



Speech by

RACHEL NOLAN

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BUDGET SPEECH 2002

Ms NOLAN (Ipswich—ALP) (9.36 p.m.): I rise to speak in support of the budget which Treasurer Terry Mackenroth brought down a couple of days ago. In doing so, I will do my utmost to make a slightly more reasoned economic contribution than we have seen from some earlier speakers. The previous speaker tried to tell us that there were more jobs in capital works than in ongoing services. In Ipswich we have some capital works. We have some bridges, for instance, that were built 20 or 30 years ago. I am fairly confident that those capital works, once built, are not creating more jobs than the services in which family services officers, nurses, other health workers, teachers and police are employed. It is a fundamental fact of economics that there are more ongoing jobs in services than there will ever be in capital works, because a capital works project can be built only once.

We have also heard from the Leader of the Opposition today that it is an outrage that we have had an operating deficit over the last year. But he wants to spend more. There is not enough money for sugar; there is not enough money for police; there is not enough money for anything. This is quite outrageous economic irresponsibility from an opposition which cannot tell us what it would do. I do not know, as the member for Logan suggested, whether it is right to assume that the opposition would privatise public assets, though I strongly suggest that that is the case. But whatever its magical plan is to put us in surplus while providing more services, we would love to know about it.

I want to talk about the economic strategy that this government is pursuing to create ongoing jobs in Ipswich. As members would know, Ipswich is very much a microcosm of the state's economic evolution. Ipswich has an industrial economy which needs to become more technology and tourism based if it is to survive. It is not just an industrial economy; it is a state sponsored industrial economy, with thousands of jobs traditionally having existed in our railway and in our power station. This budget puts \$70 million into just two state sponsored industries in Ipswich before one even really picks it up and has a good look. The \$32 million being spent during the year at the Redbank railway workshops will keep the 1,000-odd workers there employed. The \$42 million being spent at Swanbank to finish the construction of Swanbank E, the new gas-fired generator, and upgrade the old coal-fired Swanbank B is also very important. Without this investment Ipswich people should be in no doubt that Swanbank Power Station would have wound up. With this funding, the 60 or 80 jobs there will remain and, perhaps more importantly, the opportunity to locate new power intensive industries around their own generation plant exists. There is a lot of good industrial land around Swanbank, and I believe there is a real opportunity for investment. This money to keep the Swanbank Power Station going is a strategic investment, not just in power supply for south-east Queensland but also for new and smart industry in Ipswich.

The budget delivers \$15 million for the Synergy Industrial Park in Jo-Ann Miller's electorate at Carole Park. Synergy Park is in a prime spot on good connecting roads, close to the port and in the middle of a major population centre. When it is finished and it houses private food industries it will provide hundreds, if not thousands, of jobs in the area. The budget provides \$2.88 million to finalise the redevelopment of the Ipswich railway workshops which, after four years of work, will open around late August.

One of the key points about tourism is that there has to be a critical mass of attractions to make a place worth going to from the tourist's point of view. Ipswich has a tremendous earthy appeal, but that is hard to sell. When there are tourist attractions we can attract the tourist's attention and get them there. In the last three or four years the state government has put a tremendous amount of

money—that is, \$20 million at the Ipswich railway workshops and \$3 million into developing Global Arts Link—to give us two very high-quality tourist attractions to grab people's attention and bring them to Ipswich. Around that, private tourist enterprises can develop. We are not very far away from getting a quality hotel. We have a burgeoning restaurant trade. There are wineries and other tourist industries in the general vicinity of Ipswich, but without that critical mass of tourist attractions those businesses could not thrive. The state government has a strategy of diversifying the Ipswich economy by creating tourist attractions.

There is also \$365,000 in this budget to resurface the drag strip at Willowbank Raceway. That might not, on the face of it, sound like a tourism investment, but just a couple of weeks ago there were 35,000 people at Willowbank Raceway for the Winternationals. Those people came from all over Australia and they stayed and spent money in Ipswich.

Mr English: A great event.

Ms NOLAN: Indeed it was. Some \$365,000 is a fairly small investment from the state's perspective into a huge tourism venture in the Ipswich area. Parts of the state's economic development strategy involve keeping the old jobs, developing high-tech jobs and developing tourism. But for those things to work we also have to have an educated work force. I am perhaps a little old fashioned in that I like to think that education is not just about economic opportunities. I believe that education gives people an understanding of the world and the skills to make their own way forward in the world. On a more practical level though, it gives them the skills to get good jobs. Ipswich has taken big steps forward in education in recent years with the development of UQ Ipswich. Before UQ Ipswich came along we were the only regional city in Queensland not to have its own university, and now we do. I believe that UQ Ipswich could do a lot better to create links into the community, but the fact is that we have nearly 2,000 students from all over Australia and indeed the world now studying in Ipswich. We have stemmed our brain drain.

This budget puts serious money into education in Ipswich. We will have our share of the \$23 million that has gone into information and communication technology across the state and we will have our share of prep school trials. The budget provides \$188,000 to complete the \$3 million redevelopment, including a fantastic multimedia centre at Bremer State High School. There is also major building work at Ipswich Central and Raceview state schools. The ethos in this is quite simple: Ipswich has excellent state and private schools and we need to invest in the state schools to ensure that opportunities for kids going to those schools remain very good.

The final things that I consider to be highlights in the budget for Ipswich I want to touch on only briefly, although they are very important. The first is crime and crime prevention. The budget provides for the establishment of a new tactical crime squad in Ipswich. This squad will have 14 extra officers and be responsive to the policing needs our city has at any particular moment. The budget also provides funding to continue what has been a very successful drug court trial.

Finally, a key focus of the government is clearly child protection. This is tremendously important in Ipswich, as indeed it is in many other communities across the state. The state has real responsibilities to give all kids, particularly kids in our care, serious opportunities in life. There are children in need in Ipswich and families in need in Ipswich who will benefit tremendously from this money. I assure the many community organisations in the youth sector which with I work closely in Ipswich that I will be lobbying very hard to get our share of that money. The budget brings for Ipswich a complex and forward-looking economic development strategy. It seriously covers the bases in the areas that people are concerned about—that is, crime and the prevention of crime—and it takes big steps forward in terms of protecting our children. I commend it to the House.