



**Budget in Reply Speech  
GLEN ELMES**

**MEMBER FOR NOOSA**

**Hansard, 7 June, 2007**

**MR ELMES (Lib: Noosa)** (9.43 pm): I rise to respond to this year's budget and in doing so I have a few comments I wish to make. Firstly, let me applaud the Treasurer for deciding to return some of the flood of cash to the people of Queensland in the form of road upgrades in my electorate. I am pleased and I thank the Treasurer for heeding my calls to upgrade the Yandina-Coolum Road between Valdora Road and Arcoona Road. Some in this place might remember that some weeks ago there was a fatal accident on the corner of Arcoona Road and Yandina-Coolum Road, and while the \$2.5 million allocation is welcome and necessary, it is but a drop in the bucket compared to the amount that needs to be spent on what is one of the main access points into not only Coolum but the Sunshine Coast. I know that the people of my electorate are in danger every time they have to drive on Yandina-Coolum Road. I urge the Treasurer and the minister to fund a full upgrade, particularly that section of Yandina-Coolum Road between Quanda Road and the entrance to Coolum itself. In many places the road drops away some two or three metres on both sides, and with vastly increased traffic movements the capacity for further serious or fatal accidents is great.

While I am in the mood for congratulating the Treasurer, I also mention funding for the Eenie Creek Road and Weyba Road works. Those in my electorate and I live in hope that this budget shows that the Beattie government has turned the corner from its policy on infrastructure starvation. I am sure the House will be interested to know that on Tuesday morning, budget day, when Noosa shire residents read their local paper, the Noosa News, they saw not only a news story but a photograph showing the federal member for Wide Bay, Warren Truss, announcing \$150,000 in black spot funding for safety improvements on Sunshine Beach Road--the stretch between Cooyar Street and Solway Drive--specifically to help with acute parking and safety issues in the vicinity of the Sunshine Beach State School. Only a few hours later the Treasurer was on her feet promising the same money to fix the same problem. The Treasurer had just performed a magic trick that would make David Copperfield very proud--she took federal money, put it in her hat and pulled out a rabbit in the form of her own project.

In looking down the budget notes a little further, I was struck with another strange sense of déjà vu. I saw and noted the allocation of \$1.37 million to upgrade the Coolum Ambulance Station. On checking I found the same amount allocated in last year's budget and I am here to tell the House that not one cent has been spent on upkeep, let alone replacement of an ambulance station that is a disgrace. This is the same ambulance station where prior to the election I was able to identify an ambulance with over 350,000 kilometres on the clock still in use.

I am sure the House will be pleased to know that recently I had excited calls from ambulance officers in Coolum and the general community welcoming the news that at long last that ambulance had left Coolum. By then it had 500,000 kilometres on the clock and unfortunately for the member for Gympie, who is my very dear and close friend, that ambulance is now looking after the people in his electorate.

**Mr Gibson: Slowly.**

**MR ELMES:** Very slowly, and only occasionally. There has been no action from the Beattie government to reduce response times and no action on the promise of more ambulances and staff. All the people of Queensland have been given by the Beattie government is fuzzy promises and sleight of hand economics. I would like to invite the Premier and the Treasurer to my electorate to see the effect of their policy of starving Queenslanders of infrastructure. Come and see the absolute disgrace that is the Coolum Ambulance station. People in my electorate have shared with me on countless occasions how angry they are about the state of the station. I and my electorate hope that the second promise from

the Treasurer will this time be met with action. Now let us look at the fallacy that is the motor vehicle duty and the sleight of hand tactic that the Treasurer used to sell it. The Treasurer has displayed her contempt for the people of Queensland. She has tried to sweep the bite of a tax under the rug of mental health. People know that it is a lack of funding from the Beattie government that has caused the mental health shortcomings, but the Treasurer has the gall to blame the need for a tax on fixing those mistakes. It is the failure and continued failures of this government that has made this tax necessary and it was just in the name of a surplus. The Treasurer knows that it would be political suicide for her to present a budget in deficit, although the people of Queensland should know that this will be the last budget--

**Mr Lawlor** interjected.

**Mr Hinchliffe** interjected.

**Mr ELMES:** The comrades are acting up at the back. This will be the last budget in which, even with record borrowings, this government will present a surplus. The Treasurer knows that the Howard government has set the benchmark for economic management in Australia--

**Government members:** Ha, ha!

**Mr ELMES:** Here we go! The people of Queensland demand that governments manage their budgets and not run deficits. Yet the only way the Treasurer could achieve this was to slug the people of Queensland with an absurd tax sold under the name of fixing the Beattie government's failures--and, in doing so, the Treasurer has set a new precedent for her incompetence and dangerous economic mismanagement. The Treasurer has tried to cook the books on her debt. She has tried to hide debt across the government and GOCs. This kind of deceitful practice highlights again why Queenslanders cannot trust the Premier and why Queenslanders cannot trust the Treasurer, she who would be Queen. If we are not running a policy of infrastructure starvation they are spending money like sailors on shore leave. She is squandering our future and burdening our children with her legacy of debt. This just shows that the Beattie Labor government, whether under the control of Beattie or Bligh, gives no heed to the future. They are happy to play the Pied Piper and lead Queensland down a dangerous road of debt. It has been the legacy of coalition governments federally to pay off Labor's debt.

We know that the Howard government has paid off federal Labor's deficit and debt of \$96 billion, yet an incoming Rudd federal Labor government has already identified projects where they would rob the Future Fund which should be preserved for Australia's children. This state government is no different. Interest payments this year alone will be \$390 million. How many nurses, how many teachers, how many police, how many beds in public hospitals could we buy with \$390 million? Yet it gets worse. By 2010-11 this government would have borrowed \$12.4 billion with an annual interest bill of \$1.14 billion. We will not be paying off that debt; our children and our grandchildren will be paying off that debt. That will put Beattie and Bligh right up there with their Labor heroes and Labor governments like Brian Burke's government and WA Inc., the fiasco that was the South Australian Bank, the governments of Cain and Kirner in Victoria were it got so bad that they had to sell off the trams and lease them back and, of course, the \$96 billion black hole left by Paul Keating and Kim Beazley.

This government is up there with their great Labor heroes on a pedestal of financial and fiscal mismanagement. Queensland and Queenslanders deserve much better from their government. Another term that was missing from this budget--and Queenslanders know this term very well--is 'the low-tax state'. This government now refers to us as a tax competitive state. The truth is the taxpayers of Tasmania and South Australia now pay less state tax than Queenslanders. It will be to the eternal shame of this government that an economic culture that has been fostered and safeguarded by conservative governments for generations has been squandered. Queenslanders have no choice but to accept this budget which is, at its very best, voodoo economics gone bad.

But I give the House the assurance that an incoming coalition government will make the decisions, as only a coalition can, to restore good order to Queensland's books.

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