Speech By

Jon Krause

MEMBER FOR BEAUDESERT

Record of Proceedings, 5 June 2014

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

Mr KRAUSE (Beaudesert—LNP) (9.50 pm): It is a pleasure to speak in support of the 2014-15 Queensland budget and to follow my colleague the member for Algester in his support of the budget. This is a budget with a strong plan for a brighter future for Queensland. We have not increased taxes. We have increased spending on health and education by significant percentage points—six per cent and seven per cent respectively. Through careful financial management, we are revitalising front-line services, emergency department performance and elective surgery waiting times, and we are putting more police on the beat across Queensland and that includes all throughout the Beaudesert electorate.

The 2014-15 state budget outlines a strong plan for Queensland but also a brighter future for the Beaudesert electorate. In the past two years the Treasurer in his budgets has made strong decisions to control government expenses. They have been contained to a small 0.2 per cent increase this year. This is to put Queensland's budget back on track. We have laid the framework to grow a four-pillar economy in Queensland and to revitalise front-line services across the state. As I said, significant additional police resources have gone into the Beaudesert electorate at Jimboomba station in the Beaudesert district, at Tamborine Mountain and at Canungra, as well as in the entire Ipswich district, which covers the other side of my electorate.

We have restored procedural maternity services at Beaudesert Hospital and we have put our public health system on track to being the best public health system in Australia. The number of category 1 patients waiting more than 30 days for surgery has been cut by 83 per cent and the number of long-wait dental patients has been reduced by a massive 98.5 per cent over the last 14 months—a terrific record. This careful financial management has enabled the increase in funding for health services across the state and for education across the state—more than six per cent in health and more than seven per cent in education. This includes significant funds to facilitate the transition of year 7 into high school and to implement the Great Results Guarantee.

There are a number of significant matters of benefit for my Beaudesert electorate in this budget. They include Main Roads funding of $2 million to upgrade the intersection of Millstream Road and the Mount Lindesay Highway in Jimboomba. This matter has been brought to my attention many times over the last 18 months to two years because it is a very busy intersection. That part of Jimboomba is a growing section of the community and the growing residential area on Millstream Road has contributed to an increase in traffic at that intersection. So it is great that an upgrade of that intersection will take place to improve safety there.

There is also funding of $1.8 million to make safety improvements to Tamborine Mountain Road at Tamborine, where tragically there was a fatal accident last year. So the improvements on the agenda for Transport and Main Roads will certainly work to improve safety on that section of road to make it safer for motorists in the future.

We have also included funding to plan for improvements and upgrades of the Mount Lindesay Highway between Chambers Flat and Jimboomba. This recognises that we have a lot of growth going on in the area. There are a lot of residential developments going on in Beaudesert and Jimboomba and in areas in between. So putting in place funding in this budget for planning the expansion and upgrade of that section of highway is very important.

I have spoken in this House before about the services at Beaudesert Hospital including the recommencement of maternity services which happened just in March this year. This budget, I am happy to say, includes funding to secure the future of that service as part of the budget for the Metro South Hospital and Health Service. Its overall funding has increased by 17.8 per cent since Labor's budget in 2011-12—17.8 per cent. It is great that the increased services at Beaudesert Hospital are a part of that increased funding.

Over $400 million has been provided—this is new funding—for child protection to fully implement the recommendations of the Carmody inquiry into child protection. Unlike those members opposite who had inquiries into child protection and did not follow the recommendations, we are implementing the recommendations of Carmody. It is the strong disciplined decisions we have made in previous budgets that have enabled funding to be set aside to implement those recommendations in full. I commend the Treasurer for that initiative and thank him for that commitment to child safety across the state. It is focused on early intervention. I know from feedback from people in my electorate who work in the community sector in places like Beaucare and Centacare and also officers of the Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disability Services that a focus on early intervention is something they see as key to keeping people out of the child protection system, which of course is the optimum outcome in all of these situations.

The budget also includes $2.4 million to repair and rehabilitate parts of Camp Cable Road at Jimboomba—a road which I share with my colleague and friend the member for Logan, Michael Pucci. I congratulate him on his advocacy for all parts of the electorate of Logan, including Camp Cable Road. The budget includes $880,000 for additional facilities at Tamborine Mountain State High School—a very fast growing community which has a—

Mr Pucci: A strong team working together.

Mr KRAUSE: We have a strong team working together. That is exactly right, member for Logan. Thank you. We have a very fast growing community at Tamborine Mountain State High School, and it is great to see additional funds going there as well.

