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BEATTIE BUDGET DELIVERS FOR QUEENSLAND

The 2001-02 State Budget delivered on all Labor election commitments and was underpinned by sound fiscal management that would provide real services and infrastructure for the people of Queensland, the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, Mr Terry Mackenroth, said today.

Mr Mackenroth said the Budget would deliver a cash and accrual surplus, maintain Queensland's AAA credit rating, and still deliver capital works spending of more than \$5.1 Billion.

He said a massive capital works investment pipeline, tax concessions and a strong financial position would ensure Queensland was at the forefront of a post-GST recovery and once again the envy of other States and Territories.

"The Budget delivers good news for all Queenslanders," Mr Mackenroth said.

"There are no broken promises – we have met each and every one of the election commitments we made to the people of Queensland during the election campaign as well as several new policy initiatives.

"There are significant increases in funding and resources to areas of high priority such as jobs, health, education and police as well as money to help build new infrastructure and industries for the future."

Major initiatives include:

- \$100 Million for a Research Facility Fund to help develop essential science and technology infrastructure to underpin growth in biotechnology, aviation and advanced manufacturing industries;
- \$100 Million for job and training opportunities under the \$470 Million Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiative;
- \$120 Million over five years to help rebuild and redevelop State Government nursing homes;
- \$50 Million over three years for the Triple R (repainting, re-roofing, and reticulation) School Maintenance Program;

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- \$20 Million over three years in capital funding for the upgrade of existing disability services, new respite and family support services, and innovative accommodation options for people with high support needs;
- \$20 Million over two years to reduce the percentage of ‘long-wait’ elective surgery patients at public hospitals;
- Cuts in payroll tax from 4.9 percent to 4.8 percent from 1 July, 2001 and to 4.75 percent from 1 July, 2002; and
- the employment of 395 additional teachers, 300 police, 95 emergency services personnel and 120 health professionals across the State in 2001-02.

Mr Mackenroth said the Budget also contained positive forecasts for the future with gross state product expected to grow by 4 percent and the employment level by 2 percent, or approximately 33,000 jobs, in 2001-02 compared to national figures of 3.25 percent and 1 percent.

He said retail turnover had already increased in each of the past five months and in the next financial year major indicators such as exports, household consumption, business investment and dwelling investment were all forecast to grow.

“However, we cannot rest on our laurels and the Beattie Government will invest heavily in our communities, the economy and the environment to sustain this growth into the future,” Mr Mackenroth said.

“We will spend more than \$5.1 Billion on capital works around the State next financial year which will support more than 46,300 full-time jobs.

“This includes more than \$1.6 Billion for rail, road and port infrastructure, \$1.5 Billion for energy infrastructure, \$382 Million for hospitals and other health facilities and \$311 Million for schools, TAFE and other educational facilities.”

Mr Mackenroth said the 2001-02 State Budget promoted a supportive business environment, invested strongly in infrastructure and provided targeted assistance in key areas such as jobs, health, education, and industry growth and innovation.

He said it was a responsible and balanced Budget that would help deliver increased living standards and employment opportunities for all Queenslanders.

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