issue, because it is very important.

I now turn to the process companies have to go through when tendering for government projects. Companies throughout the state have the opportunity to tender to supply products to various government departments. Queensland Rail has changed its tendering system. The old tendering system adopted by QR is that in each town it would call for tenders for the supply of paint, nails and many other things. It now undertakes a statewide tender, which is 300 pages long. As a result, the small hardware store at Quilpie, Charleville, Roma or Childers really cannot tender. Because the tender process is now 300 pages long, they have to satisfy quality assurance measures expected of major companies. It is harder, so the little guy has been squeezed out. I know the government wants to save money, but does it want to protect regional Queensland or not?

I turn now to issues relating to the Water Allocation Management Plan on the Condamine-Balonne in my electorate. A social and economic study needs to be undertaken in the area. It has not been done at this stage, but I do not think there is enough data for it. What the government has done in relation to the end-of-valley flows over the border and all those river systems is totally inappropriate. It is far too high. At the end of the day, all the government is doing is putting water into the pumps of irrigators in New South Wales. That is what the government is achieving with this system. It is not working at all.

Electricity is particularly important. We need affordable mains power throughout all of Queensland. There are areas, such as Tara, that need electricity. Glenmorgan is a good example of an area that has power but cannot get the full 240. People in that community have motors burning out all the time and they have to send them away for repair. The hotel and the local garage have enormous problems. This has been the case for years. We have been trying to fix it up, but it has not been done.

Time expired.

Hon. P. T. LUCAS (Lytton—ALP) (Minister for Innovation and Information Economy) (11.00 a.m.): I record my support of this fine budget, the first budget brought down by Treasurer Mackenroth and the fourth budget of the Beattie Labor government. It is a great pleasure and honour to be associated with a government that has brought down a budget that is not only so competent but, more importantly, delivers the goods for the people across the length and breadth of Queensland.

I thank the people of my electorate for returning me to parliament at the state election earlier this year. It is a great honour and privilege to represent the electorate of Lytton. I firmly and honestly believe that the Bayside—Wynnum, Manly, Lota and Hemmant—are amongst the nicest parts of Queensland and Australia in which to live. The cream of the working class and decent middle class people live there. These people are a pleasure to live and work with in the local community. A cohesive local community is something not everyone has, but I am so pleased and proud to have it. In my area everybody, no matter their personal financial situation, their age or their station in life, is treated equally and has the chance to participate equally in society.

Mr Lawlor: They are very smart, too.

Mr LUCAS: They are very smart, in fact. I will talk a little about the Smart State and what it means to the people of Queensland. My electorate has a very proud tradition of technical innovation and of supplying quality work forces, particularly to the port and port-related industries.

I also thank the Premier for the great honour of being elevated to the ministry as the Minister for Innovation and Information Economy. It is a privilege to serve in any government, but it is an even greater privilege to serve this Labor government under Peter Beattie, a man who has tremendous vision for this state.

The debate this morning is not the time for me to speak in detail about my department's initiatives in this budget—there is a time and place for me to do that; I will leave that to the estimates committee and the proper process—but I am very proud particularly of the \$100 million research capital infrastructure fund, which will go a long way to creating circumstances in order to continue to provide the top-quality research that is being undertaken in Queensland.

Incidentally, I note some discussion about the synchrotron. Queensland has more people involved in biotechnology research and development than has Victoria. Anyone who wants to contend otherwise is simply wrong. The fact is that this state has a fantastic research future, for reasons I will talk about in a moment.

It is not only the research and university fundamentals that are strong in this state; the economic fundamentals are strong as well. When overseas businesses are looking to invest in smart states and in new economies, they look not only at what we are doing in our universities, they look also at what the state is doing and the sorts of messages it is sending to the business community in terms of business taxation and creating the environment of cohesion that we have in this great state.

As far as I am concerned, the Smart State is for all Queenslanders. Frankly, I am not interested if all it is about is the university sector and white lab coats. What we do in the university sector by way of research is very important, because that research then provides the expertise for industry to create jobs. But at the end of the day the Smart State is about people in my electorate, people in north Queensland, people in central Queensland and people in western Queensland doing their jobs better because we have provided the environment in which industries can be more innovative. Industries then pass that on to their work force in terms of drawing on their great skills.

The Smart State is about everybody being smarter, and it starts with education. I am pleased to see that this budget has placed such a great emphasis on education. I am not from a particularly wealthy background. My mum and dad live locally. They have a house—that's it. They are retired. To the extent that I have had opportunities it is due to my education, and I am very grateful for that. I understand, particularly as a parent, the significance and importance of that. I am very proud that this government has placed such a strong emphasis on education. I know, particularly with respect to the Smart State, that Anna Bligh and Matt Foley, the Ministers for Education and Employment, Training and Youth respectively, share that vision and passion for educating everybody in order to let them participate equally. It is about social equity just as much as it is about being smart economically.

This budget is a very strong budget, built on the fundamentals we in Queensland have had going for us for many years. We are a state that has always been prepared to keep its house in order. The AAA credit rating we have underpins that. People might ask what credit ratings mean to them. What it means is that this state has to spend no money on borrowings, because we have no net debt compared with other states. It means that we can spend that money on recurrent expenditure and capital expenditure to provide more services to Queensland. So credit ratings are important.

If people run their own homes in a financially responsible manner then they can afford those little extra things that are the fruits of their hard work and diligence. Queensland is just like that. We as a government have a responsibility to ensure that we undertake proper stewardship of the state's resources and finances. I am glad to say that this Beattie budget, brought down by Treasurer Mackenroth, is a further example of that.

Because we have been responsible in our financial management, we have been able to increase our spending—in health by 6.5 per cent, in education by 8.7 per cent and on police by 8.5 per cent. These increases are all significantly greater than the rate of inflation, so they are real increases—increases that will provide for extra people who will make a real difference.

Who could go past our massive capital works budget? Capital works are very important. They provide jobs in the private sector in particular. In relation to the construction industry we now need

to be very careful in Australia. We have come out of the building boom generated by the Olympic Games in Sydney. This state is meeting its responsibilities to ensure that capital works are being accelerated and given a very high priority.

The simple facts about capital works are these. First, they can be used to provide services to the community. Second, they provide for quality jobs. The people who get those quality jobs then spend money in the state and create even more quality jobs, so they are very important. Queensland leads Australia in terms of capital works spending. The proportion of Australia's population in Queensland is 18.8 per cent, yet we have 27 per cent of all capital works. So we are leading Australia. Unfortunately, other states are letting their communities down. Again, this is as a result of our prudent financial management. I table a graph that details Queensland comparative capital works expenditure.

I am pleased to note that our net worth per capita in Queensland is far greater than that in any other state. Our financial assets more than cover all accruing and future liabilities such as superannuation. Government superannuation is public servants' superannuation. We owe it to public sector employees to manage their finances properly.

Our total state net worth will grow from \$59.3 billion by the end of June 2002 to \$61.9 billion by the end of June 2005. That is in stark contrast to the Commonwealth and other states. The Commonwealth has negative net debt of some \$34 billion. Put simply, each and every Queenslanders will have a net equity investment of almost \$16,200 on the state's balance sheet at the end of 2001-02. That is 25 per cent more than the average per capita net worth of all the states—over \$2,000 more than the residents of New South Wales and over \$7,000 more than the residents of Victoria. And of course, we keep our AAA credit rating. I table comparative statistics with respect to that situation.

Unfortunately, Queenslanders, like all other Australians, have had to put up with the slug of the GST and the tremendous negative effect that has had on us. Queensland has managed to keep its position as the low-tax state. That is very important. I know that people do not always recognise the importance of having low taxes, but the simple fact of the matter is that we are in an increasingly competitive world in which companies will decide to locate wherever they see the most favourable business and economic conditions. Queensland's tax collections are lower than is the case in other states. More business relocating, setting up and prospering and growing in Queensland can have one consequence at the end of the day. It means that Queenslanders, including the people I represent, have a greater chance of employment. That is very important. That is creating a future for people.

Our per capita tax collections in 2001-02 are expected to be \$1,211. This compares with an average \$1,637 for the other states and territories—35.2 per cent higher than the tax burden in Queensland. Each Queenslanders will pay on average \$6,031 less in state taxes than residents of New South Wales and \$416 less than residents of Victoria. That is this government putting its hand in people's pockets that much less. That is very important to people in my electorate because not everybody can afford to shoulder a large tax burden. Not only does this give the businesses that employ people a competitive tax advantage; it also allows people to spend money on their families and their livelihood, which I am sure is what they want to do.

I want to talk about how my electorate has fared in terms of the state budget. It has fared well, as it has done for many years from Labor state budgets—whether it be under the Beattie administration or the Goss administration. Of course, we know how former Premier Bjelke-Petersen used to treat what were known as traditional Labor seats like mine. I am pleased to see that, under Premier Goss and Premier Beattie, that is a thing of the past. We need only to have a look around Wynnum, Manly and Lota to see that that is the case. People can look for themselves and make the comparison.

I am pleased to note that funding will be allocated for the continuing upgrade of the Wynnum Court House. We will get two courthouse rooms properly designed. The old courthouse was a product of the late fifties, early sixties sort of thinking. It was not secure. It was not satisfactory for people going to the courthouse. That building is in progress at the moment and is expected to be completed in July 2001. And what do we see next to the courthouse which is currently being refurbished? We see the brand-new police station. It is only a couple of years old. Former Deputy Premier Tom Burns got Wynnum its brand-new police station. Again, that is what happens under a Labor administration.

I am pleased to see that again the government has continued its commitment to emergency services. There is a further \$1.1 million allocated to further develop the Queensland Fire and

Rescue Authority training academy at Fisherman Islands. That is a state-of-the-art facility. That is where firefighters will be taught world-class firefighting techniques. I have been down there myself and have seen a demonstration of how they fight backdraft. It really is a fine building. But not only will it be available for people in south-east Queensland for firefighters; it is intended to be a centre for all of Queensland. Firefighters can go down there from the country. And of course, they will be spending money locally while they are there at the training facility, which I think will be the envy of this part of the world. It is a great testimony to the Labor government.

Up the road from that is the brand-new Water Police station—again, a top-class facility. The Wynnum Ambulance Station at Manly West next to the Wynnum Hospital is again a great project of former Deputy Premier Tom Burns when the Goss government was in power. Last year, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority bought land at Wynnum West to relocate the Wynnum Fire Station in due course. I am very pleased to see that sort of commitment to the emergency services in my electorate.

Education has always been a priority for people in my electorate. We have a strong and burning passion for educating our kids and educating ourselves. A very high proportion of people in my electorate have significant qualifications, particularly in the trade and technical areas servicing the port. There has been tremendous growth in that port area. I will not go into detail about the growth in the capital expenditure on the port, but it is some \$87.5 million this budget. Again, that means expansion and further facilities for trade. We like to see ourselves at the bayside working with our country colleagues. They produce the agricultural goods, and we are happy to export them through our port. We see it as a partnership.

In relation to education—\$683,000 in total education capital expenditure will take place in my electorate, with \$168,600 for a two-space relocatable building at the Manly State School. I am also pleased to note the \$179,436 for a two-space building at Wondall Heights State School and the \$290,000 for a half general learning block at the Wynnum West State School. Those are all much appreciated and fine initiatives that will go towards top-class educational facilities in my electorate.

Finally, in relation to education, I want to note a project that I am really thrilled about, that is, the allocation of \$45,000 for a preschool unit conversion at the Wynnum Central State School. The Minister for Emergency Services is an old boy of Wynnum Central State School. It is a great school. It is just across the road from my electorate office. The preschool will help that school in terms of its development and its numbers. It is in the middle of the Wynnum Central business district. So parents who might both be working can get their kids to school and preschool there while they are out in the work force. It is not easy these days for a lot of families to exist except on two incomes. This will further support them. It is a great initiative, and I pay credit to the school for the way it has been prepared to work to get these important facilities.

Some \$80 million will be provided for the construction of the port of Brisbane motorway—the big money on the project. Again, that is about getting traffic from the port of Brisbane safely onto the Gateway Motorway. It will also have a benefit for people in my electorate who are going to work. At the moment, traffic delays on Lytton Road are simply unacceptable. I am pleased to note that the initial work will be done on the duplication of Lytton Road from the Gateway Motorway to Bulimba Creek at Hemmant. I am told that will begin in August. That is a very important initiative that will not only benefit business but will also increase safety and road usage for people in my electorate.

State Development has invested heavily in my local community. The Lytton Industrial Estate is going ahead in leaps and bounds. I urge anyone on the bayside to go down there for a drive and see those quality jobs being created there. They are jobs for the future. Berri has a major processing plant that has relocated there over the past year. We have people there who are really progressing the Smart State.

We cannot have the Smart State without infrastructure, and I am delighted to note that State Development is allocating \$6.5 million to a trunk sewerage facility. That will allow further development to take place. But we cannot just have development in the abstract; we must look after the environment. And I am delighted to note that \$400,000 will be devoted to the development of the Lytton buffer corridor. People in my electorate love the environment. They love the bay. The bay is a Ramsar site. It is very dear to them. So that \$400,000 will allow the buffer zone to appropriately separate industry from the local community but, at the same time, provide a corridor for wildlife to continue to develop. There has been some great work done with the Brisbane City Council on that.

I welcome this budget not only for the people of my electorate—Wynnum, Manly, Lota and Hemmant—but also for the people of Queensland. It is a very prudent budget that takes into account the importance of sound financial management and lets us build on that sound financial management for the betterment of people in Queensland. I very much commend it to the House.

Miss SIMPSON (Maroochydore—NPA) (11.16 a.m.): In rising to speak in the limited time of this budget debate, I will endeavour to cover some of the major areas concerning the health and tourism portfolios and issues specific to the Sunshine Coast region and my electorate of Maroochydore, although I will seek to go into greater detail in the estimates committee hearings.

The increase in health spending in real terms in this budget compared to actual spending for 2000-01 is only about 2.3 per cent. The state's contribution—\$2.34 billion—is a 2.2 per cent increase. The Commonwealth's contribution of \$1.5 billion is a 4.6 per cent increase on actual spending from its contribution from the previous year.

Even taking into account the very welcome Commonwealth grants for the Comprehensive Cancer Centre, it is clear that federal government increases in spending overall to Queensland outstrip the Queensland state government's increases in funding. For all this Labor state Health Minister's complaints about the federal government, she clearly has let Queensland down by failing to ensure that health is a high enough priority within her own government.

I acknowledge there are some worthwhile initiatives in the health budget—interestingly, a number of which were also coalition commitments at the last election. However, as a whole this budget is a dud for the engine room of the acute health care system in Queensland, because it fails to deliver in the areas that matter most to Queenslanders: their free public hospital system.

Acute in-patient services are budgeted to increase in spending by only about 1.9 per cent on the previous year of actual spending. For the Commonwealth the increase is about 4.6 per cent on actual spending. This will mean that hundreds and hundreds of Queenslanders will continue to languish on waiting lists, they will continue to wait for surgery for far too long, or they will be on the secret waiting lists—the waiting lists you have when you do not have a published waiting list—hundreds and hundreds of people waiting just to see a specialist. Every member in this place would know that is true. They would have people approaching them who cannot even get on the surgery list because they are still waiting for a specialist appointment.

One gentleman—I have mentioned him before—Charles Sims, told me that he had waited nearly 20 months just to see an eye specialist, and now he will have to wait up to a year longer for the cataract operation. He could wait altogether around three years for his operation. And this is happening in parts of Queensland where the Health Minister has continued to ignore the concerns about getting people off the secret waiting lists and onto the actual surgical waiting lists. But there are obviously many other procedures that do not even qualify to be on the surgical list—many other medical procedures and surgical procedures that do not actually appear on those lists. Consequently, we find that there are people who can wait years just to see a specialist.

Let us look at acute in-patient services, where the state has calculated a 1.9 per cent increase in funding. This is minuscule considering the thousands of people who require assistance through the state health system. The government can find funding for other things such as \$280 million for the redevelopment of Lang Park. It does not mind raising taxes for that. It can find money to build a footbridge in the middle of Brisbane. When the cost of that project blows out to a level higher than the increase the government is putting into dental spending, it does not have a problem with that. But when it comes to addressing acute in-patient services in this state, the government has not made that a priority area.

Let us look at the issue of jobs. This government talks a lot about jobs. But let us look at the jobs and the staffing levels in the Health Department. This government boasts about jobs, but when you get beyond the rhetoric, when you actually start to look at the figures, there is an estimated increase of only 120 extra staff across the whole of the Health budget in the next 12 months. Members opposite should be a little bit concerned about that, because that means that there are a lot of doctors, nurses, allied health professionals and other support staff who will be working extremely hard to try to help Queenslanders get access to a quality health system, but they will not be getting the assistance they need through the state budget because they have not been funded for it.

The state government talks about extra youth health nurses, which will be welcomed. It talks about seven extra full-time specialists, which does not seem like a lot given the problem with getting access to specialist appointments. It talks about 500 graduate nurses. However, if you

look at the actual full-time equivalent staffing increases for the next year, there are only 120 extra positions. That is less than a 1 per cent increase across the staffing levels of the Health Department, which is barely covering the number of people leaving the service. That means a lot of nurses, a lot of doctors, a lot of allied health and support staff who will continue to absolutely bust their guts to do their best and look after people are not getting help from this government because it has not considered this a high enough priority.

We can also look at the way the budget papers are presented. It has been typical of this minister to provide as little real detail as possible when it comes to the budget process. There is a lot of talk about accountability and transparency and very little actual detail when it comes to the way that the budget papers are presented to allow a comparison from year to year. We certainly see this once again in the way that the budget papers are presented. The Health Department has a habit of changing the way in which weighted separations for episodes of care are presented in the budget papers. Year after year, you find that there is a different set of criteria sitting behind it so that you cannot actually do a direct comparison.

Let us look at some of the things that are listed. I note that a lot of the footnotes are, quite frankly, designed to be fairly useless. If you talk about trying to present papers for the general public—realising that it is not only members of parliament who read these documents but also members of the general public and members of the health service—you will realise that these documents are designed to conceal what is really happening. The number of occupied bed days, according to the department's own figures, went backwards in the last 12 months. The number of same day episodes of care also went backwards. We all know that this health service has been overworked. When you get to the weighted separations, you find that there has been a significant increase, but the footnote says that there has been a change in the way things are measured. So once again, there is no transparency. When it comes to the footnotes, they do not actually provide the calculations, the details and the comparative benchmarks so that you can do direct comparisons.

Let us talk about capital spending. I welcome seeing extra spending on the state's nursing homes to bring them up to standard. I believe in the last budgetary year the accreditation process was supposed to have been completed detailing what had to be done. However, there is only about \$10 million in this budget over the next 12 months out of a promised \$120 million. I understand that that \$120 million is over five years. As the \$311 million Capital Works Program this year will carry over approximately \$56 million from unspent capital funds of last year, you realise that this first installation of the upgrade work for nursing homes is relatively small. I would like to see more detail as to the roll-out of those upgrades, because we all recognise that it is desperately needed to ensure that the elderly and the frail are well looked after in this state.

I want to speak about the capital works budget. We know that there has been a fall-off in capital works spending. But when we see the unspent fundings in the capital works budget for health, a significant portion of the unspent funds were actually in the mental health capital works area. In fact, about half of the allocated mental health capital works budget was not spent during the last financial year. So mental health has been put on the backburner in Queensland in the last year when you consider that a significant portion of the capital works program for that area is running behind. It is extremely disappointing that the Beattie budget papers reveal that that \$30 million has been unspent and that there are further delays. I believe that is a bungle on the part of this Health Minister, who should have been driving that program.

The Baillie Henderson Hospital redevelopment has had about \$1.6 million slashed from its budget, and it is running behind schedule, with some \$7 million of its total \$13.1 million allocation still to be spent. The Prince Charles Hospital acquired brain injury unit at Sandgate was listed in last year's budget for \$2.3 million of spending and completion in 2000-01. It still has \$2.17 million of spending to go. Other projects running behind schedule include: upgrades to Mosman Hall in Charters Towers—\$1.3 million to complete; Royal Brisbane Hospital rehabilitation and dual diagnosis unit—also running behind schedule; the \$1.15 million Townsville psychogeriatric unit—still \$881,000 to be spent, and it is also running behind schedule; and the \$37 million Wolston Park complex still has \$21 million of works to be completed, compared with last year's estimate of \$9.6 million to be completed. There has been a \$1.4 million increase in the cost of this project, but overall a significant balance of the project is still to be completed, despite last year's forecast. I believe that this is very disappointing, given the importance of the mental health program and the need to continue to drive these services and make them available to this vulnerable class of people.

I would also like the Premier to explain to Queensland his broken election promise of 50 drug rehabilitation places. During the election campaign, Premier Peter Beattie promised an additional 50 residential drug rehabilitation places to be based in Cairns, Townsville and Mackay. Yet they were not delivered in the budget papers. In the first of Mr Beattie's broken promises this term, he has let the people of north Queensland down badly. We see that while there is reference to 30 beds, there is no clarity as to where they are. Mackay seems to have missed out in this particular round. Certainly, that detail has not been provided in the budget papers. I believe that the Premier has to explain this to the people of Queensland.

We, as the coalition before the last election and certainly as the National Party opposition now, have a strong belief that there needs to be a significant increase in the amount of funding put into drug prevention and drug rehabilitation. Areas like the Sunshine Coast virtually have nothing.

Mr Copeland: And Toowoomba.

Miss SIMPSON: Toowoomba—nothing. Many other significant regions have been left out and forgotten.

Given the time limitations, I want to address briefly some of the problems at a number of hospitals. At Nambour Hospital, I know of patients who have waited seven or eight hours just to be admitted. They have sat around waiting for a bed. These are very sick, very frail people. That is not an uncommon situation. Once again, the problem with beds being closed and the problem with staff not being available is that patients suffer. This problem has certainly been increasing. There is a desperate need for a real increase to the base funding of that hospital, a real increase to the real staffing numbers at that hospital and health services across the Sunshine Coast.

We also need a dental health clinic in Maroochydore. This is a major regional centre, identified as such in government papers, and yet the government has not actually provided that facility. Townsville Hospital is a real concern. The need for the specialist acute unit has still not been dealt with. We recognise that this needs to be planned for and put in place. The people in this region are a long way from Brisbane. This is a tertiary-level hospital. Those services need to be catered for.