We have funding for an additional 267 police officers across Queensland in this budget. This reinforces our commitment as a government to putting more police on the beat. As I said previously, we have more police on the beat at Jimboomba and Beaudesert and all across the electorate. Additional funding in this budget confirms that this government will continue with that commitment to keep our communities safe and to put more police on the beat to keep people safe.

Locally, we have $8 million in funding for the One-Stop Shop initiative, which is designed to enhance Queensland government service delivery across the whole state. The member for Lockyer and I are sharing the piloting of that scheme in the Scenic Rim region and the Lockyer Valley region. It is great to see $8 million for that scheme. I congratulate the Minister for Information Technology for his commitment to that program.

We have $5 million in funding for Everyone's Environment program, which is fantastic. That is $1 million more than last year, Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection. I have some great and very enthusiastic community groups in my electorate who will lap up the opportunity to apply for more grants in the Everyone's Environment initiative. We have $1.45 million in funding for mental health support for communities affected by drought, $3.1 million for upgrades to Moogerah Dam and several million dollars for upgrades to Maroon Dam; and $19.7 million for the construction of the Loganlea to Jimboomba 110-kilovolt powerline. This is about securing the electricity supply for people in Jimboomba and Beaudesert and suburbs in between. The Scenic Rim is a growing area and this is about providing infrastructure for that growing region and ensuring they have a reliable electricity supply into the future.

There is $340,000 for improvement works to the intersection of Running Creek Road and Innisplain Road, and there is $10 million to complete the upgrade of the Browns Plains bus station. This is important for the people of Beaudesert because we recently introduced through TransLink a regular hourly bus service between Beaudesert and Browns Plains which connects Beaudesert and the Scenic Rim with the wider South-East Queensland community. This has been welcomed with acclaim. Previously we had three buses a day; now there are about a dozen buses a day. This is really connecting my communities with the broader South-East Queensland community.

We are capping the emergency management fund contributions for rural landholders and exempting community organisations in rural areas. I thank the Minister for Police and Community Safety for heeding my representations in relation to those matters and putting a cap on that and exempting certain community organisations from that levy. That was a burden on some of those community organisations to be able to pay that levy.

There is $140,000 for irrigation and on-farm management. I think the Minister for Natural Resources and Mines had something to do with approving that funding which has been organised between the Queensland Dairy Farmers organisation, Growcom and other agricultural groups to improve farm water management for irrigators. There is $1.3 million for the Scenic Rim and Logan City libraries, there is $219,000 for Home Assist Secure services in Beaudesert, and there is $1.8 million in funding for Beaudesert child safety services.

Importantly, and I would like to congratulate the Treasurer for this, we have extended transfer duty concessions for the transfer of farms between family members. I thank him for this because there are a number of primary producers in my electorate that are family operations and I know that the ability to transfer those operations between not just children and grandchildren but wider family members as well will be beneficial. I know it still needs to be a gift—and that is understood—but there are a lot of nieces and nephews who are involved in these operations and the ability to do that without paying a duty to the government will be most welcomed.

This government has got government spending under control. It is now time to make the strongest and smartest choice to secure Queensland's future. The draft plan to reduce debt by $25 billion to $55 billion will save a lot of interest for Queensland each year—over $1 billion—and it will also make available that $8.6 billion for investment in infrastructure. There is a lot of infrastructure in my electorate that needs to be invested in. It is only because we have taken strong decisions and a disciplined approach over the last two years that we are able to keep revitalising front-line services. That is the only reason we can put $406 million into Child Safety to implement what came out of the Carmody commission of inquiry. It is the only reason we can continue to provide support services for people affected by drought, provide fee and rent relief, and provide community and mental health support programs.

This budget is focused on front-line services but this government understands that, if we want to keep funding those services as our state grows, we need to take action to reduce our debt. We cannot leave an ongoing debt legacy for our children and grandchildren. I congratulate the Treasurer for the work he has undertaken in implementing the Strong Choices campaign. The people of Queensland had the opportunity to have their say on how they would deal with the legacy of Labor's $80 billion cumulated debt. Putting aside the $8.6 billion for infrastructure is important, but reducing our debt burden and reducing the impact of the interest payments on our community is more important because that $1.3 billion that is saved through increased interest payments is money that is dead money and it is money that could be better spent on community services and infrastructure—and there is a lot of infrastructure in my electorate that needs to be built because it is a growing part of South-East Queensland.

Accordingly, I would like to commend this budget to the House. I congratulate the Treasurer and all members of the government and the cabinet for their approach over the last two years which is bringing Queensland into a position of fiscal balance where the budget is on its way to being in the black and we are well on the way to being able to balance the balance sheet side of the equation as well. I commend this budget to the House.