

**Hon. Terry Mackenroth MP
Deputy Premier
Treasurer and Minister for Sport**

3 June, 2003

MULTI BILLION DOLLAR BOOST FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE

A four year \$1.6 Billion boost from 2002-03 levels to State funding in public health care was the centrepiece of the Beattie Labor Government's sixth State Budget, the Deputy Premier and Treasurer, Mr Terry Mackenroth, announced today.

"When Commonwealth funding is added in the next four years, we will see a cumulative increase in health spending of over \$2.6 Billion compared to the 2002-03 Health Budget," Mr Mackenroth said.

"The extra funds will be used for wage increases, operating cost increases and for increased and enhanced services for a growing and ageing population."

Mr Mackenroth said it was a strong balanced budget that provided funds for real assistance to individuals and families in need.

He said the Budget would deliver a cash surplus, maintain Queensland's AAA credit rating, and still increase funding to services and capital works.

"This Budget is targeted at those people in our community who most need a helping hand," Mr Mackenroth said.

"We want to ensure the sick, elderly, unemployed and people with a disability have access to the best level of care, service and technology available."

Mr Mackenroth said by 2006-07 the annual Health Budget would grow to around \$5.4 billion, over \$1 billion or around 25 percent higher than the 2002-03 Health Budget.

"This money will be used to cut hospital waiting lists, improve health care services and technology, and look after our valuable doctors, nurses and medical staff as well as recruit new staff into these essential occupations," he said.

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He said these extra funds will mean by 2006-07 compared to when the Beattie Government was elected, funding to Queensland Health will have gone up by a staggering 70 percent.

Mr Mackenroth said other major health and welfare initiatives in the Budget include:

- an extra \$290.5 Million in State funding for Disability Services over the next four years to help people with a disability, their families and carers and for other factors such as grant indexation and enterprise bargaining;
- an extra \$255 Million over three years from 2004/05 for Breaking the Unemployment Cycle initiatives to help Queenslanders looking for work;
- an extra \$53 Million to increase the funding by 11 percent for housing assistance programs to \$528 Million in 2003/04;
- an extra \$53.8 Million for the Department of Emergency Services including the employment of 110 additional ambulance officers;
- \$42 Million as the second instalment of the \$188 Million funding package for the Department of Families announced last year; and
- record police funding in excess of \$1 Billion to help build safer communities.

“The Budget also contains a record \$738 Million in concessions such as discounts, rebates and subsidies for disadvantaged families or individuals – a \$37 Million increase from this financial year,” Mr Mackenroth said.

“There are also tax exemptions and concessions, which mainly benefit business, of more than \$2.1 Billion, up 6 percent from last year.”

Mr Mackenroth said there were increases in funding and resources in key areas such as education and the environment and an additional 300 police, 636 teachers, and 110 ambulance officers.

“I am proud of this Budget because it builds on the economic strengths of our great State and offers improved opportunities for businesses and job seekers,” Mr Mackenroth said.

“It also delivers real assistance to those people in our community that need it the most.”