There have been cries of desperation from staff and the community as they know that orders have been given to downgrade the services at Maryborough Hospital. The services are being siphoned away to Hervey Bay. There are not even transport networks in place so that people can visit their sick loved ones or, if they themselves are sick, gain access to the services in that town.

A number of other hospitals—Gympie, the Gold Coast, Royal Brisbane, Prince Charles, Princess Alexandra and a number of hospitals in regional centres—have significant issues with their base funding for their real staffing levels. There has been an allocation for only 120 extra full-time equivalent staff across Queensland hospitals. All of those hospitals know that someone is losing out, because that increase is not adequate to deal with the pressures that they are trying to cope with.

I would like to address tourism as well. Whilst there have been increases in funding to regional tourism organisations, which is welcome, for the past three years the tourist budget has been in decline. That is reflected in a decrease in state contributions in this budget of \$517,000 and a decrease of \$3.6 million compared to the 1999-2000 budget. I believe that if we are to grow jobs in this state, we need to invest in industries such as tourism—not only in the marketing structures for tourism but in the infrastructure as well. The GST money comes back to the states and there is the increasing potential for funds out of that growth tax. I say to the Treasurer that we need to realise that the more money that we spend on certain industries, the more potential they have to raise revenue for the benefit of Queensland. In other words, we invest not only in those industries but also in the revenue stream that comes from that industry. Tourism is one industry where I believe we need to put more spending into marketing and more spending into infrastructure in recognition that this spending will grow jobs in Queensland. I believe that it is extremely important that that growth tax goes back into the industries that have the potential to grow jobs in Queensland so that there is a greater social outcome.

In the very brief time that I have left to me, I would like to address issues that affect the Sunshine Coast region. This region is lumped in with the Gold Coast and the areas west of Brisbane in the Moreton statistical division. Under this government, across the state capital spending has fallen from \$5.2 billion in the 2000-01 financial year to \$5.1 billion this year. But the Brisbane area goes against the trend. The government will increase its capital spending in Brisbane from \$1.95 billion to \$2.1 billion this year. Significantly in the Moreton statistical division,

which covers the Sunshine Coast and Gold Coast, last year funding for roads fell by about \$89 million. Overall, capital works across a number of portfolios fell.

I also believe that the statistical model is outdated. The Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast should be separate statistical divisions so that, for the sake of good planning, good growth and accountability, when communities are making appeals to the government for infrastructure, we can refer to more accurate social demographic indicators. I appeal to the state government to assist me in my campaign to have those statistical divisions altered, because I believe that they do not serve us well.

I would like to address other issues that affect my electorate. The cancer centre for the Sunshine Coast is something very dear to my heart. It cuts right across the political divide and across many areas of the Sunshine Coast. Not that long ago I tabled a petition in this parliament from thousands of Sunshine Coast people calling for radiotherapy services to be available on the Sunshine Coast. I acknowledge that there has been an extension of outpatient services to patients, but once again I urge the state government to make sure that they enter into negotiations with a private provider who is setting up an office opposite the Nambour Hospital so that those Sunshine Coast people who are very sick with cancer do not have to travel to Brisbane for their treatment.

We also have a desperate need for a youth centre in the central Sunshine Coast areas of Maroochydore and Mooloolaba. I know that people in the hinterland are lobbying for such a centre, but the reality is that there are literally hundreds of kids on the streets at Maroochydore and Mooloolaba. Most of them are great kids but there are some less than desirable elements among them. They are creating tremendous problems. Many of those young kids are vulnerable and they need access to their own infrastructure so they have a place to go where it is safe, where there is access to organised activities and which recognises that they have a place in our society. There has to be something better than what is currently available for them on the streets.

In terms of roads, although I mentioned that Brisbane has been given a significant increase in capital funding, there is some funding for planning for work to be done on the Sunshine Motorway, but there is no indicative funding for it. In fact, even the Kawana arterial was not mentioned in the budget papers. Funding for that may be tucked away somewhere in the budget, but it is not actually a line item in the budget papers, which is interesting to note. The Maroochydore road needs to be upgraded. I acknowledge that the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads has asked the Maroochy Shire Council to put in a submission. I would certainly urge the Maroochy Shire Council to do that because I think that it is time to look at demaining some of the main roads in that area. That way, the council can look at ways in which some of that capital that comes to them along with that demaining process could be used on other road infrastructure and projects within their own areas.

Arterial roads are built to move the greatest number of people as possible, and some of the other roads really should return to being local roads. I believe that option should be considered. I urge the Minister for Transport and Minister for Main Roads to receive that submission from the Maroochy Shire Council, and I hope that the council makes such a submission.

Police numbers continue to be of concern. The reality is that there has been a significant increase in population on the Sunshine Coast. I do not believe that the policing numbers model actually reflects that increase, as evidenced by the way in which funds for policing are allocated throughout the state. I certainly urge the Police Minister to consider that the Sunshine Coast area experiences a terrific influx of tourists and that, as the Sunshine Coast area is a very large region, police have to travel a lot further in their duties than police who are stationed in urban areas.

There is also a need for upgrades in public transport. We are yet to see significant funding for the operational side of CAMCOS. I urge this government to take that up, because I believe that integrating the public transport and upgrading the motorway—

Time expired.

Mr CHOI (Capalaba—ALP) (11.36 a.m.) It is indeed a pleasure for me to rise today to speak to the Appropriation Bill 2001. This is the first budget of the second term of the Beattie Labor government which was, only four months ago, given an overwhelming mandate from Queenslanders to continue to govern our great state. May I commence by congratulating the Treasurer and his department on bringing to us a budget that is clearly sensible and good for Queensland.

This budget can be best described as no frills, responsible, prudent and balanced. This is a no-frills budget that aims to deliver good, sensible government projects for all Queenslanders.

This is a responsible budget that maintains Queensland's AAA credit rating and boosts business confidence to create more jobs. This is a prudent budget that delivers a cash and accrual surplus. This is a balanced budget that addresses the needs of the community, yet maintains a tight fiscal responsibility in tough economic times.

This budget is not only no frills, responsible, prudent and balanced but also is considerate and honest. It is considerate with significant increases in funding for health, education, employment and family services. It is honest because all election commitments are kept with no broken promises. This is indeed a budget for good government in Queensland—a budget for all Queenslanders; a people's budget.

The focal point of this budget is that this government has linked all our social policy priorities with fiscal responsibility and sound economic management. Ill-informed observers have said that one side of the House knows how to deliver economic wealth but does not know how to spend it fairly and wisely whilst the other side of the House is expert in social responsibilities but may not be well equipped to deliver economic prosperity. I think that that oversimplifies the differences; but even if that were true, this budget has proven that the Beattie Labor government can do both, and do it well.

Through the charter of social and fiscal responsibility, this government is prepared to be held accountable and responsible for its performance. To be accountable to the public, governments need to report in a transparent and comprehensive manner on their performance in carrying out their role. This charter of social and fiscal responsibility reflects this government's willingness to increase transparency and accountability to the people of Queensland.

This budget also delivers seven key objectives of the government which are also our policy priorities, the first being more jobs for Queenslanders. Employment is the primary source of income for the vast majority of Queenslanders. It is also the most important means for people to participate in the community through their workplace. Employment is also essential for a productive, strong and robust economy.

On the other hand, unemployment not only creates economic problems; also, more importantly, it generates severe social and community issues. This is why the Beattie government has allocated an additional \$75 million to the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative. This will bring the six-year funding total for this initiative to \$470 million. On top of that, \$20 million will be provided over two years for the Youth for the Environment and Local Communities program to enable 15 to 24 year olds to gain nationally accredited qualifications through valuable work in local communities. There is also \$6.9 million provided over three years for a program for mature age workers, including wage subsidies and the provision of job search and information technology skills. Therefore, this budget will provide wide social and economic benefits to the community, such as achieving greater community participation in the social and economic life of the state by breaking the poverty cycle and creating a stronger economy.

Queensland is the most decentralised state in Australia. Supporting regional community and development contributes to the richness and diversity of our state. This budget provides \$437 million to improve local government infrastructure and services and \$30 million over three years to further develop the skills of our primary producers, who are a very important part of our economy. Clearly, the government's budget capitalises on the strength in Queensland's regions and is important for sustainable regional economic growth and stronger regional communities.

Although minerals and primary industries are all extremely important to the economy of our state, the time has gone when, if we wanted more money, we would simply dig a bigger hole in our backyard or shear a few more jumbucks. In the 21st century we have to be smarter to be competitive, if only to survive. The Beattie Labor government adopted the Smart State strategy to be more responsive to the increasing demand for new and better skills that are consistent with a developing global high-tech market.

This budget provides \$10 million over three years for eight new centres of excellence in mathematics, science and technology, \$490 million for vocational education and training and \$100 million to establish an innovative Smart State Research Facility Fund. Clearly, the government is committed to providing Queenslanders with the skills and knowledge necessary to ensure our prosperity for the 21st century and beyond.

Law and order were key election issues and in this budget the government is prepared to invest in infrastructure and networks in a manner that is accessible, promotes participation and is responsive to the diversity of communities in Queensland. That is why the budget allows for 300

extra police, 10 extra police beats and shopfronts, and \$45 million over three years to continue the community renewal program.

I now move to the next policy priorities on which this budget is based. To achieve a better quality of life for Queenslanders, families, individuals and communities should be supported to maintain and improve quality of life. Senior citizens' housing needs are also a priority for this Government. This budget allows for \$120 million over five years to rebuild and redevelop state government nursing homes and also \$75 million to build 300 new houses. It also allows for \$5 million to reduce dental waiting lists, due to the withdrawal of funding by the federal government on dental health programs.

A clean environment with fresh air and clean water is essential for a healthy lifestyle. We need to protect our environment and its biodiversity for current and future generations to enjoy. This budget has allowed moneys for a vegetation management framework and a water resources allocation and management framework. It provides funding to implement the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality, as well as additional accrual funding to our national parks.

Last but not least, the budget aims to provide accessible and strong government. This budget provides \$3 million for a democracy initiative to facilitate and extend community involvement in the democratic process through the use of the internet. In addition, as part of the Smart State vision, \$16 million has been provided to continue work on the Access Queensland initiative.

The electorate of Capalaba has also benefited from this budget. In the four months since the election, the Capalaba State School has requested my assistance to replace their ageing phone system. As a consequence, I have made representations on their behalf to the minister. I am pleased to advise that they will be receiving their new phone system in this budget year.

I would like to congratulate the parents and citizens of Capalaba State School, particularly the president, Mr Wayne Fing, the secretary, the treasurer and everybody on the executive committee for their efforts and commitment in looking after the wellbeing of the school. I would like to thank the Minister for Education and her staff for assisting me in this regard.

One of the key distributor roads through my electorate is Old Cleveland Road. A timber bridge at Coolwynpin Creek was badly in need of replacement for quite some time. In fact, State Government engineers have to monitor that bridge on a very regular basis to ensure the safety of motorists is maintained. I am pleased to say that \$1.7 million has been allocated in this budget to replace the bridge, which will in fact occur in the next few months.

Education is a key issue in my electorate. Moreton TAFE is one of the best TAFE colleges in Queensland and is renowned for its multimedia program. In fact, I have seen some of the work of the students and I believe that they are the very best that the industry has to offer. This government will spend over half a million dollars this financial year to complete a \$7.4 million expansion program of the Moreton Bay TAFE in Alexandra Hills. This institution is truly magnificent and clearly contributed to the Smart State strategy implemented by this government.

Public housing capital works also received a major boost in funding, with over \$1.3 million being allocated for this year's budget, providing essential new housing and upkeep for existing dwellings. Planning of a proposed new bus terminal at Capalaba is also near completion. There is an existing terminal, but it is underutilised because of its location. It provides no parking and has not been supported by the community. However, public support for the new Capalaba bus terminal has been very strong and we will make sure that communities and residents will be consulted prior to the finalisation of the project.

In conclusion, this is clearly a people's budget. It manages Queensland's finances to maintain a budget surplus, a low debt status and a AAA credit rating. At the same time, it will deliver essential social programs, and promote open and transparent government. I congratulate the Premier and the Treasurer on this highly responsible budget. I commend the bills to the House.

Mr MULHERIN (Mackay—ALP) (11.46 a.m.): It is a pleasure to speak in support of the 2001-02 state budget. Firstly, I would like to congratulate the Treasurer, the Honourable Terry Mackenroth, on his first budget, which delivers on the Beattie Labor government's election commitments. It is a responsible budget that builds on the foundations of previous Beattie Labor government budgets with its aims of broadening the Queensland economy through Smart State initiatives of investment in information technology and biotechnology and, more importantly, investing in people and the community.

The budget is based on a growth rate of four per cent, creating 33,000 new jobs, bringing the total of new jobs created by this government since coming to office in 1998 to around 144,000. General government revenue is expected to increase by 5.5 per cent to \$19.261 billion, whilst general government expenses are expected to increase by 3.1 per cent to \$19.237 billion, delivering on a range of services and infrastructure across the state. The budget will deliver a new operating surplus of \$24 million and a cash surplus of \$253 million in the general government sector, maintaining Queensland's AAA credit rating.

The budget has been brought down under the tight economic circumstances caused by the introduction in the financial year 2000-01 of the goods and services tax and higher interest rates, which has dampened domestic demand and confidence. This was particularly felt in the business community where an estimated decline of 14.5 per cent in business investment was felt during the period. The building construction sector was adversely affected by the federal government's tax reforms, whereby an estimated 6,000 jobs were lost in Queensland in the first three quarters of the 2000-01 financial year. As the federal government tax reforms work their way through the economy, employment in Queensland is expected to grow by two per cent in 2001-02, which is double the national forecast of one per cent.

The key to all of this is confidence—confidence by the business sector and confidence by the consumer. Confidence will drive investment and domestic demand, creating jobs. Confidence has been affected by the collapse of HIH, which has impacted severely on the business sector. The estimated loss from the HIH collapse is in the vicinity of \$4 billion, making it our worst corporate collapse. It will cost the Queensland taxpayer approximately \$230 million. We have also seen the collapse of One Tel and Flight West Airlines. These major collapses have not done anything to boost confidence.

However, for Queensland, there appears to be light at the end of the tunnel with recent announcements of Macarthur Coal's expansion at Coppabella, Pacific Coal's Hail Creek project at Nebo and the light metals project at Stanwell. Those projects have been in the planning stages for a number of years and have come to fruition by global demand. Fortunately, the commodity export sector has underpinned the economy, whilst the domestic sector has been mugged by the introduction of the federal government's goods and services tax.

Yesterday, we heard the normal whinge from the Opposition Leader about the budget, how it failed to deliver services and that more money should have been allocated for capital works. In the same breath he said the government is spending more than the income it receives. He cannot have it both ways. The facts are that general government revenue is expected to increase by 5.5 per cent to \$19.261 billion, whilst general government expenses are expected to increase by 3.1 per cent to \$19.237 billion. That indicates to me that the government is not spending more than it receives, unlike the coalition government when it was last in power.

The coalition's record was an increase in spending by 21 per cent, whilst revenue increased by only eight per cent, with seven new taxes and increases in taxes and charges. During the election campaign we saw that the coalition has not learned from its time on the Treasury benches. They tried to buy their way back onto the Treasury benches with a massive \$1.2 billion of election promises, compared with Labor's modest \$450 million which have been delivered in this budget.

All sides of politics acknowledge that unemployment is a curse on society. The Opposition Leader's attack on the government's initiative to tackle unemployment is flippant and partisan. The Opposition Leader referred to the government's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative as a 'feel good' scheme. At no stage did he offer a critique of the Commonwealth work for the dole scheme versus the state's Breaking the Unemployment Cycle program. In fact, during the election campaign, the only scheme proposed by the opposition was to provide roughly \$70,000 for transport subsidies to assist unemployed people to access the Commonwealth work for the dole scheme. Let us look at both schemes.

Work for the dole is a Commonwealth government funded program which provides work experience opportunities and activities for eligible job seekers. Through work for the dole, many unemployed people satisfy their mutual obligation to give something to the community in return for their unemployment payment. The state government's Community Jobs Plan funds community and public sector organisations to employ long-term unemployed people, or those at risk of long-term unemployment, for periods of three to six months on a range of public works, community and environmental projects. Projects must be of benefit to the broader community, with an emphasis on the participants gaining training, competencies and work skills in such activities that will lead to employment opportunities relevant to local employer needs.

When comparing post-program outcomes of the Community Jobs Plan with work for the dole, the Community Jobs Plan appears to have a higher outcome rate. The Commonwealth labour market's *Assistance Outcomes Paper* for the year ending December 2000 states that, from the start of the program to 31 December 2000, the work for the dole scheme achieved a post-program employment rate of 26.9 per cent, whereas the Community Jobs Plan achieved a post-program employment rate of 45.7 per cent. So there is a big difference there—26.9 per cent under work for the dole scheme compared with 45.57 per cent for Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiatives.

While the work for the dole and the Community Jobs Plan are inherently similar, there are some major differences. On Community Jobs Plan projects job seekers are employed by local councils or community groups on a full-time basis and are paid at a rate that has been determined by either the relevant award or a Queensland Industrial Relations Commission order. Work for the dole participants are not employed by sponsor organisations and are required only to work part-time; participants remain on income support—the dole—but receive a fortnightly travel allowance of approximately \$28.

The Community Jobs Plan is also voluntary in nature and is open to a broader range of disadvantaged, long-term unemployed job seekers, not just income support recipients. For example, the Community Jobs Plan can include spouses of working partners, newly arrived migrants and discouraged job seekers. The emphasis for work for the dole has been more on mutual obligation for income support rather than the importance of training in assisting unemployed people back into the work force. This issue was also identified by the OECD in its economic survey of Australia in 1999.

Recognition of this problem was recently announced through the Australians Working Together package, which allows work for the dole participants to receive an \$800 training credit. While the details of this new arrangement are still unclear, there is concern that this may not be the most effective method to provide training to long-term unemployed people. While participants will be able to exercise choice, the training is not targeted and may not adequately meet skill requirements and may not provide value for money, whereas the Community Jobs Plan provides training based on the needs of project participants and further local employment opportunities.

The Opposition Leader has also said that the budget lacks vision for the future. I totally disagree with his claims. The Opposition Leader does not understand or appreciate the cornerstone of this budget—the Smart State initiative. The Smart State initiative will ensure that Queensland is appropriately skilled, economically strong and socially responsible so that it can lead Australia as the Smart State in the intellectual hub of the Asia-Pacific region.

Our economy has been based on mining and agriculture. In recent years we have seen growth in tourism, where Queensland is a leading destination not only for Australians but overseas visitors as well. All communities in Queensland benefit from tourism. However, we have to broaden our economic base, and this is what the Smart State will ensure. The Smart State will see the state's economy expand and job opportunities created through the development of an industry culture based on innovation and the commercial adoption of research and knowledge through co-ops to research centres and technology incubators which in turn will drive exports.

The cornerstone of the budget is the Smart State initiatives, but there is more to this budget than that. This budget invests in Queensland's greatest asset—its people. The budget delivers on a range of services across the State in key areas such as health, education, law and order, emergency services, disability and families, the environment as well as a Capital Works Program which will provide infrastructure for services such as health, education, roads, ports, law and order and the environment.

I would like to outline some of the initiatives that will flow directly from this budget into Mackay, but before I do I would like to pick up on another point that the Opposition Leader raised during his reply to the budget. He indicated that the government had no plan for the regions. Once again he has missed the point. During the election campaign, one of the great reasons for the success of the re-election of the Beattie government was the fact that we as a government developed regional plans for the regions. I know that the people of Mackay were very impressed with the plan for Mackay, the content of which I have outlined previously in my speech in the Address in Reply debate. Unlike the coalition, we did have a plan. They had nothing—just a bag full of unfunded election promises.

As I said, I would like to use the rest of my time to outline some of the benefits of this budget which will flow to Mackay and, at the same time, honour our election commitments to the people of Mackay.

Mr Speaker, I seek leave to incorporate the rest of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

In addition to record spending on services the Government's budget has allocated \$213.8M for capital works in the Mackay region which will assist in job creation and employment for locals and supporting local businesses.

Key capital works projects in the local area include: \$4.8M towards the re-development and refurbishment of the historic Mackay Court House for a total cost of \$11.4M. The Mackay Court House was built in the 1930s under the Forgan Smith Labor Government. It's heritage listed and it is quite a significant landmark, not only in Mackay, but in Queensland, because of its architectural importance. The Government will work with the Heritage Council to ensure that the architectural character of this beautiful building will be retained.

The Mackay Court House serves a large area of central Queensland, including mining communities to the west. It provides access to the Supreme District and Magistrates Court for over a quarter of the land area of Queensland. The much-needed upgrade will ensure that we have modern court facilities which will include a multi-purpose Courtroom, additional Magistrates Courts, Registries Office, Interview Rooms, facilities for child witnesses and victims of domestic violence and victims of crime. It will also have improved public space and public access. The refurbishments and extensions of the Mackay Court House will not only improve the efficiency of law courts, it will also create many jobs during the construction period.

\$1.3M to complete the re-development of the Mackay Base Hospital has been part of the \$28.7M project which has improved the health services for the Mackay District. I just want to place on record my appreciation for the support and dedication of the hospital Acting Manager, Ms Val Coughlan-West and her staff. Their dedication to duty is really appreciated.

\$2.7M for public housing which will address waiting lists for public housing and will boost the building sector in Mackay. It's a pity the Federal Government doesn't put money into public housing to the extent that this State has.

Education is a big winner and \$2.8M will be spent on educational facilities in the Mackay area. Some of these include \$896,000 for the Mackay State High School Renewal Program; \$182,000 for a re-locatable building at Fitzgerald School; \$278,000 for a half teaching block at Beaconsfield State School; \$1.2M in Cooler Schools subsidies for North Primary, Kewara Special, North High and Slade Point Schools.

Whilst on the subject of Education, I would like to congratulate the principals and teachers and support staff and P & C members of the Mackay District schools who work in partnership to ensure that our children have the best possible educational outcome. Their dedication to duty is second to none.

\$4M will be spent towards the construction of the Mackay Harbour Road. This is due for completion in 2002-03 financial year. As more and more heavy vehicles use this road, it has become the main route to Mackay Harbour and over recent years, the pavement surface has deteriorated.

Tourism is a major employer in the Mackay region, but we must also keep pace with infrastructure requirements and I welcome the announcement of \$4.4M has been allocated to the upgrade of the Mackay Airport. Included in this upgrade will be a \$2.5M refurbishment of the airport terminal. \$1.8M for continuing infrastructure enhancements at the airport and the purchase of minor equipment.

The Coal Industry contributes significantly to the Mackay economy. It's a great generator of jobs. It purchases a lot of materials and services locally and recently there has been two major announcements in relation to Macarthur Coal's Coppabella Mine and a new mine that they are proposing about ten kilometres south of Coppabella, as well as the Pacific Coal's announcement of the \$425M Hail Creek Project, worth \$425M. The Coal Industry seems to have a brighter future than it has had in past years, and with recent developments or proposed developments of these new mine sites, we need to ensure that we have the port facilities to handle extra tonnages that go through the Dalrymple Bay Coal Terminal. I was pleased to see that \$44.7M has been allocated for this continual upgrade of the infrastructure at Dalrymple Bay.

I also welcome the commitment of \$2.6M for the new North Mackay Police Station. Not only will it serve the residents of Andergrove and North Mackay, but it will service the fast growing northern beach suburbs in the Whitsunday Electorate. I know that the Member for Whitsunday has taken a keen interest in this project, something that I've been pushing for three years. Jan and I look forward to working with the Queensland Police Service towards the completion of this Station. The Police in Mackay do an excellent. They are well-respected in the community and I would like to commend them for their dedication to duty.

As I said earlier, tourism is a great generator of jobs and wealth for the community. I welcome the announcement by the Government of \$235,000 for an environmental impact study for the \$38M multi-purpose facility project. This project will lead to CBD renewal and I look forward to working closely with Mackay City Council, Mayor Cr Julie Boyd, the Mackay Show Society Chair, Mr Cec Etwell and government agencies to ensure that this project is brought to fruition. Our election promise was a \$38M commitment towards this project in the term of this Government.

In the area of service delivery, the Government has allocated record funding for health, education and families and I welcome the increased funding for disability services.

Unemployment is a curse on any society and this Government is committed to breaking the unemployment cycle and I am pleased that money has been allocated in this budget and over the next three years to meet our election commitment that we will create 734 jobs in the Mackay region at a cost of \$6.9M.

I also welcome the commitment of \$400,000 for the Great Walks of Queensland initiative which includes Eungella and Whitsunday National Parks. This commitment will assist the fledgling eco tourism market for the Eungella highlands area and further enhance the great parks that we've got in the Mackay Whitsunday region.

Mr Speaker

Probably the biggest problem facing our community is the challenge of drug availability and the consequences of drug abuse. There's no evidence to suggest that drug problems in Mackay is any worse than any other regional centre. However, the Mackay community hasn't been idle and has taken up the challenge to bring about the ways that we minimise the harmful effect of drug abuse and provide help to people who want to kick the habit.

Last year I established a Mackay Drug and Alcohol Partnership Forum. The Forum consists of State Government agencies, including the Department of Families, Police, Queensland Health and other agencies such as Mackay City Council Crime Prevention Partnership, concerned citizens and other community-based organisations. It's a great example of the community and the Government coming together in partnership to tackle a community problem. The Forum members believe that to successfully tackle the drug problem you require a four pronged approach of education, treatment, rehabilitation and enforcement. It is only through co-operation that we will achieve better outcomes for the people with drug-related problems.

Already the group has received national recognition for its work. The Forum members will be pleased that the Government has allocated money for the election commitment that we gave for the establishment of ten rehabilitation beds. This will complement a number of the other measures that the Government has placed on the agenda to combat drugs and crime. These include the \$845,000 family and community support package which includes parent and adolescent mediation, youth crime prevention grants, capital grants to re-build community facilities, 12 extra police, the 14 member elite Police Flying Squad which will tackle crime hotspots such as drugs across our district.

Finally, Mr Speaker, I could go on forever about talking about Mackay—it's a great place and in closing I just want to once again thank the Treasurer and the Premier for their hard-working commitment to regional Queensland, in particular, Mackay. I am sure the people of this State appreciate their efforts. This budget is a responsible budget—it is a budget for all Queenslanders and a budget which puts families and young people first. It will ensure that Queensland is a totally skilled, economically strong and socially responsible. I commend both bills to the House.

Mr COPELAND (Cunningham—NPA) (11.57 a.m.): I rise today to speak to the fourth Beattie government budget, the first for this term and a budget that really lacks vision and resources in many areas. This is a budget that does very little to address the concerns of the young people of Queensland. It does little to promote real job growth with real jobs within the state.

Queensland continues to be shown as the worst state for unemployment in the country, yet this government has not looked beyond the blinkers to address the problem in this year's budget. The Premier's promise of five per cent unemployment seems a very, very long way off. He has blamed his government's ordinary performance on all sorts of things. He has blamed it on the Asian economic downturn. He has blamed it on the GST, which every state in Australia has. He has blamed it on high fuel prices, something that other states also have. He has blamed it on high interest rates, which I had forgotten about until the member for Mackay mentioned it.

The members opposite must have very short memories, because I certainly remember the days of the Keating government when interest rates were at a high of 22 per cent. If nothing else—and I certainly do not agree with a lot of the things that the federal government does do—one of its great achievements has been to bring down interest rates. The Premier also blamed it on the participation rate, yet Western Australia's participation rate is higher. Typically, he blames everyone else for his own non-performance.

The Premier still claims Queensland is the low-tax state. It certainly used to be. However, due to the management of this government over the past three years we have allowed Tasmania to claim that title, and we can hope only that we are not overtaken by others. Tasmania has even overtaken us in terms of employment.

This budget does nothing to create real jobs and change the course of past policies which have proven to be failures in addressing the unemployment rate. This budget also does little to address the concerns of people with families. It does little to address the concerns of people with disabilities. It does little for the majority of Queenslanders, unless they are living in Brisbane or the south-east metropolitan area. This is a budget that leaves the majority of Queenslanders wanting, and that wanting includes the provision of funding in crucial areas like disability housing, not fulfilling the Beattie government's commitment to the Forde inquiry, and youth unemployment—just to name a few.

One of the Beattie government's first acts on gaining power in 1998 was to initiate the Forde inquiry into child abuse in Queensland institutions. The main thrust of the Forde inquiry was to identify whether there had been any abuse, mistreatment or neglect of children in Queensland institutions to encompass the period from 1911 to 1998. The major recommendation that came out of the inquiry was the need for the Queensland government to increase the budget of the Department of Families by \$103 million to allow it to meet the national average per capita welfare spending for children and agree to maintain the increase in line with the national average. The additional resources were designed to focus on the prevention of child abuse through supporting at-risk families, respite care, parenting programs and other early intervention and preventive

programs for high-risk families. The Beattie government has failed the people of Queensland on this.

In the 1999-2000 budget the Beattie government committed \$10 million in recurrent funding to meet the recommendations of the Forde inquiry. The 2001-02 budget only delivers the \$10 million on a recurrent basis, an additional \$5.7 million on a recurrent basis and \$1 million in non-recurrent funding towards child protection, youth justice and family support services to support the recommendations of the Forde inquiry. Overall, this adds up to a dismal \$31.7 million, that is, \$31.7 million since the 1999-2000 budget, which is certainly a lot lower than the \$103 million required and promised. This shortfall must be addressed by the government if it is to prove that it is serious about this issue. If this government does not begin to seriously address the funding shortfall in this area, those who conducted the inquiry and the victims of child abuse in institutions must conclude that their involvement was a complete waste of time. This is an inquiry that cost Queensland taxpayers \$2.8 million, yet the government has not implemented the recommendations of the report.

This government also established the Forde Foundation Trust Fund, which was designed to help former residents of Queensland state and church-run institutions and children previously in care repair the past in practical ways and improve their lives in the future. That is certainly an admirable and needed aim. The trust fund was established with great fanfare and awarded the sum of \$1 million to operate. The government started to try to shift some of that responsibility of the foundation onto the churches and other charity organisations. Again this year we have found that only \$1 million has been committed to the running of the trust. The minister was kind enough last week to provide morning tea to the survivors identified by the Forde inquiry. It is a small contribution to the welfare of these people.

The conclusion here is that, while it seemed a good idea at the time to establish the fund, the government has not committed to maintaining the trust to a level that will provide real assistance to those people who deserve our help. Unfortunately, the government has fallen well short of the mark it set itself and abused the belief people had in it 'to do the right thing', as the Premier is so fond of saying. The member for Ashgrove has raised this issue previously and given his views on the performances of former governments. I agree that there are faults on both sides, but this government has rightly committed to implement that program, and it must do it.

The Beattie government has also failed in this year's budget to supply an adequate staff increase for the state's child protection workers. Earlier this month it was reported that Queensland's social workers have to deal with up to five times the number of cases handled by their interstate colleagues. Is it any wonder that staff are on the brink of striking? In this year's budget the government stated that it will recruit a further 50 service delivery child protection staff and a further eight support staff, and that is for the whole of the state! The relevant minister has projected in her budget statement that her department will deal with an increase of 592 cases in the 2001-02 financial year, yet she is only providing a further 50 staff to cope with this extra workload and the workload that already exists. Is it any wonder that such an outrageously high number of high priority child abuse cases remain unassessed? This is unacceptable, and I call on the minister to do something about this situation before it reaches even more critical proportions.

The minister has already refused once to give details of caseloads for departmental staff to a question on notice I asked of her. I have again placed a question on notice requesting those figures. It will be interesting to see if the minister provides details. The minister's response to me was that it was a crude measure of workload and that there is a new measure being formulated to more accurately reflect the picture. However, this morning we have discovered that those caseload figures have been taken to cabinet for consideration. They certainly should be disclosed so that people can see just how the department is operating. If she does not provide them, we can only be left to wonder why she is being so secretive. What is she trying to cover up? Are the caseloads so horrific that dedicated departmental staff are simply unable to cope with them?

Real problems deserve real solutions, and this government is obviously not committed to providing the solution to the people identified in the Forde inquiry. This is the government that will be remembered by those involved in the Forde inquiry as the government that can spend \$135 million on the inner northern busway, \$600 million on the South East Transit Project and \$23.5 million and growing on the footbridge, let alone the amount spent for Lang Park, but cannot find the recommended amount to spend on victims of child abuse as promised so many years ago.

Of course, this is not the only area of services in which the government has let down the people of Queensland. Funding for adequate housing for people with disabilities has also been

overlooked by the government. In answer to a question I asked the minister about Basil Stafford she confirmed that of the 45 residents at Basil Stafford 30 were voluntarily moving over the next 12 months and that a new residence would be provided for the 15 remaining residents. What the minister has not answered and which is of great concern to me and those families involved is where any additional housing is to be provided in the future for people whose care is best provided by a facility such as Basil Stafford.

The minister has done some very interesting figuring in the budget statement in relation to spending on disability housing, with the budgeted figures for 2000-01 not being spent in that year but being regurgitated for this year's budget. How housing facilities cannot have needed some expenditure last year is beyond me, especially when the minister repeatedly talks of the West Indian white ant that has infected the buildings at Basil Stafford. What is also interesting is that the minister budgeted for \$1.125 million in 2000-01 for the maintenance of Basil Stafford but did not use it during that time when it was still an operational facility yet has budgeted the exact same amount when she confirmed that the facility is to be downgraded.

The minister has also short-changed people in need of respite and emergency accommodation. In last year's budget the minister set aside an amount of \$700,000 for respite and emergency accommodation yet only spent \$100,000 of this allocation. This apparent idea of the minister's that the money did not need to be spent on respite and emergency accommodation flies in the face of people such as the Ipswich family who donated their family home for a respite centre due to a lack of facilities in their area.

Today I also want to address the lack of funding in the budget for the Office of Youth Affairs. The Beattie government claims to be committed to the youth of Queensland, and that they are one of its highest priorities. Yet when given the opportunity to put money where its mouth is, look at what we find, that is, the group of people designated to come up with real solutions to a growing number of the problems concerning youth have been given nothing in this budget. The Beattie government made much of the recently established State Youth Advisory Council, which is designed to implement a Queensland Youth Charter. However, there is no sign of any funding for the council in the latest budget. Not only is there no money for the council; the government seems to have also shunned funding its own five-year strategic plan for youth suicide. That is an extremely important project, yet the government appears to have put nothing aside for this.

I also highlight the effects of the 2001-02 budget on the Cunningham electorate and the Toowoomba and Darling Downs regions. The electorate of Cunningham includes a large part of Toowoomba. Even though there is little in this budget for my electorate, some other projects located outside the Cunningham electorate are relevant to its residents. One of the most significant announcements for our region was the long-awaited new Toowoomba Police Station. The \$3.7 million initially allocated out of a total project cost of \$10.5 million is much appreciated. This has been the culmination of a lot of work over a number of years by a lot of people, most notably the member for Toowoomba South and the former member for Toowoomba North. Given that detailed planning and design is complete and work is about to begin, the project was a long way down the track prior to the 17 February election. The fact that an estimated \$1.13 million will have been spent to 30 June is proof of that.

I recognise the fact that every member of parliament in the Toowoomba and Darling Downs region has been working on the project, both prior to 17 February and since. The current facilities housing the Queensland Police Service in Toowoomba are antiquated and inadequate. The staff who work at the station, the residents of the region and even those people who may be there unwillingly will appreciate the new facility. Work beginning on the new Warwick ambulance station will also be welcomed by those residents in the south of my electorate.

The sum of \$2.449 million for the completion of the horticultural facilities at the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE is also welcomed, as is the \$300,000 to redesign the administration centre at SQIT. The work done by SQIT, especially in the horticulture field, will be enhanced by the completion of this project—another project that is largely the result of a lot of hard work over a number of years.

The completion of the large redevelopment project at the Baillie Henderson Hospital is also a good outcome, although there are some concerns, as previously highlighted by the shadow minister for health. Baillie Henderson is a vital component of the health care facilities serving Toowoomba and the Darling Downs, and the completion of this project will allow it to continue the hard work it does.

The announcement by the federal government in this year's budget that it will fully fund the duplication of the Gatton bypass is a huge relief to all those people who use it. It has been a dangerous stretch of road, and this work will substantially increase the safety of people travelling along it. Unfortunately, spending on roads in the Darling Downs is below what is required to develop and maintain roads in the region. I am pleased, however, that there has been an allocation of money to continue the work on the Oakey-Pittsworth Road, part of which is in my electorate. That money represents really the only allocation to Cunningham.

I express my disappointment that the University of Southern Queensland has not received more recognition in this budget. Many members on both sides of this House have quite rightly praised the work of that institution.

Mr Lucas: A top university.

Mr COPELAND: Yes, it is a top university. Unfortunately, despite the government giving capital grants to other universities in the past, none have been made to USQ. Someone more cynical than I may assume that the reason for that is that the university is not in the south-east corner—the location of the universities that have benefited from those grants.

Mr Lucas: I am a graduate of USQ, and proudly so.

Mr COPELAND: Excellent. I hope there are some others who have graduated from there and done very well. I do welcome the \$100 million research capital infrastructure funding in the budget, and I certainly hope that USQ is able to take advantage of some of that funding.

A lot of the outcomes in this budget represent completion of projects that have been under way for some years. I have spoken previously in this House about the unfair Beattie pub tax and the effect it will have by taking significant funds out of community groups in my electorate and electorates right across the state in order to pay for Lang Park. The unfairness of it can be seen in the fact that community groups, volunteer organisations and schools in my electorate will be losing money in sponsorship and support from the local pubs that will have to pay that tax. I said when it was announced that this is an unfair tax. That remains my belief. It also makes a mockery of the government's 'no new taxes' cry.

There is an ongoing concern in the Cunningham electorate regarding the WAMP process and the imminent caps to be implemented in the Condamine-Balonne. Although the Minister for Natural Resources is trying to abrogate the government's responsibility to pay compensation for any property rights that are taken by the state government, it is quite clear that it is this government's responsibility to compensate those farmers who have had water allocations taken off them. It does not appear that this budget provides for that compensation.

I have also been unable to find a line item in the budget with regard to a question I asked of the minister recently in relation to the state providing dollar-for-dollar funding to match the federal government's \$2.1 million allocation already made to the Queensland Murray-Darling Committee. Without this funding Queensland will forgo those available federal funds and the excellent work that that organisation does, outside of the recently announced national action plan on salinity. That work will not be able to continue. I hope I am incorrect, and I look forward to the minister clarifying the government's position on this.

There is also a real concern in my electorate regarding school buses. It is an issue that is not particularly addressed in this budget and it is something that needs to have a major overhaul, after many years in practice. The issue of school buses is raised with me in my electorate office perhaps more than any other issue, and there are some very real concerns. It is an issue that may not need extra funds applied, but some changes in the way that they are applied and the way they are accessed need to be made.

I conclude by highlighting what I see as perhaps the greatest inadequacy with this budget. The Darling Downs region, along with Moreton, received by far the lowest per capita capital outlay in the state. We received only \$785 per capita. This is a huge reduction from \$1,210 per capita in 2000-01. The fact that per capita funding in the Brisbane region has increased significantly over that same period is indicative of this government's focus.

I recognise that there are no major infrastructure projects in our region—no mines, no ports, no busway, no freeway, no Lang Park—and that certainly does affect the capital outlay in our region. That is all the more reason that a major project such as the renewed water pipeline be undertaken. That project, as all members will be aware, has the enormous potential to create a huge economic stimulus for this state, creating real and long-term jobs. Those jobs are something that this state desperately needs. The piping of Brisbane's renewed water to the Lockyer Valley

will not only have a significant economic effect on the state; it will also mean a significant improvement to the environment of Moreton Bay. This in itself will be a major economic benefit to Brisbane and the bay. Such an outcome is generally agreed to be of great public benefit. It is also therefore to be expected that the public should make a contribution to the whole project.

I appreciate the Premier's and the government's support of this project. Unfortunately, it will take more than moral support to make it a reality. There must be financial support from local government, as the Premier has said; there must be financial support from the federal government, as the Premier has said; and there must be financial support from the state government, something the Premier refuses to say. I hope that the Premier will soon commit to the project, rather than point the finger at everyone else.

This state has a lot of competitive advantages. Unfortunately, this budget does little to capitalise on those advantages. I hope that the Premier will soon stop blaming everyone else and make a real, lasting and positive contribution to this state.

Hon. J. FOURAS (Ashgrove—ALP) (12.16 p.m.): I am very pleased to take part in this budget debate. It is amazing that all members opposite have had the same gripe. They have all complained about the lack of capital works in their electorates and they have all complained about the lack of human service delivery. They want to be all things to all people, yet they do not want to raise taxation. The only way they could meet their stated goals is to have a massive increase in taxation.

Those opposite have learnt nothing and forgotten everything. In relation to the delivery of human services, we have to catch up for the 32 years of the Bjelke-Petersen government, which left this area completely untouched.

Mr Springborg: You have been in government for 10 years almost.

Mr FOURAS: And we are getting there. We are getting up to the Australian average very quickly.

I congratulate the Treasurer for delivering in this budget all of Labor's election promises. I congratulate him for delivering a budget for all Queenslanders. In his budget speech the Treasurer said that Queensland's financial fundamentals are strong and that our balance sheet and cash flow remain the envy of all other states. That says everything. Growth in Queensland in the last financial year was 3.5 per cent, as compared with the Australian growth rate of two per cent. In this budget, growth is forecast at four per cent, compared with an Australian growth rate of three and a quarter per cent. We have financial assets exceeding \$15 billion and our net worth is increasing. People can see that we have the fundamentals in this state right. I think we all benefit from good budgets.

I will talk about how this budget impacts on my electorate in just a few areas. There is \$1 million in this budget as part of a \$3 million upgrade of the Gap State High School. This high school has delivered great educational outcomes, but it is getting run down. This upgrade will give people in my electorate a true choice in relation to state school education.

This budget also provides a further nearly \$2 million for public housing capital works in my electorate. The Bjelke-Petersen government never accepted the need for public housing, and we therefore had the lowest per capita public housing component in Australia by far. Even the Borbidge government gave over \$100 million back to the federal government to reduce debt rather than undertake capital works, because those opposite do not believe in public housing. This budget allocates half a million dollars, to follow the half a million dollars allocated last year, towards the further refurbishment and fit-out of the Alderley police depot.

As did the member for Mackay, I will talk about the Community Jobs Plan. There have recently been two successful applications in my electorate. The most recent one is Unicare Ashgrove, a service run by the Uniting Church which seeks to look after about 80 families in my electorate, with respite care and emergency care. That organisation has been able to buy new premises. Not only will it have a wonderful facility, some long-term unemployed people will also be given skills. The outcome in the electorate will be so positive.

What do people do when they work for the dole? They weed creeks. But we now have volunteers who do that. It involves no skills, and they receive no training. There is no support for the long-term unemployed. I had the privilege of being the president of the Enoggera SkillShare for eight years. The outcomes we were getting from there were that, with the majority of our programs, over 60 per cent of people were getting into full-time and part-time work. But when Howard came to office, they were all abolished. If we are to have equity and cohesion in our

society, we need to make sure that we provide opportunities for those people who are falling off the fast train of globalisation.

This debate on the budget seems to have been about capital works versus service delivery. Politics has always been about how we slice the economic cake. The real political decisions in any government happen at budget time, and it is about which slice of the economic cake goes to which person. Look at the last two decades—the decades following Thatcher and Reagan. We had the politics of tax cuts at the cost of public services all over the world. We had right-of-centre governments being elected and bringing in those policies. We had greed and private interest versus the public good. So we had private interest leading to public squalor.

It is interesting to note the voting trends in the last election in the United Kingdom. Voters there were opposed to the Tories' promises of tax cuts and privatisation. The voters saw that as irresponsible; they preferred better public services. As a Labor government we have to make sure that we respond to the winner-takes-all cost of globalisation, because it is not sustainable. The leader of the Liberal Party said—

Mr Lucas: Which one was that?

Mr FOURAS: Mr Quinn, the third one. He said that the government would rue its cutting of the size of its capital works budget because it would cost jobs. But he was wrong, because there was no cutting of the capital works budget. But there was not as much as some of the people in the business sector wanted.

What if we wanted to please the Business Council of Queensland in this budget? It would want \$400 million or \$500 million more in public works spending. Where would we get that from? Would we get it from the 8.9 per cent increase in education? Do we want to leave our young people behind and not give them a future? That is the difficulty of this argument.

The real concern by opposition members in this debate has been about the unemployment figures. It is really unfortunate that they can, in some ways, mask what is really happening. As I said earlier, we are experiencing growth above the Australian average in this state. So on that basis we must be doing something right. But when we consider our very high participation rate in Queensland—over 65 per cent - and the immigration rate of 1.5 per cent to two per cent, we can see one of the reasons why unemployment in Queensland is high compared to that in other states.

We were doing very well until the middle of last year. Queensland's unemployment rate was only 7.5 per cent in the middle of last year—a 10-year low. Then suddenly things went quite sour. Things were happening across the nation, but the situation was worse in Queensland. Queensland is always the first state to feel the chilly winds of a recession, but it is also the first to show an improvement. I do not believe that the government policies that gave us that 7.5 per cent have changed. They are right. I believe that the only change that occurred in that time was the GST, which has more of an effect on a service sector economy like Queensland's. The GST affects small business more. And then we had the blow-out in fuel prices and increased interest rates by the Reserve Bank. So I think that answers the concerns of members opposite about unemployment.

We need to take note that Queensland is on the right road to becoming the Smart State. We need to drive our economic strategies towards the new knowledge industries of the information age with thousands of new jobs in IT, technology and biotechnology. I believe that the \$100 million for the Research Facility Fund, the \$10 million for the Aviation Centre of Excellence and the extra money for education will lead us down that road.

I remember some time ago reading that the Queensland Competition Authority said that it was not the role of state governments to usurp financial markets by building up and investing in a large portfolio of financial assets. Of course, it was talking about a portfolio which is in excess of \$16 billion. What is it saying? Is it saying that we should let the financial sector invest that for us in the private market?

Australia's monetary policy is run largely for the benefit of the financial sector. The inflation target is the only real target for the Reserve Bank of Australia. It allows the financial sector to exploit profit opportunities by building demand for debt to finance activities in shares, properties, mergers and consumer credit. I note that there has been a growth in private sector debt in the last few years, and it is escalating. It is currently six per cent of gross domestic product—double the average in European countries. What we are seeing is a finance sector without an incentive to invest in areas where we will have growth and in areas where we will get industry, because they regard that as a high risk. The financial managers of today—the fund managers of today's

world—are interested in the bonuses that they are going to get at the end of the year. They will not take risks in new industries that require success. So we need to promote investment in that sector in this era of globalisation.

Historically, we have three choices. Governments can do it themselves—like the Taiwanese strategy—in terms of investment in these areas; they can do it like the Irish—by subsidising multinationals to do it; or they can do it like the northern Asian and German people do—by regulation, compelling the finance sector to do these things. We are actually trying to do it by having some government involvement.

The United States has massive expenditure on its Army for R&D, and it has massive expenditure in the space age. We do not have that. As I said, there are no incentives to fund managers to consider the national interest. I believe that this policy will continue to drive the Australian dollar lower and lower and, ultimately, will threaten inflation. In many ways I believe that, in this regard, we will see an ideology that has with it the seeds of its own destruction.

We now have a trade deficit in manufacturing—over eight per cent of gross domestic product—the highest in the OECD. We are going nowhere. We need to adapt new technologies to traditional industries. We need to gain innovation and management skills. We need to have the benefits of research and development and education expenditure to accrue to Australians. My son is about to finish a PhD in mechanical engineering. He possibly has to go overseas to get a job. What investment will be made in him? We are not going to get it unless we change our ways. And if we do not do this, our manufacturing base will continue to decline and, consequently, the proportion of full-time jobs paying reasonable wages will also decline.

With regard to industrial relations—Alan Wood in the *Australian* incensed me when he wrote—

Beattie has introduced what is probably the worst system in Australia, turning the clock back to the rigidities of arbitration tribunals and awards and effectively abolishing individual contracts. This can't be good for jobs.

So he wants us to follow the Reith experience. I watched the segment called 'The Insider' on the *Sunday* program of 8 April. That program showed quite clearly what the Reith experience is. Agent provocateurs were brought in to help sack workers.

What happened at that meatworks? The G & K O'Connor meatworks at Pakenham near Melbourne was the scene of the longest lockout by management of workers in Australia. They were locked out for an unbelievable amount of time and were taken back only on individual contracts. That meant that they all lost 30 per cent of their salary. They lost all the conditions for which they had worked for a lifetime. The economic rationalists like Alan Wood want to deregulate the labour market; and by deregulation they mean lower and lower wages and not looking after people. Yet we are told that we should mimic the experience of others.

We are about social justice. We are about social cohesion. We are about a society that looks after all its members and tries to give people their day in the sun. I congratulate the Treasurer and the Beattie Labor government, because this was a Labor budget. This was a budget that got a balance between looking after people in need and making sure that the economic parameters were right so that we can keep our AAA rating. I predict that in two years time, before the next election, people will be in awe of the budget that this Labor government will bring down. Those opposite can take the smiles off their faces, because they will not have anything to run with for that election.

I congratulate the Treasurer again. I am proud to be part of the Labor government that brought down this budget.

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN (Stafford—ALP) (12.30 p.m.): I rise to support this responsible, steady budget from a solid and responsible government. We have heard so many complaints from members opposite. Their complaints are based on the fact that they cannot really criticise the content of what is in it and the purpose of the budget. Members will have noted that the opposition is using a couple of phrases: 'the arrogant government with a dangerous majority'.

Mr Springborg interjected.

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: The honourable Opposition Deputy Whip says that he is going to keep using it for the next couple of years. We know where the arrogance comes in, and it is not from this side. But members opposite are partly right. This is a dangerous majority, but it is only dangerous for members opposite because they do not have a chance of getting onto this side of the chamber at the next election if they keep up their work. That phrase simply masks a lazy and

ineffective opposition. That is what they are really saying. They are saying, 'We are so lazy and ineffective that the only way we can get some negativity is by trying to scare the constituents.'

Mr Mickel: He is the only one here. Leave him alone.

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: I will accept the interjection from the member for Logan, even though he is not in his correct seat. At least the member for Southern Downs is in the chamber. He is the only person from the opposition. There is no cross-bench member. Here we have 20 government members, keen enough to support this budget, and doing a damn good job.

Government members: Hear, hear!

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: I accept the interjections of support from all the government members who made that comment.

The good people of Stafford are very pleased to have the announcement for the planning for the new police station and the budget to purchase land. There is not a specific amount allocated, simply because the commercial in confidence nature of the purchase of land means that the Police Service, through its property and assets section, will look for a piece of land that will meet their needs, that will be accessible, that will fit in with the other land uses and where they will be able to construct and use the building to meet the policing needs of the soon-to-be-created Stafford Police Division. That division cannot be established until the land and the station are fully in place, but that announcement should be coming shortly.

Mr Cummins: The government delivers on law and order.

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: We are pleased to deliver not only on law and order and public safety but also in a lot of areas. Members might not be aware, but recently there have been some very cowardly attacks on women in the Stafford area. The need for a high police presence in the area is recognised, and I congratulated the Queensland Police Service earlier in the week for having taken into custody someone who will be charged with certain offences.

I am also proud that this government will create 33,000 new jobs in the 2001-02 period. I know that groups like the Cherside and District Senior Citizens Centre will be applauding the additional \$3 million over three years for the Home Assist/Home Secure program. I congratulate everyone at Burnie Brae for the fantastic effort they put in to provide services for the elderly and disabled.

The 300 extra police who will be brought online in the next 12 months will be spread throughout the whole state. I congratulate the Minister for Police on the way in which he is keeping me informed on what is happening in my area, and I know that other backbenchers have had a similar experience. We all, of course, would like more police, more teachers, more nurses in our area. We know that we have to share, and we are happy to share so long as it is done on an equitable basis. I trust this minister and the Police Department to do that.

In the education field, the Triple R program will benefit more than 900 schools throughout the state, and some of those schools will be in my electorate, including the more than \$632,000 for phase 2 of the renewal program for the Wavell State High School. Many people on the government backbench come from well-established areas, where the schools are 30, 40, 60 years old. They have not had an ongoing program of maintenance. They do need a solid revamp. In the growth areas, the schools not only were new but also were put on an immediate maintenance program. We have not had that. I also thank the Minister for Education, Anna Bligh, for the way in which she keeps her backbench and her committee informed on what is happening.

The \$120 million capital rebuilding and redevelopment of state government nursing homes will be welcomed by the population who will need those services and who are currently housed in those services. As well, the \$5 million to reduce hospital waiting lists in the next 12 months will have a flow-on effect to the Prince Charles Hospital, and patients not just from my area but also from all the inner northern suburbs will benefit. While I mention Prince Charles Hospital, I will just reiterate my thanks to the government, the Premier and the Minister for Health for the partnership with GE Medical Systems for the introduction of the world's leading technology for medical resonance imaging. This will continue to keep Prince Charles Hospital at the forefront of world-class medical services and research.

The work on the inner northern busways will affect many of the suburbs and electorates in the northern area of Brisbane. I thank the minister for his work there. The greater challenge is the outer northern busway to link up to the Carseldine campus. That will be extremely difficult

because of the nature of the land and the road network. It is a challenge that faces us all, and I look forward to working with the minister in having an input into that program.

In conclusion, I say that this is a steady, solid, responsible government. We have in fact looked at the needs of all Queenslanders. I will just take one minute to emphasise one aspect of that. I have heard so many members on the opposition side say that it is all in south-east Queensland. The figures put the lie to that. There is a majority of the resourcing outside the Brisbane and the south-east corner.

Mr Cummins: Fifty-eight per cent.

Mr TERRY SULLIVAN: Fifty-eight per cent, I have been told. I actually have no problem with things like the extra cost for housing, teaching, electricity supply and roads in remote areas. In fact, Brisbane residents have subsidised the electricity for the bush for years, and I have had no problem with that. But what I do have a problem with is when members opposite treat the whole of Brisbane as if we were one electorate. There are more than 1 million people in the south-east corner. I cannot see any reason why the 150 people in my electorate who lose their jobs because a major cannery or factory closes down at Eagle Farm should not receive the same treatment and resources as 150 people who lose their jobs because something closes down at Murgon or Childers. The people in Brisbane's suburbs deserve the same respect and support as people in small country towns. For some of the members opposite to say that there is a bias against the bush is an absolute lie in terms of where the money is spent, and it is about time that they realise that we need a fair go here in Brisbane.

This is a responsible budget from a responsible government. It has my support.

Mr SPRINGBORG (Southern Downs—NPA) (12.30 p.m.): I want to refer to a few general perceptions that I have gained while listening to this budget debate over the past couple of days. Last year—and I think even the year before—in my contribution I referred to the way in which the budget papers are presented. When I entered this parliament 11 and a half years ago, the budget papers for the first Goss government were not very voluminous. They were probably about two or three inches thick and probably about half the width of the budget documents that were presented the other day. Certainly there was a lot more information, and more easily accessible information, in those budget papers.

Over the past 10 or 11 years—and I am not picking on any particular government—I have seen a decline in the quality and the amount of accessible information in the budget papers. I believe that the paramount concern should be the quality of information that is contained in the budget papers. It is great to have all of this information, but if we actually look at what is contained in the budget papers to enable members to respond to what they have received in certain portfolio areas, we find that the budget papers are limited. They are certainly far more limited than what they were 10 or 11 years ago.

Members opposite and some other people might scoff at my comments, but it is true. If honourable members do not believe what I am saying, I challenge them to get a copy of the budget papers that were presented by the Goss government in its first and second terms.

Mr Lucas: I am pleased that you read it.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I did read them, because they are very, very important. I am talking about the way in which the information that is presented to this parliament in those budget papers has changed over that time.

Mr Terry Sullivan: But that is the ministerial program statements for the estimates committees. They were not there.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Yes, but the Ministerial Portfolio Statements themselves do not contain a lot of information. The individual breakdowns that you need for districts within regions is not there. Even the regions are not necessarily covered. The statistical divisions are there, but there is not the breakdown of the individual regions. The process of going through the budget papers to get that information has become really protracted. This is not necessarily an attack on this government; it is an attack on a process that has evolved over the past 10 or a dozen years. I think that we really need to look at that.

Earlier, the honourable member for Ashgrove stated that this budget delivers all of the Labor Party's election promises. I do not believe that to be the case, and I intend to point out some of the areas where I think the government has fallen down. The honourable member who spoke before me mentioned the subsidisation of electricity for rural and regional consumers. When that legislation was introduced into the parliament in the early 1970s, the Labor Party voted against

tariff equalisation. I am very pleased that they now support it. I think we need to break down that city-rural divide and understand that the regional and rural areas need the city and vice versa.

People in Brisbane and other areas, including the towns in my electorate, receive the benefit of subsidised bus services. That is very important. Other areas also receive the benefit of subsidised train services. That is also important. There are a whole range of things that are provided for people, such as sporting facilities, on which the government would never get a financial return. They are community services. That is why we have governments elected by the people. At the end of the day, we can question the spending priorities of a government—and I think that is appropriate—but we have to consider that people in the regional areas of the state have needs that are different from those of people in the city, and that there are different ways of meeting those needs.

I would like to talk about a couple of things that are happening in my electorate. I have a general concern about the overall reduction in the capital works budget and a concern about some other funding issues. However, there is funding in the budget for a new amenities block for the Warwick West State School, at a total value of \$272,000. There will be a replacement station at Warwick for the Queensland Ambulance Service at a cost of \$700,000, which is very welcome. There will also be compliance money for the Texas and Inglewood Hospitals. I understand that money for the Millmerran Hospital has also been rolled into this. About \$5 million will be spent between those three hospitals. Millmerran Hospital is not located in my electorate; it is located in the electorate of the honourable member for Cunningham. That money is for compliance—something that inevitably must happen—but it is welcome. There is also funding for the upgrade of the Goondiwindi Hospital—\$700,000.

There is funding for a demountable building for the Main Roads staff at Warwick of \$400,000. Some people may say that for \$400,000, they should get a pretty good demountable building, because a lot of people could build a two or three-storey house for that amount. An allocation has also been made for certain highway upgrades and road improvements north of Goondiwindi. That is Commonwealth money but, because of the way in which that money is administered, it comes out of the state budget. At least the much-needed work at the Murri Murri crossing is being done.

My area has also received funding for a bridge of \$1.4 million. Although that funding is not equivalent to the \$30 million that has been given for the pedestrian bridge in Brisbane, at least it addresses an area of need on the Texas-Yelarbon road. That road services the commodity needs of Australia's largest cattle feedlot, Whyalla. Over the past six or eight years—

Mr Lucas: Is Kath Wallace still there?

Mr SPRINGBORG: She has actually moved to Adelaide. Kath Wallace taught me in year 1. She is a really good old Labor stalwart. She always wondered where she went wrong—or where I went right!

An honourable member interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: That was great, too. I welcome that commitment to that new bridge. I just hope it is going to be wide enough. Certainly it meets the commodity needs of that feedlot and also the people who conduct commerce or other activities on that road, such as taking their kids to school.

I will move on now to some portfolio issues. I would love to take more interjections, but I am running out of time—unless at the end of my 20 minutes a member moves that I be further heard. I turn to the earlier comments of the honourable member for Ashgrove about the government meeting its promises. We know that the drug courts proposal has received bipartisan support. In fact, in January or February 1999 I suggested it as coalition policy and I moved a motion in this parliament that the government move to establish drug courts. The government voted against that motion but later put in place a model drug court in Queensland—something which I actually welcome.

In the portfolio area of Attorney-General and Justice, \$1.17 million has been allocated for the continuation of the trial of the drug courts at Southport, Ipswich and Beenleigh. In this budget, only planning is to occur for drug courts in Cairns and Townsville. The concern I have is that a lot of things can be planned in the budget, and continue to be planned. A typical example is the new Brisbane Magistrates Court complex. This year it looks as though we have some concrete funding for it in the budget, but basically it has been planned since around about 1997. I just hope that this planning of drug courts for Cairns and Townsville does not get put on the planning never-

never. It was an election promise to spend a share of \$1.433 million of recurrent funding and \$800,000 worth of capital works in establishing those particular courts that I mentioned.

The state contribution to legal aid funding increased by \$2.7 million. The Attorney-General has claimed that legal aid funding has been increased by \$10 million. However, that is an increase over four years, not over one year. The fact of the matter is that this budget promises only \$2 million a year. In June 2000 the Commonwealth committed to increasing legal aid funding for Queensland by \$19 million over four years. I concede that prior to that the Commonwealth government had not necessarily met its obligations, but when it finally came the \$19 million was a significant contribution. Clearly, the Queensland Attorney-General has been shamed into making this commitment by the Commonwealth funding. Over the past 12 months applications for legal aid have increased by three per cent. The government plans to provide 34 community access points to legal aid services targeting rural and regional communities. That is welcome, but at this stage it probably remains to be seen how much is actually an enhancement of what we have at the moment.

Criminal matters coming before Magistrates Courts are projected to increase by 10 per cent, and that is a real worry. There will be new courthouses for Brisbane, Inala and Pormpuraaw and an upgrading of the courthouses in Mackay, Mount Isa and Wynnum. That is certainly welcome. An amount of \$1.2 million has been allocated for the purchase of surplus government land at Caloundra for the future building of a courthouse. While the construction or upgrade of those courthouses is very important, the construction of the courthouse at Caloundra was also a coalition promise and something that I said would happen during the election campaign. What we really need is greater access to higher—

Mr Cummins interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The honourable member was shamed into pushing for it in this budget.

Mr Cummins interjected.

Mr SPRINGBORG: When I was the minister I promised lots of things and delivered lots as well. An important need is greater and quicker access to justice. The budget makes provision for a higher court judge to sit in one more location. However, because of the changed reporting procedure, the budget does not reveal whether it will be a resident judge or simply a circuit court judge. Our policy was not only to improve and build court facilities but also to increase the number of locations with resident judges of either Supreme or District Court level, for example, the provision of a Supreme Court judge for Southport. I believe that a District Court judge is needed in Toowoomba to service our area, and that view would probably be shared by the honourable member for Toowoomba North. We need to work towards that sooner rather than later.

The courts modernisation project has been allocated \$3.8 million for 2001-02. However, it is recognised that this includes a deferral of costs from 2000-01, which accounts for the 2000-01 courts modernisation budget being underspent by approximately \$1.3 million.

The Attorney-General has recognised that there have been a number of difficulties experienced by the Queensland-wide interlinked court system that was installed under this program, including poor data communication and bugs in the software. The Attorney-General advises that programs have been put in place to deal with the bugs as they are detected. This must surely come at a cost and we must question whether the appropriation to this program for 2001-02 is sufficient to meet such increases.

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions was very badly managed by the previous government, to the extent that we lost our senior prosecutors from Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Southport and Toowoomba. There has also been a run-down of intellectual knowledge and corporate knowledge in Brisbane as a lot of very experienced people have left the service. We now have a disproportionate balance in Queensland. We have very experienced people in the Office of the Public Defender, which is very important, but we do have a real skills shortage in DPP. No specific data is provided on the office's operating budget or its staffing levels. Funding is allocated through criminal law administration appropriations.

Given that the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions is an essential service, it would be reasonable to expect that the budget should be reviewed by the government. I intend to pursue that. We are all aware of the concerns expressed in our electorates and throughout Queensland about prosecutors simply turning up on the day without having been very well briefed. As a consequence, matters are not being dealt with properly in the court. In some cases, the presiding judge has admonished the prosecution. Also, we have seen situations where a verdict may have

been different if the amount of preparation by, information and experience of the person appearing for the DPP had been much greater. There is a real resourcing issue there.

We have to do something to address the issue of the dearth of talent that is being caused by resignations from that office over the last couple of years. A lot of people in the office are trying to do a good job, but at the end of the day we have to enhance their skill level and working conditions to ensure that we have a properly resourced and balanced Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The budget of the Office of Fair Trading has been decreased by approximately \$10 million. The government describes the activities of the Office of Fair Trading as making a 'significant contribution to the development of a dynamic and competitive trading environment within Queensland'. A cut of \$10 million to the office's budget will not assist in achieving that outcome.

Previously, the office has only achieved a 75 per cent level of satisfaction for those who bring complaints before it. Despite the cut in its budget, the government expects that the office will increase the rate of satisfaction by five per cent. That seems to be highly unlikely, given that the government itself is predicting increases in contact with the office by some hundreds of thousands, and given that in previous years the amount of contact predicted in the budget papers was significantly underestimated. The funding cut comes at precisely the time when the department will be implementing the provisions of the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act. It would be highly unlikely that the office would not have to field a significantly higher number of inquiries as a result of the implementation of that legislation. However, to deal with that, the entire department will have an increase of only two full-time equivalent staff. That hardly seems to be enough.

Marketing scams, both domestic and international, are becoming more sophisticated and are ripping off even very astute people. As such, the Office of Fair Trading needs the resources to properly investigate those scams, as well as to warn consumers of the risks of them and to take action against the promoters where possible.

Mr Cummins: And to take the fall.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Got me for none, mate; I'm too wise.

The office has had a number of successes in this area, with significant action taken against persons involved in the cash club scheme. However, with the slashing of the office's budget by the Beattie government, it is difficult to see how the office will have sufficient funding to investigate the many matters that it has a social responsibility to investigate.

I acknowledge that the Department of Innovation and Information Technology is a new department and it is a very important portfolio. It is very difficult to directly compare matters in this year's budget with what may have happened previously because of the consolidation of certain responsibilities of other departments. Generally, we are dealing with a portfolio that, hopefully, will deliver good news to Queensland on a regular basis. I will be keeping a very close watching brief on it.

The budget will increase overall funding for services, infrastructure and facilities to Queensland regions by only \$2.84 million. However, when developments in the forthcoming year are examined, it is seen that none will directly provide IT facilities to rural areas. The only funds provided for rural areas are for planning and development purposes. I note that the government talks about the provision in this year's budget of \$100 million for the Smart State plan and I hope that good things will come from that.

Whilst I am talking about issues associated with innovation and technology, I do not want to miss the opportunity of mentioning the particle accelerator or the synchrotron, which was mentioned in today's newspapers. Depending on what happens over the next couple of weeks, there is a very real risk that this project may be lost to Victoria. I understand that the Victorian government has indicated that it is prepared to spend up to \$100 million to attract the project to Victoria. Certainly, a process has to be followed to finally decide—

Mr Lucas: And they clearly had no confidence that they were going to win on their merits.

Mr SPRINGBORG: But that particular door has not completely closed yet, either. The Queensland government has to do whatever it can to keep this innovation in Queensland. It is a bit hard to cry that they were not prepared to play cricket. The minister knows that even the Queensland government has been prepared to go in under what is proposed for other states and to put some money up to bring particular proposals and business opportunities to Queensland. In

this particular circumstance, I do not think that it is good enough to excuse what is relative inaction, saying that they have gone outside the process and crying over spilt milk.

Mr Lucas: I'm not going to get you to buy me a house at auction. You would bid at anything.

Mr SPRINGBORG: But at the end of the day, the Victorian government is prepared to put its money where its mouth is. The Victorian government sees this as a significant opportunity, and it is. This government is saying, 'Well, there might be an opportunity for centres of excellence in Queensland,' and hopefully there is. But it would be far better to have this particle accelerator located in Queensland and for centres of excellence to build up around it.

We know that a magnetic process goes with this. Wherever the particle accelerator is established, by and large the scientists and researchers will want to be located near it. That is a simple reality. It will give them an opportunity to test their intellectual capacity and their knowledge against each other. Basically, they will be able to drive down the road instead of flying.

The government has to be prepared to exceed the commitment that apparently is going to be made by the Victorian government. This is the biggest scientific innovation that has been promised for some decades in Australia. The Premier is taking some credit for that, and good on him, but we need to ensure that it is located in Queensland. Particle acceleration technology is developing throughout the world. We know that it will be of real benefit to IT, molecular biology, communications and a range of other things that are important to the future good of this state.

Sitting suspended from 12.59 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

Ms BARRY (Aspley—ALP) (2.30 p.m.): It is with a sense of pride and privilege that I rise to support the appropriation bills—privilege to be representing the people of Aspley for the first time in this debate and proud to be part of the Beattie Labor government responsible for these bills. The budget represents an investment in people and communities like those in the electorate of Aspley.

In my first four months as their state member, I have done a lot of listening to and talking with the people of Aspley. It is clear to me, even in these early days, that the people of my electorate have their priorities. They are clear about what they believe governments should be doing for them. They want a government that exercises fiscal responsibility but also one that ensures that it will be done with a strong social conscience and a sense of putting a hand out to assist those who need a hand up.

The people of the Aspley electorate have talked to me about the things that they value. They value access to quality education for all of our children that includes sufficient numbers of teachers in our classrooms and appropriate buildings in which to learn and teach. They value equity and access to affordable and quality health care for all Queenslanders, including access to elective surgery within a reasonable time frame and improved access to oral health treatments. They value the rights and opportunities for people to be meaningfully and appropriately employed, including young people and mature aged job seekers. They value help for families by assisting those parents who need help with the challenges of parenting in today's world. They value assistance to those people who have challenges as a result of disability. They want improved care packages for people who live with disability at home and the very important provision of respite care to ensure that carers have the opportunity to restore their health and energy following prolonged periods of care delivery.

The people of my electorate value a sense of safety within their community. They want to feel safe in their homes and safe from the impact of opportunistic crime through an increased police presence. They also value a proactive approach to the causes of crime and a tough approach to those who repeatedly perpetuate crimes of an opportunistic nature.

The people of Aspley value safety as they travel around our busy city streets. They want roads and access to pedestrian walkways that are safe and traffic management strategies that are effective and create effective, efficient traffic flows. They value a public transport system that meets their travel needs and is a real alternative to the use of their cars.

The people of Aspley value a balance between their time spent at work and their time spent with their families. They want a manageable working life where a productive and satisfying working output is achieved through reasonable workloads and secure employment patterns. They value a safe working life where injury, where it unfortunately occurs, affords them a secure, affordable workers compensation recompense.

The people of Aspley value their sporting and recreational opportunities and facilities, and they value an ability to improve their facilities in partnership with government. The people of the Aspley electorate value safe, secure and dignified care for their older citizens, particularly those who live in nursing homes. They want our small and medium businesses to be supported to grow and prosper through appropriate taxation regimes, reduced red tape, and innovative and practical help with business acumen and ideas.

The people of Aspley want their state government to have a plan—a plan that reflects their electorate's priorities: health, education, jobs, disability services, quality of working life, safety and a vision for the future that is innovative and courageous as well as smart. I am pleased to be able to tell the people of the Aspley electorate that these bills reflect their priorities. These bills reflect an investment in people and communities to meet the diverse and emerging needs of all Queenslanders, and Aspley gets its share.

There is a commitment in capital works of over \$1.1 million in our schools, including replacement and additional classrooms for Aspley East State School and Bald Hills State School, and \$70,000 for land acquisition for the Bald Hills State School. As a past president of the Bald Hills P&C, I know that this was a priority project for a set-down zone that would enable access for emergency and other vehicles, and I am pleased to be able to deliver them this news.

The budget provides capital works funds for the Aspley State High School so that it may complete its vital planning work for its entry into the Secondary Schools Renewal Program—plans that include construction of new and refurbished facilities and construction of a footbridge that will link the Aspley State High School to the Carseldine campus of QUT.

The bill also provides over \$680,000 for Pine Rivers State High School. Work has already commenced at the school as part of the state government's Secondary Schools Renewal Program. There are plans to construct four extra classrooms and a state-of-the-art auditorium that will enable this school to be a nation leader in multimedia and information technology education. We can see the work proceeding as we speak.

I am excited by the plans at both of these high schools in my electorate. Aspley State High School has embraced the need for a continuous pathway for students from preschool, primary school, special school, secondary school and on to tertiary education either at Carseldine campus of QUT or North Point TAFE. It has created a community education campus, a one-stop shop in education, in Aspley. The money from this Appropriation Bill will enable plans to be further developed.

Pine Rivers State High School is the high school to which I send my two eldest sons because it is my local, great, state high school. It will see its plans come to fruition. I congratulate the teachers, the principals—Janelle Degan of Pine Rivers and Ian Isaacs of Aspley State High School—the parents and the communities of these schools on their vision. They will contribute to the capacity of our children to get jobs and to prosper.

The reality of this government's investment in Queensland as a Smart State is something that I and many of the families in Aspley can see. We see career opportunities in information and technology. They are tangible and they are achievable. Our children are hopeful. They come home from school, from careers days, and talk about careers and jobs in information technology, diplomacy, arts and the media, to name just a few of the choices that they see that they have. I have hope for their future and they have hope for their future. They are not withering away, despairing; they are marching in tune with this government's Smart State strategy because that is where the jobs are. They are there for all students, be they technical, trade, service driven, academic, creative or research jobs. They see the possibilities for their future, and this state government's Appropriation Bill makes their future possibilities a reality in the Aspley electorate.

The bill provides for a further \$5.5 million for the continuation of works for the third rail track. I am a regular train traveller on the Caboolture-Sunshine Coast line and I can say that this work—

A government member interjected.

Ms BARRY: Yes, it is a very good train service. I can say that the work on this line makes travelling by train faster, more efficient and a much more attractive alternative to our cars.

I am delighted that the funds provide for much-needed improvements to Strathpine Road. The total allocation of funds to this project will be \$300,000. As I speak, the constituents of Bald Hills are being widely consulted on the proposed works. I am advised that this work will be completed within the year. The Aspley electorate benefits tremendously from the total Transport and Main Roads budget.

A further \$89,000 has been allocated to works in public housing in Aspley. I had the recent pleasure of hearing from a constituent, a Mr Kelly Fitzgerald, who is a fine Irishman. He came to thank me for the government's installation of ventilation and a skylight facility within his public housing unit. It was a small item, but it made his and his wife's anticipation of summer much happier. I say thank you to the minister, the Honourable Robert Swarten, and the Brisbane North office of the Department of Public Housing for remembering that the little things are important to individuals such as Mr and Mrs Fitzgerald.

This budget delivers for workers. It delivers an improved quality of working life for them through the establishment of a Work and Family Unit in the Department of Industrial Relations. The unit will run pilot projects on flexible family initiatives in the workplace. There is \$99,000 to develop industry codes on reasonable working hours. Money is also allocated for a workplace bullying public inquiry and youth advocacy services. These initiatives will assist to address the issues expressed by many workers in my electorate.

The establishment of a \$100 million Smart State research facility fund that drives innovation, science and technology in this state is a worthy centrepiece of this budget, as is the establishment of a pharmacy centre of excellence. Having been a nurse for some 24 years, I know first-hand that Queensland and Australia are leading talents in research—research that saves and improves lives. But all too often in the past we have heard about researchers being compelled to sell their knowledge or to seek to have it developed offshore because funding is unavailable, because neither governments nor the business world understand their vision or because they themselves have undeveloped business acumen, leading to their failure to capitalise on the research findings. This government's commitment to Smart State infrastructure will provide Queenslanders with access to world-class research and its positive outcomes.

The budget provides for record health spending. Amongst this is \$5.6 million for 100 school nurses, recognition that the Beattie Labor government understands the primary health care role of nurses in our schools. There are increased job opportunities for nurse graduates. I am sorry that the member for Lockyer is not in the chamber, but I have to say that they are great graduates who will deliver professional care. In particular I note with pleasure the \$120 million upgrade to state government nursing homes. I have long been known to be an advocate for the unique role of state government nursing homes and the role that they play in the provision of aged care within this state and this country. In an environment where the federal government has wasted millions of dollars by pouring unaccountable funds into the hands of a minority of unscrupulous aged care providers, this state government has the foresight to secure the future for state government nursing homes and to be accountable to the people of Queensland for the state of its facilities. The many nurses and other staff, as well as the residents and families—present and future—within our state government nursing homes will welcome the upgrading of their facilities.

This bill reflects the priorities of the Labor government put to the people of Aspley and to Queenslanders at the state election. I am pleased it reflects the priorities of the people of Aspley. However, there are still challenges for me as their local member. I have begun advocating for additional classroom space at the Aspley State School and, despite record funding of disability services by the Beattie Labor government, there is still a demand in my electorate for funds for home care and for long-term accommodation strategies for those people with a disability who have ageing parents. I can assure the people of Aspley that I will continue to represent both their priorities and their unique needs. I congratulate the Premier, the Treasurer and all ministers and commend the bills to the House.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Liddy Clark): Order! Before I call the honourable member for Broadwater, I welcome to the public gallery members of the Wavell Heights community fitness group and its instructors. Of course, Wavell Heights is in the electorate of Clayfield.

Mr Purcell: And Leah.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: And Leah. Yes, I know. She wrote it.

Mrs CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (2.43 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to rise to speak on the Treasurer's 2001 budget. In doing so, I commend him for a budget that contains positive opportunities for all Queenslanders. When I read what had been delivered for Queensland, the Gold Coast and, in particular, my electorate of Broadwater, I felt extremely proud. I am proud that it is this government that has delivered on its promise to focus on real issues—real issues such as health, education, housing, transport, services for our elderly and disabled, employment, training and the environment, real issues that Broadwater residents care about and want to hear about.

In fact, I had difficulty reading through the budget because there was so much in it. I am amazed and disappointed that the member for Gympie could find nothing in the budget for her electorate. While I appreciate that the word 'Gympie' may not have jumped out at her as she perused the documentation, I would encourage the opposition to delve deeper. This budget is jam-packed with funding for grants, initiatives and programs that help and assist all Queenslanders. This budget is by no means boring or bland, and it certainly does not leave the Gold Coast or Broadwater short-changed.

Mr Mackenroth: What she doesn't understand is that Gympie is my family's old home town. There's no way I wouldn't look after Gympie.

Mrs CROFT: That is right.

Broadwater is Labor heartland. The residents in my electorate are good, down-to-earth and hardworking people. I believe that statements that there is nothing in this budget for the people of the Gold Coast are an insult to the people who worked very hard to ensure that I was well aware of the needs and wants of Broadwater. I then made sure the relevant ministers were well informed by bringing Broadwater's needs and wants to this House.

This government listened. This government is well informed about Broadwater. It is well aware of its diversity, with residents coming from all backgrounds, and its striking contrast of older retirees and young families. I had no trouble at all finding something for everyone in this budget, and one of the big winners were our schoolchildren. I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

In this Budget the Beattie Government has delivered \$1.734 Million in total capital works spending from Education into Broadwater. \$661,969 has been granted to Coombabah State High School towards a new resource centre to replace the school's library that was destroyed by fire last year. The destruction deeply affected the students, the teacher's, parents and friends of the school and volunteer workers. I would like to take this opportunity to commend Coombabah High School's P & C for their ... contribution towards the new resource facility. This is an outstanding achievement enabling the school to work co-operatively with Education Queensland on the design of a functional facility that will also incorporate a counselling centre for the students. The school principal, Mrs Carolyn Hooper, has also conveyed to me her gratitude towards Q-Build for clearing the debris of the destroyed library on the weekend to relieve some pain of the aftermath for the students and teachers.

Biggera Waters Primary School will receive in this budget \$825,189 for a double story teaching block, \$200,000 for a new amenities block and an additional \$47,000 to enhance the resource and administration block. Biggera Waters Primary School P & C are to be congratulated for their past and recent efforts in bringing to this government's attention the school's needs. I regularly attend the school's P & C meetings and it is by doing so that I am giving the parents and teachers an opportunity to discuss many issues that concern them with me. Led by P & C President, Mr Brian Golden the parents and teachers boast enthusiasm for the school's program's and demonstrates their commitment to their children's learning environment through creative fundraising ideas, working bees and talking to their local member. Biggera Waters is one of my electorate's oldest School's and this funding has been warmly welcomed by Biggera Waters.

This budget builds on this Government's 2010 strategy to revitalise State education and delivers on election commitments. Other education highlights that all schools in my electorate will benefit from include the \$50 Million Triple R Maintenance Program over three years and an injection of \$15 million to get all schools on line as part of networked learning communities.

In recognising that the need to provide teachers with opportunities to update their skills this government has allocated \$3.7 million to developing the Quality Teacher Program. This program along with the \$214.9 million enterprise bargaining agreement from which teachers' salaries will increase by 4.5%. Is all about retaining high quality teachers for our young Queenslanders and illustrates the Beattie Government's long term vision for this state.

Significant funds in the 2001-2002 Transport and Main roads budget will be spent in Broadwater providing the people who live and work in the Broadwater area with a safer and more secure environment, particularly for users of public transport. The projects that will be taking place in Broadwater include:

\$400,000 for widening the existing pavement on the Labrador-Carrara Road, between little usher Avenue and Central street

\$400,000 for the completion of a \$2 million project for traffic management devices at various locations on the Gold Coast highway between Helensvale and Southport.

\$300,000 to commence delineation, marking and signage at various locations on the Gold Coast Highway between Helensvale and Southport and \$80,000 to commence rehabilitation and widening of the Labrador-Carrara road between Central Street and Musgrave Avenue.

Under the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme the Beattie Government has contributed to a number of local government projects, including \$37,500 on a 50-50 basis for traffic signals for a set down area and pedestrian access at Coombabah High School on Pine Ridge road.

One of the aspects about this Beattie Government that I am very proud of is the continual commitment shown towards people with disabilities and less fortunate who can not afford housing of a decent standard on their own. The Broadwater electorate will share the benefits of further affordable housing projects initiated through the Department of Housing and I can not thank the Minister for housing enough for the funds earmarked for the electorate of Broadwater. Around

\$1.1 million will be spent on maintenance of public housing and almost \$800,000 provides for completion of dwellings started in 2000-01 and to initiate work on eight new dwellings.

In addition public housing in my electorate will share in an allocation of \$2.9 million to continue the upgrade program in 2001-02.

I commend the department of housing for taking initiatives to improve the designs of public housing and thank them on behalf of the many Broadwater residents whose lives have been improved from the receiving the simple necessity of a comfortable affordable place to live. I know many residents are diligently manicuring their gardens in preparation for the 2001 Garden of the Year awards that are held in August. Since the election Public housing in the Broadwater electorate has received unfair criticism. I was appalled to hear that public housing is the reason why people could not sell their houses in the area, that public housing is the reason for crime and unsavoury neighbours. That there is too much of it and in one case public housing was identified as a reason to change the name of Labrador to Broadwater. Well Mr. Speaker I was not impressed. Public housing in the Broadwater area provides a decent, comfortable home for many of our older Queenslanders, disabled and young families who find themselves dealing with the pressures of meeting financial demands of other necessities such as food, education requirements and finding work.

On praising the Minister for Housing for his efforts I must also mention how excited I am about the \$437,000 that has been delivered to Gold Coast North Home Assist. It was only recently that Mr. John Osborne visited the Paradise Point Progress Association, Paradise Point Senior Citizens, and the Paradise Point branch of Vision Australia to speak to Broadwater residents on the services they can access through the Home Assist Program. Well the response was overwhelming! Some residents commented that they had lived in the area for years and had never heard of it, because sadly they were never told. The previous member did not keep the residents of Broadwater informed about wonderful programs like this, denying them of the right to security when calling on someone to enter their home to fix the plumbing or install a fire alarm. I guess the fact that Home Assist is an initiative that was started in the Goss Labor Government would not have helped his cause.

The team at Marana Gardens is to be commended for their patience and compassion that is displayed when dealing with the large number of Gold Coast residents that are already registered with the Home Assist Program. I am sure they are as delighted as I am in knowing that John Osborne's hard work in drumming up more business since visited Paradise Point has been well rewarded.

This government continues to inject funding into protecting our unique environment and on reading the outline of the state government's environmental management program I was reassured of this government's commitment to environmental issues.

This government for the Youth and the Environment has delivered \$10 million and Local Communities Program, providing nationally accredited qualifications through work in the local communities in the areas of horticulture and waste management. \$13 million will go towards community initiatives such as Landcare, rivercare, waterwatch and bushcare.

I know the people of Broadwater are pleased to see a balance of funding being delivered by the Beattie Government for a wide range of issues that affect and are of concern to all Queenslanders.

There is a lot more to talk about in this Budget as it affects my electorate.

I can assure my constituents I will be raising other issues and initiatives in future speeches in this House and if they have any questions about the 2001 State Budget they should feel free to contact my office.

Mr SHINE (Toowoomba North—ALP) (2.46 p.m.): At the outset, I want to make a comment or two in relation to the remarks made by the member for Southern Downs in his contribution to the debate. He challenged the fact that Labor had delivered on its election promises. I ask the House to consider this: what would have happened if the National Party had been elected and had attempted to deliver on its promises? Members will recall that it promised at least \$1.7 billion in recurrent expenditure alone, as well as billions of dollars in capital expenditure. The result would have been bankruptcy. He also raised the need for a District Court judge in Toowoomba. I join with him in asking the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice to look at that issue. Clearly, the need for a judge must be balanced by court delays and the workload. There is no point in asking for a judge just for the sake of it. It has to be able to be justified.

It is a privilege for me to speak today as the new Labor representative for the seat of Toowoomba North in debate on the appropriation bills, the first budget of the Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth, who is now also Acting Premier. I congratulate him on its quality, especially as it relates to the delivery of just outcomes, particularly with respect to the areas of concern covered by portfolios which affect most Queenslanders—families, disabilities, education and health.

This budget provides for the expenditure of over \$5 billion with respect to capital works. As a member for one of Queensland's major regional centres, it was particularly pleasing to know that over 58 per cent of the capital works budget is to be spent in centres outside Brisbane. The budget is responsible, providing for a cash surplus of \$400 million, and predicts four per cent growth, as opposed to 3.75 per cent federally, and two per cent growth in the rate of employment. About 27 per cent of budget expenditure relates to capital works, well above the level of expenditure on the same area by other states. In furtherance of its commitment to social justice, increases in expenditure in some portfolios are as follows: health, 6.5 per cent; education, nine per cent; disability services, 11.6 per cent; and, families, 12 per cent.

At the same time, this is a budget crafted to encourage jobs by, for example, again lowering payroll tax from 4.9 per cent to 4.8 per cent. This, together with the level of workers compensation insurance premiums being lowered, maintains Queensland's enviable status as the low-tax state as well as the Smart State. Queensland business pays the lowest payroll tax with the lowest threshold and also pays the lowest rate of workers compensation insurance premium throughout Australia. These inducements to business should continue to promote investment in Queensland, which in turn leads to the provision of jobs. The part of the budget which quite justifiably has received the most accolades is that which established a fund of \$100 million for research and development, ensuring the continuation of our Smart State reputation.

I intend now to mention some of the highlights of the budget as they have local relevance. This budget continues the beneficial events occurring in and around the Toowoomba North electorate and our region generally. Confirmation of the announcement made at the community cabinet meeting held at Highfields earlier this month of the new Toowoomba police station appears. An amount of \$3.7 million towards replacing the police station, watch-house, district headquarters and regional office has been allotted. The full cost will be in excess of \$10 million.

Honourable members will recall my calling in this House for the replacement of the existing police station. It has been my top priority since the 17 February election, and I am elated that the work done, including repeated representations to the Police Minister, has paid off. The construction of the police station will provide an initial boost to the local building industry and jobs, but the long-term benefits to the Toowoomba and regional community will be immense. It would be reasonable to expect increases in the levels of both efficiency and morale as a result of eventually having all of the functions together in a modern, well-equipped and comfortable complex.

An announcement relating to a Suncorp-Metway call centre was also made at the community cabinet meeting. This represents great news for Toowoomba. The call centre will provide for some 300 jobs initially. I understand, however, that there are reasonable prospects for this number to increase to 500, consequent upon the Suncorp-Metway takeover of the insurance functions of AMP. The credit for the call centre coming to Queensland can quite properly be attributed to the government's efforts via the Department of State Development. It is yet another example of the Beattie government's proactive policy of encouraging new job-creating industry to Queensland. That Toowoomba was chosen over other places in Queensland is a triumph for our mayor, Councillor Di Thorley, who, together with the Department of State Development, secured the centre to Toowoomba. Toowoomba is indeed fortunate to have a mayor whose immense talent is only matched by her passion and powers of persuasion.

In the budget it was announced that an amount of \$60,000 will be provided for the purchase of land for a new fire station at Highfields. My door-knocking activities prior to the election and my community activities since have reinforced in my mind the strong demand by Highfields, Meringandan and Blue Mountain Estate residents for the provision of adequate emergency services in the area.

Highfields is a most attractive part of my electorate. It was located in the former electorate of Crows Nest and, together with the Blue Mountain Estate, is situated in Crows Nest shire. It takes 15 to 20 minutes to travel from the Toowoomba CBD to Highfields. Therefore, it is quite understandable, and in my view particularly reasonable, that the residents are anxious for there to be police, ambulance and a full-time fire brigade presence in their area. I will continue to lobby strenuously for these services to be provided as quickly as possible.

The acquisition of land is, at last, tangible evidence of the success of these representations to date and indicates that the government is aware of the emergency services needs at Highfields. I have made constructive approaches to and have had fruitful discussions with senior officers of both the Police and Ambulance Services in Toowoomba concerning the Highfields situation. I am determined to work tirelessly over the remainder of my term to see these services become a reality. I believe that the fact I was successful in having Highfields made host for the last community cabinet meeting will prove in the mid and long term greatly beneficial to Highfields.

I would now like to turn my attention to other aspects of the budget which touch directly on Toowoomba North or the Toowoomba and Darling Downs regions as they relate to various government departments.

With respect to health, during the coming financial year significant amounts will be spent by way of capital expenditure—that is, in addition to recurrent expenses such as wages and maintenance. In Toowoomba North itself, an amount of \$7.147 million is being applied towards

the redevelopment of Baillie Henderson Hospital. Construction here is due for completion and commissioning by December 2001. As well, the government has allocated a further \$567,000 towards the ongoing project of the state government nursing homes program.

I express my appreciation on behalf of the people of Toowoomba North for the fine efforts and dedicated application to their tasks of all who work in the various public health service outlets in our city. I would also like to make mention of the fact that, as a result of representations recently made by Toowoomba members of parliament and the Toowoomba hospice committee, the Health Minister has agreed to a request for recurrent funding. The amount being advanced is \$300,000 per year. Whilst this is less than the sum requested, it should enable those responsible to take the decision to proceed with construction as soon as possible. The group needs to be congratulated on raising \$1 million for the construction costs.

With respect to police, Toowoomba can indeed be content with the allocation of funds. I have already mentioned the \$3.7 million for the start of the new Toowoomba police station. I reiterate the need for a police presence at Highfields. My electorate has neighbourhood police beats which are proving successful and are extremely well received. I note that, in response to the success of the neighbourhood police beat and police beat shopfront programs, an amount of \$2.4 million is to be provided for 10 new beats and shopfronts over the next three years. This provision, I hope, will augur well for more of such in Toowoomba North, particularly at Highfields.

I would particularly like to pay tribute to all of those involved with the peace builders program currently at Rockville, Wilsonton State School and the Toowoomba State High School Wilsonton campus—particularly Helen Parker, Danny Tattam of Rockville State School, Councillor Bruce Hinchliffe and Mr Geoff Holmes of Toowoomba City Council, Jenny Clarke of Education Queensland, and Gary Wells and Cam Crisp of the Queensland Police Service. Also, I commend the valuable and ongoing work performed by those civic-minded people involved with the various Neighbourhood Watch groups within Toowoomba North.

I will be keen to see that Toowoomba continues to receive its appropriate share of new recruits. I was pleased to take part in the recent welcome of seven officers to Toowoomba. As well, I have made representations to the minister, requesting him to supply police dogs to Toowoomba to assist the service combat the spread of drugs.

With respect to education, \$9.36 million is to be spent in the Darling Downs and south-west region to meet education needs. Included in this sum is \$173,000 for a relocatable building at the Toowoomba East State School and \$809,252 for phase 2 of the Toowoomba State High School's renewal program.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of this job is the contact one has with the schools, both state and private. Each school has its needs, and I certainly will be doing what I can to assist each school community to achieve their realistic aims. To that end I have made every endeavour to visit each school P&C and P&F meeting to gain a knowledge of the needs existing.

The government puts at the top of the list the education needs of our children. To maintain Queensland's reputation as the Smart State this priority will be kept. I have met a great number of the teachers within the electorate. One cannot help but be greatly impressed by their ability and dedication, and I extend to them the sincere appreciation of the people of Toowoomba North.

The importance of the activities of the Department of Employment and Training in the preservation of Queensland's reputation as the Smart State is self-evident. In Toowoomba North we are indeed fortunate to have a fine institution in the form of the Southern Queensland Institute of Technology. I am very happy to point out that \$2.449 million is to be spent at SQIT for the relocation and construction of its horticultural facility from Wilsonton to the Bridge Street campus. A further \$300,000 has been allotted to complete the redesign and refurbishment of its client services and hairdressing training facility. The staff of SQIT have to be congratulated on their many outstanding achievements. I was recently shown over the complex and was most impressed by what I saw, particularly the enthusiasm demonstrated by the staff, and indeed the students and apprentices, in the undertaking of their tasks.

A sum of \$2.379 million in total funds for the public housing capital works program is to be spent in the electorate. As well, \$1.158 million for maintenance, providing ongoing employment, is provided. I am particularly pleased to see that 19 new rental dwellings will be commenced, at a total cost of \$1.4 million. I congratulate the minister, the Honourable Robert Swarten, for the admirable initiative. The electorate fares well also with respect to the community rent scheme in that the expenditure under this head will be \$386,000 for a total of 64 managed properties.

With respect to public works, Toowoomba also did well. By way of example I note that the amount to be spent for backflow prevention devices for the three Toowoomba electorates is \$87,000. Of particular note is that the department will in our region take on seven apprentices in the 2001 apprentice intake, taking the total to 23. I seek leave to have the remainder of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS AND ARTS QLD

In this budget in the Darling Downs and South West Region a total of \$37m is to be spent for Queensland Rail projects and a total of \$62.6m for roads. Of particular significance is the expenditure of \$5m on the Queensland Heritage Trails Network in our Region. This will be a fantastic boost both for Tourism and Employment.

STATE DEVELOPMENT

I have earlier mentioned the major State Development initiative with respect to the Suncorp-Metway Callcentre. This Department was also recently instrumental in saving scores of jobs of TYCO employees and was instrumental in keeping that Company in our region. The Department has and will play a crucial role in the redevelopment of the much needed Industrial Park at Charlton/Wellcamp. This will be of particular importance in the context of the Second Range Crossing. The Department works closely with the University of Southern Queensland, particularly in encouraging partnerships between the USQ and industry with respect to research and development. The Beattie Government has allotted \$100m for such research and I will be doing my best to see that the USQ secures its fair share of that funding.

I am keen to see the involvement of this Department on behalf of the Government in such visionary projects as the development of the International Gardens/Quarry Gardens, as I am in promoting a vision of Toowoomba in the Premier's recent words, "a University Centre of Excellence".

Unfortunately, time does not allow me to further itemise the contents of the Budget.

Mr Speaker, overall the 2001-02 Budget provides for a total capital works spending of more than \$237m or \$1.044 per person in our region. I look forward in the ensuing budgets of this government, to ensuring that Toowoomba North receives its just share of the many progressive initiatives of the second Beattie Government.

I congratulate the Treasurer in particular and the Beattie Government in general on the attainments set out in the Budget and commend the Bill to the House.

Mr MALONE (Mirani—NPA) (3.00 p.m.): It is a pleasure to rise today to speak on the first budget of the 50th Parliament. Unfortunately, from my perspective, the budget is without vision and condemns the state of Queensland to another 12 months of short-term government schemes which provide nothing to address the problems facing Queensland and Queenslanders at this time.

I have to say that, from my perspective, the budget is nothing but a smoke and mirrors budget. It has blown the budget on capital works spending in Brisbane city. It does nothing to address our rising unemployment rate, which is the worst in Australia. But we have been given a bridge that goes nowhere and an expensive Clayton's stadium, paid for partly by new taxes which we were not going to have. There does seem to be plenty of money for training but little chance of a job at the end of that training. That is fairly typical of a Labor budget.

Having said that, I would like to move on to the issues that affect my electorate. In particular, the increased budget allocations in Brisbane have been at the expense of my electorate of Mirani, and particularly the Mackay region generally. That is very disappointing and, I believe, in some ways discriminatory. The allocation of 42 per cent of the \$5.115 billion capital works program to the Brisbane statistical division does show a priority of this government for that area. One has to bias that with the fact that, in the last two years, included in that statistical region has been a substantial amount of money that has been put into the Gold Coast motorway, which is now finished. So that bias should have actually reduced somewhat. In a state the size of Queensland, how can any government justify the spending of that proportion of the capital works budget in one area?

I will draw attention to the Mackay statistical division, which covers a fair amount of my electorate. We have seen a decrease in the capital works allocation from \$217.4 million in 2000-01 to \$213.8 million in 2001-02. This equates to decreased spending of \$235 per capita for the region in one year, from \$1,760 per capita to \$1,525 per capita. I have to say that, from my perspective, this is a real test of the budget, and unfortunately it fails. How can a decrease in capital works in our area be justified when \$119 million has been allocated to the Suncorp-Metway Lang Park stadium redevelopment alone? That is more than half the allocation for my entire region. It does not really matter what set of figures we look at, the Mackay statistical region has gone backwards. And how any Labor member, including you, Madam Deputy Speaker, could stand in this place and say that regional areas have done extremely well out of this budget is beyond me and absolutely unbelievable.

Mr Mackenroth: I thought the redevelopment of the Suncorp-Metway stadium was actually a pretty big issue in Mackay at the last election.

Mr MALONE: It was.

Mr Mackenroth: You had Martin Bella running, and he made it a central part of his campaign and he got walloped.

Mr MALONE: I do not think it was for that reason alone. The Treasurer might like to hang his hat on that, but unfortunately he does not have the right argument there.

Despite the urgent need in my electorate for a police station in Sarina, that was not part of the budget. As you would well know, Madam Deputy Speaker, the Mackay-Bucasia road is a high priority. As I understand it, there is a roundabout to be built there, which is good, but it is certainly not addressing the real problems of that road. And there was no provision in the budget to relocate or rebuild the Queensland Ambulance Service headquarters in Mackay. Mackay got some money—\$4.8 million—towards the \$11.4 million extension to the courthouse. That is great. However, only \$100,000 has been allocated this year towards the much-publicised North Mackay police station. That was a really big issue in that North Mackay region, but \$100,000 would hardly mow the lawn there for 12 months.

Mr Mackenroth: That would be the plans.

Mr MALONE: That is right.

Mr Mackenroth: You've got to start somewhere.

Mr MALONE: You would hardly mow the lawn for that. As I said, the North Mackay police station—

Mr Mackenroth: You need the plans before you build the building. You actually do need plans first.

Mr MALONE: If they cannot build a building quicker than that, the Treasurer ought to sack a few people.

Mr Mackenroth interjected.

Mr MALONE: Time is running out, so I had better keep going. We all know that the North Mackay police station was a huge issue, and promises were made. I accept what the Treasurer is saying; \$100,000 is certainly a step in the right direction. That is more than what a few other things in the Mackay district got, so let us be grateful for small mercies, I suppose. How much of the footbridge across the river would that \$100,000 buy? About a foot of it! North Mackay is a growing area, and the new subdivisions in the northern beaches have created a whole new aspect, so servicing that area is becoming more and more difficult in terms of police and emergency services. I am disappointed that only \$100,000 has been allocated in the first year, and I hope that building can be built fairly quickly.

As I said earlier, there was no allocation for the much-needed upgrade and replacement of the police station at Sarina. Our police officers have been operating out of that station for a long time. It is a very outdated, extremely cramped facility. I would hope that, in the near future, we can find some necessary expenditure to make that police station a far better place for those people to work in. The police in Sarina do a magnificent job on a very busy highway.

The Mackay-Bucasia road is a single access road. It was hoped that some four-laning would be done there. But, unfortunately, in the budget papers I see no special allocation of funding for that. That will be a huge issue in the future as that much-used road becomes more and more prone to traffic congestion. During the February state election, the National Party gave an undertaking that not only the North Mackay police station but also the four-laning of that highway would be a high priority under the coalition.

It was also disappointing that provision was not made for the Queensland Ambulance Service to have a new building built in Mackay. That is also causing response times to blow out in the Walkerston area and that is becoming a fairly big issue in that community, which also is a growing part of the Mackay district.

The leasing of the Dalrymple Bay coal terminal is the only thing that stands between a very mediocre budget and an absolute disaster. The infusion of \$700 million into the bottom line of an \$820 million deficit budget makes it almost respectable. Had not this extreme measure taken place, it would have been a very different story. I just wonder what we are going to have to flog off next year to balance the books.

In last year's budget Labor played a cruel hoax on businesses by claiming that it had reduced payroll tax. Certainly it did, but only marginally. However, at the same time it included superannuation in the calculations. This effectively meant that many businesses paid payroll tax for the first time. I can tell members that I got plenty of calls about that. And members would not want to know about it, but the government has done it again! This time the Treasurer has announced a reduction in the effective rate next year. But now, as I understand it, capital gains and fringe benefits are going to be built into the equation. Again, I believe that business has been sold a pup. It is about time Labor realised that we must have a strong, viable business community to create employment. And perhaps that is where the problem lies. The government has to be warned: you can outsmart yourself when you try to con the electorate, but the reality is that you are just making it more and more difficult for business to operate and maintain employment, let alone create jobs.

One of the big issues in the Mackay district during the last election campaign was the priority of a drug court for the region. The court would cover not just Mackay but also the Sarina and Proserpine areas. I am disappointed that no move was made to try to address that in some way during this budget. There is a group that operates in the Mackay district to promote the establishment of drug courts and rehabilitation centres. They call themselves DRAG—Drug Rehabilitation and Action Group. They are volunteers in our community who are doing one hell of a good job in making people aware of the issues surrounding drugs in our community. They just have to keep fighting to make sure that, sooner or later, somebody recognises the real plight of those who are affected by drug use in our district.

I turn to a few issues that touch on the rural community that is such a big part of my electorate. We heard the question this morning directed to the Environment Minister regarding pigs in national parks. Unfortunately, the pigs do not stick to the national parks; they wander around a bit outside them. Foot-and-mouth disease is a huge problem in other parts of the world. If that disease ever were to enter Australia, the pigs would be one means of spreading it throughout this country. Unless we take some steps now or very shortly to look at methods of eradicating pigs in forestry areas, in national parks or even outside those locations, we will face a huge problem. I know it is a difficult matter, but sooner or later it must be addressed.

Some imported pests are really running riot throughout our rural communities. Giant rat-tail grass is spreading very quickly throughout Queensland. It is almost impossible to eradicate. It competes very effectively on pastoral land. It will be a really difficult problem to overcome. Unfortunately, there does not seem to be any method of dealing with this pest on the horizon. Any current means of controlling it also affects pasture grass and anything else that grows. There is no funding in the budget to address that problem. There are also things like sickle pod and the old favourite we have in Brisbane now, fire ants, which can have a huge impact throughout rural and even urban Queensland. I know that this problem requires a coordinated approach across Australia, but the fact of the matter is that we have the problem in Queensland and we need to fix it now. If we wait till the spring, those ants will keep spreading. I was disappointed that more attention was not paid to those sorts of matters in the budget. They would have ensured that there is not a depreciating future effect on employment, et cetera.

As time is running short, I would like to address a few provisions in the budget with respect to my shadow portfolio areas of responsibility. Obviously they will be addressed in detail during the estimates hearing. Emergency Services incorporates the statutory authorities of the Queensland Ambulance Service, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority and the counter-disaster and rescue services. This portfolio provides essential public services and either delivers directly or funds a range of necessary services. These services seek to prevent in the first instance, or minimise the impact of, emergencies and disasters as well as minimising the impact of emergencies and disasters. I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

I would like to take some time today to address my shadow portfolio of Emergency Services. Emergency Services incorporates the statutory authorities of the Queensland Ambulance Service, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority and the counter-disaster and rescue services. This is a portfolio that provides essential public safety services and either directly delivers or funds a range of necessary services. These services seek to prevent, in the first instance, or minimise the impact of emergencies and disasters as well as minimising the impact of emergencies and disasters. Every community in Queensland is serviced and are vital in ensuring the safety of the community, protecting the environment and protecting property. And I take this opportunity to commend all emergency service personnel in Queensland for the great work that they do, especially the great work of the volunteers in our state.

It is because of this level of service and the importance of the emergency services to Queensland that I find it difficult to comprehend the Beattie Government's lack of commitment to providing adequate funding for the upkeep of staff and resources for the services.

Recently the Queensland Ambulance Employee's Union undertook a survey of members that revealed major problems amongst their members. More than 90% of officers believe that patient care is being compromised because of a lack of resources—that is 90% of officers in Queensland. On release of the survey, the Secretary of the Ambulance Employees Australia, Mr Steve Crow, said that problems in the QAS would continue until funding issues were resolved once and for all—well he must have been a very disappointed man on Tuesday night.

The survey highlighted frightening statistics, some of which I will share with the House today—

91.28% reported that in their experience patient care had been compromised because of a lack of resources eg poor equipment and inadequate vehicles;

66.42% reported problems with their vehicles. This included 30.06% who said the vehicle they used needed immediate replacement;

91.95% believed if they had to retire early their superannuation would be inadequate;

64.73% said they had suffered stress that led to time off work or should have—of this 64.73%, only 52.5% said they had sought help for stress;

81.48% said they did not believe that the ambulance service promoted a culture of cooperation and good management;

These results are incredibly disturbing. Day after day, the Beattie Government is hanging these people out to dry. There has been no support for them and there is nothing in this Budget that addresses these concerns adequately. Nothing.

I have raised these staff shortages with the Minister time and time again, yet the Minister is still not addressing the problem. Who knows what disaster has to happen before the Minister will act on this matter. There was one positive aspect of the Budget in terms of the QAS and that was that the Government will undertake a 'second annual staff satisfaction survey'—positive in terms of the survey being conducted and yet to be seen whether the outcomes from the Government is a positive.

One of the biggest problems is officers having to be OIC of a rural community QAS station and on call for extended periods of time.

It is of extreme concern to all Queenslanders that our QAS is being underfunded and understaffed at any time. My concern also lies in the added burden on the QAS with the holding of both the Goodwill Games and CHOGM in Brisbane this year. If our ambulance service is stretched to the limits now, how is it supposed to cope with this extra burden on its resources? QAS is at the cutting edge of services to the community and has never really addressed the added impost of the loss of positive contribution of pensioners and senior cardholders made to the financial support of QAS. Many of these people have told me they would rather pay something than have the prospect of not being able to get an ambulance when they want one.

This Budget has done nothing to address the concerns of the QAS and I find it difficult to believe how the Minister responsible can travel the state and deliver a couple of new vehicles and claim everything is well in the QAS. The National Party has always pushed that adequate numbers of trained staff should be available to attend emergencies, obviously this is not something the Labor Party hold to. The Minister has grossly let down the member of the QAS and the people of Queensland by not providing more money for further services. The Government has failed to provide adequate staff and it has failed to provide adequate equipment for the day-to-day running of the QAS.

This Budget has also shortchanged the State Emergency Services in the provision of equipment. This Government has set aside only \$2 million over two years for the whole of the state in emergency services. This is only \$1 million for emergency equipment for the whole of Queensland, hopelessly inadequate. All Queenslanders rely on the services of the SES and I for one would hope that they were properly equipped, obviously this Government does not agree with me. I mean this million will no go very far when you consider the individual cost of the equipment that the Government identified within the Budget—personal protective equipment (overalls, boots, helmets, safety glasses) for SES volunteers statewide; wet weather clothing to benefit 2,500 volunteers statewide; Safety at Height equipment for 180 SES Groups; and the issue of new and replacement of communications equipment to 49 SES groups throughout the state. With the huge responsibility on the SES and the outstanding work they do for Queensland and Queenslanders, they deserve better from this Government.

I am also concerned about the lack of community disaster awareness and education activities that have been conducted by the Department. In the 2000/2001 Budget the Government budgeted to run between 40 and 50 activities, yet only ran 16. Surely we want the community as well versed as possible to cope with any situation. These are the sorts of activities that need to be encouraged and run in the community.

I must also express complete disbelief with the low percentage of hospitals that have been inspected for fire safety at only 45% and only 70% in nursing homes and aged care facilities. This figure should be 100% fire investigation and 100% for fire safety. It should not take a disaster like the Childers' Backpacker fire in one of our hospitals to ensure that fire safety in hospitals, nursing homes and aged care facilities are up to standard. We are talking here of facilities full of people who are, in the main, incapable of being moved quickly in the event of a fire. Why then isn't the Government ensuring that these facilities are up to the mark in fire safety?

With 68% of pensioner or benefit recipients having difficulty finding affordable housing in Queensland and with the closure of caravan parks and some boarding houses, lack of affordable housing is contributing to the number of homelessness in Queensland. I would have thought that the Beattie Government would be increasing the amount of money being budgeted for Community Housing, by a lot more than only the budgeted \$2 million. From the figures supplied by in the Minister's Budget paper, he obviously does not think the need for crisis accommodation or transitional accommodation is going to increase on last year and that the number of people requiring long term accommodation is going to increase by only an extra 9 people. I wish I had his confidence. This is a slight on those people requiring crisis housing in Queensland and I think the Government should be condemned for their callousness.

Mr LEE (Indooroopilly—ALP) (3.14 p.m.): It is a great pleasure for me to rise in support of such a great budget. I say this as someone who, unlike most of the opposition, has not been

sitting in this parliament all week. In fact, at 7 o'clock on Wednesday morning, I was outside the Indooroopilly railway station handing out budget information flyers and talking to commuters. It is my great pleasure to inform the House that the feedback, certainly in my electorate and, I am sure, throughout the state—as I am sure opposition members will find when they finally set foot in their electorates—has been nothing short of fantastic.

A number of the people with whom I spoke on the morning after the budget was delivered asked me to pass on their congratulations to the Treasurer. A number of them had read recently in the local newspaper where he opened my electorate office. They were pleased to see such a great budget. Why wouldn't they be satisfied? This budget delivers big in the key areas of education, health, police, family and disability services, and the environment. It is also a budget that delivers big for the Indooroopilly electorate.

From the very beginning, I said that I was determined to be an active local MP and that I would keep my electorate informed about state government issues. It is a pleasure to be able to inform my electorate about this budget. In my maiden speech, I also said that my No. 1 priority as the member for Indooroopilly would be education. I believe this budget sets new records for education funding in the Indooroopilly electorate. There is over \$1.5 million in education capital works funding, including \$852,687 for Indooroopilly State High School's secondary school renewal program and \$728,335 for site redevelopment at Toowong College.

I visited Toowong College on Monday to assist a local student with their enrolment. It was a great pleasure to walk around the school and see the achievements that this Labor government has had so far. For the first time, thanks to this Labor government, that school will have a school auditorium. I understand from the P&C association that that is something the school has been aiming to do since the 1960s. It took a Labor government to make that a reality for them. I am also pleased that Ironside State School will share in the \$10 million to develop a centre of excellence in maths, science and technology.

On Wednesday night, during the parliamentary dinner break, I visited the Indooroopilly State School after-school care group. That is another school that has benefited greatly from this Labor government. Indooroopilly State School has recently achieved some excellence of its own. The school entered a team in this year's HP Inventing the Future Challenge and in fact was named the Queensland winner. I think it is a great testament to this great Labor government's commitment to making Queensland a Smart State that the winner of a national online IT challenge would be a state school from Indooroopilly. They received a prize of \$6,000 worth of technology of their choice, presented to them by the Minister for Education at a special service at the Science Centre.

This is a great achievement. It is through ongoing partnerships with industry and initiatives like this that we will encourage young Queenslanders to become leaders in the Smart State. I also congratulate their teacher, Mrs Margaret Randall, who provided team members Ben Croker, Nick Dent, Adele Lim, Jonathon Sparkes and Emma Stevenson with the guidance to achieve such a great result for their school. They have made their teachers, their parents and their community proud.

I have also spoken in this place about my local schools' musical achievements. I am once again pleased that the state government is committed to spending money on things like this in schools. Along with a number of local parents, I was very proud to hear a performance by the Western Suburbs String Orchestra. Many local children benefit greatly from state school and music programs. Under the guidance of director Andrea Messenger, they performed as guests of the Queensland Youth Orchestra junior string ensemble at the old Queensland Museum last Saturday night.

It was very satisfying for me, because I not only saw children who have benefited from music programs in their schools but also had the pleasure of watching my young sister, Riognach Lee, and her friend, Hannah Anderson, and others performing absolutely fantastically. After watching performances like that, I am absolutely flabbergasted that members opposite could not find anything good in this budget. It delivers in a tremendous way for education. Had the members opposite seen those students perform, they would know that this government's commitment to making Queensland the Smart State is most definitely the right idea.

But that is not all. The University of Queensland benefited from funding of over \$9.5 million, the centrepiece of which is super computing. I am very proud that this government is committed to helping the University of Queensland in this way. I might add that this comes at the same time as the Howard government is belting the living daylight out of tertiary education. It makes me

very proud, as the local Labor member, to be able to go to the University of Queensland, my old university, and tell them that we are doing the right thing by tertiary education. The Indooroopilly electorate has never had a representative so determined to promote education. I am pleased to say that the Indooroopilly electorate has never had an education budget that delivers like this one.

I would like to speak briefly about some areas in this state budget as they relate to my local area, and particularly I would like to talk about funding for bikeways. I have spoken already about this government's commitment to making Queensland the Smart State. But it seems to me that the government is committed to making Queensland the healthy state. Funding has been allocated in this budget to create a bikeway along Strickland Terrace in Sherwood and Graceville. I am very pleased about that. I am a keen cyclist. I have raced for the Bramble Bay Amateur Cycle Club and for the Ipswich Amateur Wheelers. I am hoping that very soon young children in my electorate will be able to ride their bicycles from Sherwood State School all the way to the Jack Pesch Bridge in Chelmer without having to deal with major traffic flows. I feel very strongly about that. Jack Pesch is a friend of mine. I raced bicycles against his two grandchildren and often had my bicycle repaired at his shop up on Petrie Terrace. The Pesch Bridge is used by over 400 cyclists every day. It is the bridge that I use when I ride my bicycle to work.

It is great to be able to see that allocation in this state budget, because just last week the year 5 students at Sherwood State School were treated to a bicycle safety check by Donald Tainton of Forest Lake Cycles, who for a number of years has been going to the school to assist the children with bicycle safety. I am pleased to be able to say that this state government is helping the local community with bicycle safety, too. This is a great budget for sport. As someone who, like many members, loves sport, I am also very pleased to see \$130,000 allocated for a clubhouse upgrade for the Toowong Rowing Club.

There is also some wonderful funding in this state budget for the western suburbs Home Secure/Home Assist program. This government is committed to making our community safer. Over the past couple of weeks I have spoken to many local people at Neighbourhood Watch meetings. I am very pleased to see that the budget allows for an extra 300 police officers to be employed. I am personally very happy to see a trial of buprenorphine as part of the detoxification treatment program that has been offered. We were all aware of the scourge of illicit drugs in our communities. I am very proud to see that this great government is committed to doing everything that it can to make our community safer. Personally, it is also great to see a figure of some \$2.5 million for Legal Aid Queensland and community legal centres.

I conclude by saying that, as the member for Indooroopilly, I am very proud to be able to support such an excellent budget. I feel personally that it is a budget that delivers big in the areas that should be delivered big—it delivers big in education, it delivers big in health, it delivers big in families, police and disability services. It is very disappointing for me that the members opposite could not find it in their hearts to admit that this is a great budget for all Queenslanders, whether they live in Indooroopilly, Rockhampton or north Queensland. I would also like to point out that yet again there is no-one from the One Nation Party present in the chamber. Perhaps if they were to spend more time in the parliament they would understand exactly how good this Labor government is. I am honoured to support the bills.

Dr LESLEY CLARK (Barron River—ALP) (3.26 p.m.): The 2001-02 budget handed down by Treasurer and Deputy Premier Terry Mackenroth this week has kept faith with the Queensland community that re-elected the Beattie Labor government in February. This budget delivers on the election commitments made to the people of Queensland and to my constituents in Barron River.

At a time when there is still a significant level of cynicism regarding politics and politicians, the importance of restoring trust by keeping election promises cannot be overestimated. The 2001-02 budget keeps faith with the families of Queensland by delivering in the areas that are of critical concern to them—health, education, housing, crime prevention and the opportunity for skills training, jobs and economic development—while still valuing our wonderful natural environment. Most importantly, this budget also keeps faith with regional Queensland with 58 per cent of the \$5.1 billion capital works budget being allocated for projects outside of the Brisbane statistical division.

As parliamentary secretary to the Premier in far-north Queensland, I am pleased to report that our region will benefit from an allocation of \$437.1 million for capital works—an increase of \$34.7 million compared to last year. In per capita terms, it is also clear that the government has put the additional resources needed to deliver facilities and services into regional Queensland. For

far-north Queensland this per capita figure is \$2,092 compared to Brisbane where the dollars per person are somewhat lower at \$1,352.

Labor's election promises were contained in 35 central policies covering every area of government activity and 14 regional plans, including a specific plan for the Cairns area, which are all addressed in the budget. The Beattie plan for Cairns covered a wide range of areas and was designed to maintain the balance of economic success, social support and environmental sustainability for our region covering the electorates of Cairns, Mulgrave and Barron River. The total cost of the commitments in the Cairns plan over three years was estimated at over \$28 million.

Whilst it now seems unlikely that our government can meet its five per cent unemployment goal for reasons beyond our control, such as the GST, which is destroying jobs in small business, the Cairns plan promised 870 jobs over the next three years under the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle program and these will be delivered. This budget injects another \$100 million into this successful program, which will create 13,200 jobs and training opportunities statewide over the next 12 months. The focus of the government's four individual Breaking the Unemployment Cycle programs is young people and mature-age workers.

I look forward to seeing our local young people take advantage of the new \$10 million Youth for the Environment and Local Communities program, which will create 600 additional traineeships for young people in their local communities in areas such as environmental protection, horticulture and waste management. I hope, too, that Cairns employers and the Cairns City Council will get involved in the Experience Pays program, whereby they will receive a cash incentive of \$4,000 for employing a long-term unemployed person aged 45 or over. Tragically, all too often the knowledge, skill and wisdom offered by mature-age employees has not been recognised to the detriment of both our economy and the individual themselves.

The Cairns plan identified a number of infrastructure projects for Cairns that have been funded in the budget, in addition to other significant new and ongoing projects which, while they are regional facilities or services, will be of value to the residents of Barron River, where my coastal communities have very much become dormitory suburbs of Cairns. Those projects include \$105 million for a railway track upgrade and \$48 million for the design and manufacture of the tilt trains which, when they become operative, will both improve the rail service to Cairns and add another exciting dimension to our tourist industry.

The completion of the Cairns Base Hospital and the new state government office building, at a cost of some \$29 million, will improve health facilities and the delivery of government services. Health services will also improve with the employment of visiting ophthalmologists and the expansion of the ENT services at Cairns Base Hospital.

Sadly, abuse of both legal and illegal drugs is having an increasing impact on the lives of young people and the government is devoting increasing resources to this important area. The budget includes funds to plan for the extension of the drug court trial in Cairns and provides \$500,000 for initial establishment costs associated with the provision of additional drug rehabilitation residential beds in Cairns and Townsville.

Barron River residents enjoy the many facilities in Cairns city and are looking forward to the revitalisation of the inner-city area being facilitated by government funding. The budget provides another \$5.1 million to complete the process beginning in Shields Street and the city place. The \$35 million city port development set to begin this year will transform the Cairns waterfront and the \$2.7 million allocated for a new contemporary arts centre for Kick Arts and Just Us Theatre will add an exciting new dimension to the arts scene in Cairns. This year should also see further work commence on the Esplanade redevelopment for which the state government committed \$9 million.

However, we all want to enjoy dining and recreational experiences in safety, and I welcome the \$1 million allocated for the establishment of the Cairns Diversionary Centre that will assist in reducing the problems associated with public drunkenness in our city. Additional resources have also been provided in the budget for indigenous alcohol and drug services to address drug related crime issues.

Public transport is vitally important to many people in Cairns, but there has been concern expressed about the adequacy of services for people with disabilities. Queensland Transport is finalising a review of taxi services that has addressed this issue. I am pleased to note that \$250,000 has been allocated in order that Sunbus, our local bus operator, can introduce a number of low-floor wheelchair accessible buses through the Accessible Bus Program, which has

purchased 233 buses to date. I am pleased to announce that five new wheelchair accessible buses will begin operation on 1 July to service the northern areas of the Cairns region, which includes the Barron River electorate. There is also an amount of \$100,000 in the budget for additional bus shelters for the Cairns region to increase the comfort of bus passengers.

In addition to the regional initiatives for the Cairns area, my constituents will benefit directly from the delivery of some additional specific commitments to Barron River made prior to the last election. Those commitments were made following community campaigns and strong representations from myself, and I am proud to confirm their delivery in the budget.

In light of the need to conclude this debate this afternoon, I seek leave to incorporate the remainder of my speech in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The first is the provision of an additional pre-school unit for the Redlynch State School. Members may recall the petition that I lodged in this House and the speech that I made earlier this year about the long waiting list for pre-school places due to the significant growth in the Redlynch Valley. The \$263,200 allocated in the budget for a second pre-school unit, means that with a total of 100 places available, all those children on the current waiting list will be accommodated next year. This school, the fastest growing in my electorate, will also benefit from the budget with a new amenities block, student undercover area and demountable double classroom to be provided by the end of the year at a cost of about half a million dollars. Other significant educational initiatives in Barron River include the provision of \$1.13 Million for the re-building and modification of B Block at Freshwater State School after the fire last year. It still makes me really angry that two young arsonists caused the school community so much pain, but when it is completed, B block will incorporate the school library as well as classrooms and provide a better learning and teaching environment than previously. Work should begin very shortly and it is hoped that facilities will be available by term 4. Students in both Edgehill and Trinity Beach State Schools can also look forward to a cooler summer when air-conditioning will be completed with the government subsidy of \$335,527 as part of our Cooler Schools Program.

The other successful community campaign was that waged for a Police Beat following significant youth crime problems at Holloways Beach. A community meeting of nearly 100 local residents in February made it clear that they were no longer prepared to tolerate vandalism and abusive behaviour on the part of young people. I pledged to lobby for a police beat as part of a wider community-based response based on the success of the existing police beat at Trinity Beach in dealing with youth crime in particular. I was pleased to receive a letter from Police Minister McGrady this week informing me that I have been successful and Holloways Beach will be one of six new police beats to be funded in this budget. I look forward to working with the community and local police in identifying suitable premises for the location of the Police Beat which I hope will also service the adjacent community of Machans Beach.

The Holloways Beach community also has a significant problem of beach erosion that is threatening a number of homes. Unfortunately the Cairns City Council had ignored this problem until it became critical. However I am working closely with the current Council and community and the BPA is now undertaking coastal studies that will identify the most appropriate means of dealing with the problems being experienced at Holloways Beach. The budget has allocated \$2.4M to the BPA for its Statewide operations and to enable it to carry out this study, as well as studies at Pumicestone Passage and Maroochy River mouth where homes are also threatened by erosion.

There are also beach erosion problems at Clifton Beach in the electorate of Cook and I hope that future budgets will allocate resources for this area. Fortunately there are no homes under threat in this area, but work is needed to understand the underlying causes of erosion in this area so that it can also be addressed.

Road safety is another area of concern to my communities, in particular the problems generated by increased traffic on the Brinsmead Kameranga Road. Following the completion of traffic lights at the Haley Street intersection just this month one major problem area has been addressed and attention can now be focused on the Lake Placid intersection. The budget has allocated \$300,000 to begin work on this \$1M project. There is also \$700,000 for work to improve road safety at Caravonica State School. However, support is needed from the Cairns City Council to construct a car park as part of this \$1.1M project, but to date, this has not been forthcoming and further negotiations will be required with Cairns City Council.

The future of the Kuranda Range Road is a major issue for Kuranda residents in my electorate as well as other Tableland communities. Following extensive and comprehensive studies and public consultation, the next step will be consideration by Cabinet of the various options for upgrading this major transport corridor from Cairns to the Tablelands.

The budget this year has an amount of \$500,000 for preliminary design work and approvals that will be required to implement the Cabinet decision. Additional allocations for actual road construction will be included in future budgets.

The reliable provision of power is another critical issue and I'm pleased to note that \$5.29M has been allocated by Stanwell for maintaining and upgrading the Barron Gorge Power Station. Ergon has yet to allocate funding for the reinforcement project that will improve reliability of supply of power to the northern beaches because community consultation regarding this project is only just beginning. No doubt funding will be provided in next year's budget to progress the project, but I would like to place on record again my personal view that this 135kV line should be undergrounded and that an appropriate level of funding should be made available to construct such a line.

Tourism is a major industry in the Barron River electorate, with the Great Barrier Reef being the draw card for many of the visitors who stay in accommodation on the northern beaches. The health of the reef is therefore of critical importance and the budget provides for \$1M over two years to address crown of thorns infestations that are badly affecting reefs in the Cairns region. A reef taskforce will also be formed to advise the Government and better co-ordinate existing programs to improve water quality which is of critical significance to the health of the reef.

The 2001/02 budget also provides for the completion of a multi-million dollar project to improve visitors facilities in the Barron Gorge National Park. Thus \$145,000 will allow for the completion of the Speewah Camping grounds on land to be donated by the Elgar family for inclusion in the National Park. Unfortunately this work and the associated walking tracks have taken longer to complete than anticipated, but I look forward to the Premier opening these facilities later in the year

when the agreement between the Elgar family and the State Government will have been honoured. The budget has also made provision for other projects to protect and manage the Wet Tropics World Heritage area which is both enjoyed by locals and utilised by many tour operators who live in the Barron River electorate. One of the Great Walks of Queensland will be located in the Wet Tropics and some of the \$2M allocated in the budget for this project will be used to progress plans for a 2-3 day walk from the Atherton Tablelands to the coast.

The Cairns wetlands could also be a major eco-tourism attraction in the future as they are in other parts of the world. The budget has allocated \$2.86M over 4 years for remediation of the East Trinity degraded wetlands affected by acid sulfate soil problems. I look forward to the creation of the Cairns Wetland Park in the future as advocated by the Cairns and Far North Environment Centre.

As I indicated at the outset of my speech, this budget delivers for families—all families—with additional funding to reduce elective surgery and dental waiting times, create employment for young people and mature age workers in particular and provide more support for family members with a disability. The Beattie Labor Government pledged to put families first and this budget delivers on that pledge with a wide range of other programs to support parents and their children as well as the elderly.

I will conclude by reminding members of the other pledge that Premier Beattie has made repeatedly—namely his commitment to make Queensland the Smart State. This commitment underlines a wide range of budget initiatives being driven by the Ministers for Education, State Development and Innovation and Information Economy, so that Queensland can generate knowledge industries, as well as stimulate innovation in our traditional industries of mining and agriculture. For example, \$12.6M has been allocated for the establishment in Brisbane of an Aerospace Centre of Excellence and a Pharmacy Centre of Excellence. I hope that future budgets may provide for a Rainforest Centre of Excellence if the Feasibility Study currently being conducted into the establishment of such a facility on the Cairns campus of the J.C.U. in my electorate proves positive. The exciting initiative in the budget of a \$100M innovative Smart State Research Facility Fund may well provide an avenue to assist in the development of the Rainforest Centre of Excellence and I will be pursuing this concept vigorously over the next twelve months.

Just opposite the James Cook University campus where it is hoped to locate the Rainforest Centre for Excellence, is Smithfield State High School which is contributing to making Queensland the Smart State. Smithfield High was one of three winners in the Education Queensland regional awards for Showcase 2001 for their IT program.

The advanced computing subject for Year 11 and 12's, Information Technology Systems, gives students the opportunity to obtain an OP score, a Certificate III in Software Applications and a Certificate IV in Interactive Multi-Media by the time they graduate.

Congratulations must go to head teacher Mark Jones and his team for their awards submission which focused on the program's links with the tertiary sector and QANTM, Australia's leading multi-media training organisation. Smithfield is now in the running for the State Finals to be held later this year.

Two outstanding Smithfield students, James Tappenden and Ryan Knell, recently attended a seminar in Brisbane as part of the Minister's Awards for Students Excelling in Information and Communication Technology.

Ryan had this to say about his experience, "I feel that the Minister's Awards for Information and Communication Technology seminar will have a huge impact on the future direction of my life. It has opened my eyes to future industry employment in Queensland, such as Microsoft or Compaq". It is students like Ryan and James who will indeed make Queensland the Smart State.

The Premier recognised the excellent work in IT at Smithfield High when he announced the allocation of \$100,000 for the school to further develop its innovative programs when he launched an education policy at Smithfield High School prior to the election. This budget delivers on that commitment and I look forward to seeking the outcomes of this additional funding. The budget also makes provision for six centres of excellence in maths, science and technology and I have strongly advocated for Smithfield High School to become one of those six in recognition of its leading edge work in information technology education.

I congratulate the Treasurer on his first budget, which showed all the hallmarks that have characterised the performance of the Deputy Premier in his previous ministerial positions namely political acumen coupled with disciplined attention to detail in the service of the people of Queensland. I commend the Bills to the House.

Ms MALE (Glass House—ALP) (3.35 p.m.): It is my great pleasure to speak about this year's state budget and I congratulate the Treasurer on delivering a strong, sensible budget. For my seat of Glass House, this year's budget has delivered many much-needed projects and benefits, and I will discuss these later in my speech.

Firstly, I would like to address some of the criticism directed at the budget. We have seen the same old tired lines from the same old tired lobby groups from the business community, local government and some unions who should know better.

A government member: And the National Party.

Ms MALE: Indeed. They have claimed that the budget was predictable and there was nothing extra for their particular groups. I am sorry, but isn't this the first budget following a state election? The budget delivers on all of the Beattie Labor government's election commitments, as it should have. The budget should have been predictable, because we saw it all during the election campaign.

During February of this year, the Premier was adamant that he would only make promises that Queensland could afford. This contrasted markedly with the coalition, which promised everything under the sun, and then some. It was willing to rack up billions of dollars worth of

debts, as long as it got its hands on the Treasury coffers. During the election campaign, if someone came up with an issue, the coalition's answer was to throw money at it.

The City Country Alliance—if honourable members remember it—caught the same spending-spree bug. I remember the stock, standard response from the Glass House CCA candidate every time an issue arose. He would say: 'Don't worry, CCA will fix it.' It was that simple. He would not say how it would be fixed or how much it would cost to fix it—just that it would be fixed. It must be nice living in the CCA world with a benevolent Bill Feldman travelling around the countryside fixing everyone's problems with a flick of the wrist. Luckily, the voters of Glass House saw through the CCA facade and its candidate hardly received a vote on election day. In fact, he got fewer votes than the comic Tamara Tonite who ran in the Premier's electorate. However, despite all its bravado, the CCA was never going to be serious contenders at winning this year's state election.

The coalition, however, was always in with a good chance. It must be remembered that as soon as the Premier called the election, Labor dropped back to 44 seats due to the redistribution. The coalition only had to win one seat or rely on One Nation or Independents to win back government. So the coalition threw everything at Labor, including a whole pile of unfunded promises. It was desperate to win, and it showed.

In contrast, Labor made affordable, sensible promises, prioritising needs from across the whole state. This year's budget reflects that steady-as-she-goes attitude. It is not outlandish, but it provides real sustainable services and real sustainable jobs. The Beattie Labor government realises that we do not have a bottomless pit of money and that we cannot fix everyone's problem overnight. This budget provides tangible benefits for all Queenslanders without breaking the bank and without raising taxes.

Some people obviously have unrealistic expectations about budgets. Perhaps all those pre-election promises from the coalition convinced some people that governments could cure all their ills. Julie-Ann McCullough from the Queensland Teachers Union was disappointed that the budget did not deliver anything more than what was achieved through the Industrial Relations Commission. As a former teacher in the dark days of the Bjelke-Petersen era, I am surprised at the QTU's statements. I think that the QTU should be well satisfied that teachers are getting the pay rises, which are at great expense to the budget bottom line. It should also be happy that the budget has funded the extra teachers as promised, not to mention the continued emphasis on information technology. Our talented teachers are working hard in our classrooms every day and they are supported and appreciated by the Beattie Labor government.

The Police Union's response to the budget was also predictable and trite. I must say that Gary Wilkinson's hangdog expression at his press conference was worthy of an Academy Award. Instead of working with the government to continually improve the Police Service, Mr Wilkinson continues to talk it down. The Police Union has received an average of 300 additional members per year for every year under the Beattie government and it is not happy. I do not know of any other union that can boast such consistent growth over the last few years, and this year's budget delivers another 300 membership fees to the union's coffers. More importantly, it is 300 jobs created above and beyond the normal attrition rate in the Police Service. Queensland has a first-class Police Service and I am proud to be part of a government that recognises the excellent service our police officers provide to the people of Queensland.

Job creation has been one area in the budget that has come in for some criticism in media circles. There has not been a government in Queensland that has done more to create apprenticeships, traineeships and sustainable jobs than the Beattie Labor government. There has not been a government in Queensland that has done more to attract business, trade and investment than the Beattie Labor government. However, people have to face facts. If the underlying factors for job creation are not there, then the state government can only do so much. It must be remembered that Australia has recently suffered its first downturn in the economy for almost a decade. Up until the last quarter of last year, the Australian economy was leading most of the world in terms of growth. And what was the single factor that sparked negative growth in the last quarter of last year? The GST! And who introduced it? The mean, tricky and out-of-touch Howard coalition government.

A government member: It's serious.

Ms MALE: Indeed, it is very serious for the people of Queensland. The Queensland economy is still battling the effects of the GST, high fuel prices and slowing markets in our main trading partners of Japan and the USA. Couple those factors with a high employment participation factor and high interstate migration, and the result is a higher than average

unemployment rate. Despite this, Queensland is outperforming the rest of Australia and it is predicted to have double the employment growth of all the other states. The Australian economy only just clawed its way into the black in the first quarter of this year after its GST-induced coma. The main reason for that growth was the underlying strength of the Queensland economy.

This year's budget provides a balanced approach to the problems facing Queenslanders. It continues the government's strong commitment to job creation, with new employment programs for the mature age unemployed and the long-term unemployed. It continues the good work of the Community Jobs Plan program, and I look forward to seeing more of these in the Glass House electorate.

The budget puts an emphasis on health service delivery, with extra funding for crucial areas such as intensive care and oral health. It puts Queensland at the forefront of research and development and new industries which will create long-term sustainable jobs. It boosts police numbers, police beats and shopfronts as well as creates other innovative crime prevention initiatives such as the tactical crime squads. It maintains Queensland's Smart State status with record funding in education. It continues to address the severe underfunding in the disability services sector and provides the basis for some real social justice outcomes for disadvantaged Queenslanders.

In the area of the environment, it returns the focus to the human side of our national parks, with funding for more park rangers. It also sets aside funding to attack salinity problems and continues the South East Queensland Regional Forest Agreement funding for forest reserves.

That is the big picture painted by this year's budget, but on a smaller scale, all those benefits have been passed on to the people who live within the Glass House electorate. Indeed, the people of Glass House have fared well, with a number of programs and projects aimed specifically at the problems which currently exist in my local area.

Due to the large number of speakers still on the speaking list, I seek leave to have the following segment of my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The first one I would like to talk about is the proposed Police Beat for the Tullawong and Central Caboolture area. Now a Police Beat may not seem like a big deal in the overall scheme of things and I'm sure including it did not threaten to break the Budget and did not give the Treasurer any sleepless nights. But it is a crucial piece of service delivery which will immensely improve the quality of life for Tullawong residents. People have asked me: "Why Tullawong? It is not the crime capital of Queensland and it doesn't feature heavily in police reports. Why should that suburb deserve a police beat?" The simple reason is the demographics of the area and the fact that it lends itself perfectly to the police beat concept.

There are four major schools and four large retirement villages and nursing homes within the Tullawong/Central Caboolture area.

There is an inter-mix of older people with growing families and this combination has led to a heightened fear of crime. It is not just a fear of crime, but there is still a large amount of break and enters and so-called minor crime such as vandalism, hoons and petty theft—which is often as distressing as major crime. From my doorknocking of Tullawong before and during the election campaign, the number one issue to emerge was crime. It prompted me to invite the then Police Minister Tom Barton to visit Tullawong during the campaign and meet with residents—to hear their concerns first-hand. So I'm very pleased that their pleas have not gone unanswered and I must thank both Tom and the new Police Minister Tony McGrady for finding the funding for the Police Beat. By having a police officer living and working in the area, the police presence will be dramatically increased and the fear of crime should plummet. The new officer's ability to get involved in school life and community life can only be beneficial to our area. Already I have had residents ring my office to advise of vacant houses the officer could move in to.

Mr Speaker, health and transport also featured strongly during my doorknocking and mobile offices and in these areas, Glass House has fared very well. Even though the Caboolture Hospital physically sits within the seat of Pumicestone, it services most of Glass House. Therefore, it is great to see the \$650,000 for the intensive care unit and the recurrent \$3.3 million for critical care services at the Caboolture Hospital. I have received a number of complaints about long waits at the dental hospital since the Federal Government cut funding, so the extra \$5 million to reduce waiting lists in public oral health services will go a long way to improving services in Caboolture.

Mr Speaker, One of the big ticket items is the \$12 million allocated for the long awaited Caboolture Northern Bypass. It was all set to go in 1996, and then, unfortunately, the Coalition won power and promptly scrapped it—no doubt to pay for the Gold Coast highway. It has taken this long to get back to the same stage and now there are only a few steps left before construction starts. I would like to thank the Transport Minister for his commitment to the Northern Bypass and can assure him that the people of the Caboolture and surrounding areas will be delighted to see the completion of this much-needed project. The other major transport projects funded in the 2001-02 Budget include:

\$700,000 to begin work on Landsborough to Caboolture rail upgrade study

\$150,000 to commence rehabilitation and widening of the Palmwoods-Mooloolah Road, between the rail overbridge and Old Gympie Road

\$482,000 to complete the \$2.8 million at-grade intersection project on Glass House Mountains Road at Beerwah; and

\$1.2 million to complete the rehabilitation of Glass House Mountains Road and Beerburum intersection works.

We are also seeing the results of money from last year's Budget being spent on improvements to the Caboolture Railway Station for improved access for people with a disability and this type of program is to be extended across the Citytrain Network in this Budget.

Schools in the hinterland part of Glass House have done very well in the capital works budget with:

\$220,000 for upgrade of the Special Education Unit at Beerwah State School

\$101,000 for canteen, amenities and covered play area at Glass House Mountains State School; and

\$117,000 for rectification of grounds at Mooloolah State School.

Mr Speaker, people in the Beerwah and Glass House areas still continue to suffer power outages so the \$2.5 million for the completion of works on the Energex 110/330kV Substation at Beerwah should go a long way to improving power supplies and reliability.

The Fire and Rescue Service has also set aside \$250,000 for purchase of land for a future Mooloolah Fire Station as part of its record budget allocation. After my many discussions with the Mooloolah Fire, they are all looking forward to acquiring the land and then getting their new station built.

Ms MALE: Overall, this year's state budget is a well rounded and well grounded budget for both Queensland and, more importantly, Glass House. However, just because I am pleased with the outcome of the budget does not mean that I will stop lobbying ministers for much-needed funds in Glass House. So ministers can be forewarned that I will continue to do my corridor creeping around Parliament House and I will pounce on them when they least expect it. Again, I pass on my congratulations to the Treasurer, Terry Mackenroth, on a top-class budget. I look forward to the Caboolture region and the Sunshine Coast hinterland featuring strongly in his future budgets.

Interruption.

PRIVILEGE

Kupai Omasker

Mr JOHNSON (Gregory—NPA) (Deputy Leader of the Opposition) (3.43 p.m.): I rise on a matter of privilege suddenly arising. In this House yesterday I asked a question without notice of the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy asking her to explain why neither she nor the Premier have met with the kupai omasker project working party on traditional Torres Strait Islander rearing practices. In answer to my question the minister stated—

Over the past three years I have met with the working party—I cannot remember when the last occasion was—and given them my commitment on behalf of the Queensland government to pursue this issue.

I have today received a letter from Mr Steve Mam, chairman of the kupai omasker working party, which says in part—

I am amazed at the minister's response to your question as I also cannot remember the last occasion when the minister met with the working party about Kupai Omasker. The reason for this is that there was never a first occasion—she has never met with us.

In view of Mr Mam's letter, it would appear that Minister Spence has misled this House in her answer to me yesterday. Madam Deputy Speaker, I therefore ask you to refer this matter to the Speaker for the consideration of the privileges committee. I seek leave of the House to table the relevant documentation.

Leave granted.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jarratt): Order! I will refer the matter to the Speaker.

APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL APPROPRIATION BILL

Second Reading (Cognate Debate)

Resumed.

Mr LIVINGSTONE (Ipswich West—ALP) (3.44 p.m.): This budget is the best budget ever for Ipswich West. After 32 years of neglect at the hands of the coalition, our region started to see improvements under the Goss government. However, under Peter Beattie we are seeing vast improvements never witnessed in our area before. I congratulate Terry Mackenroth as Treasurer. I am sure that this will be the first of many budgets to come under his stewardship.

In the area of health we see an increase of six per cent, taking the Health budget to over \$4 billion, with \$364 million for capital works projects. With the support of the members for Ipswich

and Bundamba, I will make sure that Ipswich gets its fair share. Numerous Ipswich people travel three times per week to the Princess Alexandra Hospital for kidney dialysis treatment. In this budget we see \$600,000 for a new kidney dialysis unit. This new unit will be finished by November this year.

An extra \$5 million across Queensland to help our seniors awaiting dental health services will also be well received in Ipswich as there are quite a few people on the waiting list. In the area of emergency services, Ipswich West has again been treated very well. During the first Beattie government, over \$600,000 was spent on a joint ambulance and fire station at Rosewood. Since then, new vehicles for the Ambulance Service have been delivered, and now in this budget we see that \$250,000 has been earmarked for a new unit known as a road accident rescue kit. This unit is complete with jaws of life, blow-up air bags and other essential equipment that has not ever existed in the Rosewood area.

In the past, in the event of serious accidents a vehicle always had to come from either Ipswich or Laidley, and that can take half an hour or more. I am sure that if a member of our family was unfortunate enough to need this service we would want to have the best equipment possible. I would also like to note that Rosewood has been in an electorate held by the National Party for 30-odd years, and in return it got nothing.

In the area of education we have an increase of 8.9 per cent to bring total spending to a record \$4.3 billion. In an area like Ipswich West, where a lot of the schools are old, the \$50 million Triple R maintenance program will be well received, and I will make sure that schools in my electorate get their fair share. In addition to this program, Brassall State School will receive over \$290,000 for a new amenities block, which is well overdue. Rosewood State High School will also receive almost \$163,000 for a new amenities block.

In the area of law and order, Ipswich West again fared well, with a commitment to a new police beat being established in North Ipswich. This was an election commitment, and it is our intention to keep all of our election promises. We also have a major upgrade of the Ipswich Watch House, which is long overdue.

In the area of regional infrastructure, \$430,000 has been put aside for pavement rehabilitation on Pine Mountain Road, from High Street to the Warrego Highway. This follows stage 1 on which we spent \$1.6 million in the last budget, bringing the total that has been spent on this road within a couple of months up to over \$2 million. \$200,000 has been put aside for repairs to the bridge over the Bremer River on the Warrego Highway on the boundary between Ipswich and Ipswich West. \$140,000 has been put aside for repairs to a bridge on Hagslea-Amberley Road. A further \$850,000 has been earmarked for the Brisbane Valley Highway south of Fernvale. \$8,488 has been put aside for a subsidy to Esk Shire Council for a bikeway adjacent to Lowood-Minden Road. The total subsidy eventually will be \$45,000. A further \$5,955 for traffic calming near Lowood State High School, again in the Esk shire, has been allocated. The total of this subsidy will be \$13,000.

In the area of housing we continue to see major improvements. When I first came into this parliament in 1989, housing commission maintenance was almost non-existent. Under the coalition, people living in housing commission houses were treated as second-class people. Then when the Labor Party came to government, Minister Terry Mackenroth, the then minister, put in place a trial period—a pilot program—for urban renewal. This program has been very, very successful. It was established at Leichhardt to do a major upgrade of defence housing, with input from the local community. A community swimming pool was also established. However, when we lost government in 1995 one of the first things the Borbidge government did for Ipswich West was to freeze the urban renewal program.

Government members: Shame!

Mr LIVINGSTONE: It was a shame. It was disgraceful. It just shows what it thinks of people living in housing commission homes. However, under the Beattie government, urban renewal and community renewal came to the forefront. The present minister, Robert Schwarten, should be congratulated. There is no minister in this government with more knowledge of his portfolio than Minister Schwarten. There is no minister in this government with more compassion for those people who are doing it tough. Almost \$3 million has been earmarked for capital works in Ipswich West, and this will bring a lot of those properties up to the standard they should have been at a long, long time ago.

One major issue in Ipswich West is water. The redistributed electorate of Ipswich West takes in part of the Lower Lockyer, an area which has been National Party heartland forever. I do not

think there has ever been a Labor member in that area. The National Party stands condemned for doing absolutely nothing to help the people in that area. Atkinson Dam is down to about 50 per cent of its capacity. I am not suggesting that it is the coalition's fault that the area has not had rain. However, the creek running next to Atkinson Dam used to flood for six to eight weeks of the year. Because of the excavation of sand and gravel, subdivisions and roadworks, the same amount of water passes through that creek in just one week.

There are a couple of pipes underneath Atkinson Road in a fairly deep canal, which runs through to the creek. While the creek is in flood, the water runs through those pipes and fills Atkinson Dam. However, since the creek only floods now for approximately one week a year, not as much water gets through the dam like it used to. This problem can be overcome for a reasonable amount of money, not a large amount. I have been dealing with residents in the area and people from the irrigation committee, particularly Selwyn Sippel, who is a first-class gentleman. All of those people have pointed out to me in discussion that installing a couple of culverts on the roadway would resolve the problem, because that would harvest more of the water that gets away. I have already had discussions with several ministers. I am pleased to be able to inform the House today that I have already been promised at least half the cost so far to put those culverts in. I would hope that in the very near future I will get commitments from other ministers in order for this job to be completed.

Mr Hayward: You have a reputation for getting commitments from ministers.

Mr LIVINGSTONE: I do have that reputation, and I want to ensure that it is done. However, I do not want to give the local people or media the impression that this is going to be the solution to all their problems, because it is not. It is really a short-term solution. The long-term solution is running a pipeline from Wivenhoe Dam to Atkinson Dam. I would certainly hope that the water board, if it has not already, starts to look at this. I would urge it to do that today.

I am told that the cost of constructing that pipe is somewhere in the vicinity of \$12 million. The pipe will pass through the small township of Coominya, which is only five kilometres from Wivenhoe Dam, but which unfortunately does not have town water. There are also abattoirs in fairly close proximity, which at present employ 280 people. An additional 50 people work for McDonald's making meat patties. The management of the abattoirs tells me that if it had a commitment for a permanent water supply it could employ another 120 people. That is something that this parliament should look at, and I will be encouraging that to happen. This area has only been in my electorate for approximately four months as a result of the last redistribution. This government has been listening to the people, and it is certainly going to deliver on some of these issues as quickly as possible. This is a responsible budget. I commend it to the House.

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (3.53 p.m.), in reply: I thank all honourable members for their contributions to this debate. A large number of new members have made their first contribution to a budget debate, and I congratulate them on the speeches they have made. I guess one of the fortunate things for me with such a large majority in government is that they all had a lot of praise for the budget. I am not foolish. I thank those members for their comments. I would particularly like to address some points made by the Leader of the Opposition so that he understands some of the processes, because he was wrong on some of them. In the interests of the House, I seek leave to have my speech incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

I wish to make only a few remarks at this time, to answer some of the statements made yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition and shadow Treasurer.

The Leader of the Opposition said, in respect of the slippage in the 2000-01 Capital Works Program: 'If that \$278 million of capital works had been spent, as it was supposed to have been, then there would have been an even greater operating loss of \$1,098 million.'

As I pointed out yesterday, that statement is incorrect. If the capital works were fully spent, it would not have had an additional impact on the operating result. It would have reduced the cash surplus by that amount, but not the operating position. The operating statement only would have been affected to the extent that there was some slippage in the capital grants component of the capital works program.

The Leader of the Opposition said of the 2000-01 result: 'Spending blew out by \$919 million to \$19.071 billion ...' and that 'the government has tried to put a spin on it. It tried to talk about the HIH collapse as though that was a major contributor. But it was only a minor contributor.' The figures are right, the increase was \$919 million. But let's have a closer look at it, to help the Leader of the Opposition understand it.

As I outlined in my budget speech, the primary drivers behind the additional expenditure in 2000-01 were one-off extraordinary items: the collapse of HIH (\$230 million) and the transfer of the Townsville-Thuringowa Water Supply Board from state to local government (\$180 million). Employee expenses also increased due to a number of factors, mainly the

teachers enterprise bargaining outcome in December. Other material expenditure changes were matched by additional Commonwealth funding. For example, specific purpose payments increased by \$180 million and so did corresponding expenditure.

Gst-related expenditure for GST administration costs and the first home owner's scheme also increased in the order of \$120 million. This was offset by additional Commonwealth budget balancing assistance as required under the agreement. On the revenue side, the additional moneys from the Commonwealth were more than matched by the lower than anticipated investment returns.

Back to HIH. In accordance with the principles of sound fiscal management, upon learning of the HIH collapse, the government undertook a review of the likely impact on Queensland's financial position. The provisions of the Motor Accident Insurance Act require that the Nominal Defendant take over an insolvent insurer's rights and liabilities under CTP policies, with recourse to assets of the insurer as the company is wound up. The government has made an assessment of expense and associated liability to pay claims as they arise in the future. That cost has been recorded in the 2000-01 operating result as the collapse occurred this year, and the liability to pay claims therefore should be recognised on the balance sheet, this year. As claims are submitted there will be cash payments each year until the government has met its obligations to Queenslanders left in the cold by HIH.

The Leader of the Opposition referred to an article by Marc Robinson in the *Courier-Mail*. Making reference to the fiscal balance, he said, 'The fiscal balance reveals a substantial deterioration in the projected outcome for the current fiscal year 2000-01.'

The Charter of Social and Fiscal Responsibility focuses on ensuring that the state's financial assets cover all accruing and expected future liabilities of the general government sector. The level of Queensland's net financial assets measures this. Our government has consistently pursued sound long-term policies such as ensuring that not only are employee superannuation entitlements fully funded, but other liabilities such as employee long service leave entitlements are also fully funded. The results of these policies can be demonstrated by Queensland's level of liquidity being well in excess of that of the other states and territories.

A change in net financial assets—the stock—equates to changes in the fiscal balance and revaluations affecting financial assets & liabilities—the flows. As you can see, fiscal balance is not the full story. It is more appropriate, as the charter states, to track net financial assets as it is that measure which fully reflects your financial position. Net financial assets are projected to go up over the forward estimates period.

The ratings agency Standard and Poor's and media commentator Alan Woods of the *Australian*, support this argument. The net operating balance is important because it gives you an indication of the sustainability of your fiscal policy settings. It is also a measure for assessing that equity is being maintained between generations—as it ensures that there is sufficient revenue to cover all expenses including those assets used up and depreciated in a year.

On the changes to the Charter of Social and Fiscal Responsibility that I tabled in this House on Tuesday morning, the Leader of the Opposition said: 'The Australian Accounting Standards were no longer going to be part of that charter of responsibility.' The amendment made to the charter changes the requirement to publish in the annual budget papers both the government finance statistics (GFS) and accounting view. Instead only the GFS view, which is the standard budget presentation for all Australian governments under the Australian Loan Council uniform presentation framework, will be required for the budget. This has been done to improve clarity and understanding of the state's budget. The Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 requires the government to prepare whole-of-government general purpose accrual financial reports after the end of each financial year, in the format prescribed by Australian Accounting Standards (AAS) 31. This requirement has not been changed and will continue to be fulfilled. These requirements are still part of the charter. It is therefore not true to say that reporting under Australian accounting Standards has been dropped from the charter as I explained to the parliament on 19 June 2001.

Finally, the Leader of the Opposition talked about Suncorp-Metway stadium. He said: 'It is time for the Treasurer to stand up and explain the mystery of Lang Park and what is happening. Where is the \$125 million and more that the government has to find this year coming from?' The Suncorp-Metway stadium redevelopment is to be completed by May 2003 and will be funded by borrowings for the full \$280 million cost of the redevelopment. \$235 million in debt will be repaid by funds collected through the major facilities levy on hotel gaming machine profits.

The major facilities levy applies from 1 July 2001 to the most profitable hotel gaming machine venues, with the proceeds used to finance major public sporting and cultural facilities and infrastructure in Queensland. Funds generated by the levy will be paid to the Lang Park Trust by the Department of Sport and Recreation in the form of a grant. After completion, the revenue generated by the stadium from the hirer's staging of events is expected to generate sufficient revenue to service debt on a \$45 million portion of the \$280 million in borrowings.

Motion agreed to.

Reference to Estimates Committees

Mr SPEAKER: Order! In accordance with the sessional orders adopted by the House on 30 May 2001, the Appropriation (Parliament) Bill and the Appropriation Bill are referred to the estimates committees for consideration and report.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT

Hon. T. M. MACKENROTH (Chatsworth—ALP) (Deputy Premier, Treasurer and Minister for Sport) (3.54 p.m.): I move—

That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 31 July 2001.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at 3.55 p.m.