



Speech by

Mr BRUCE LAMING

MEMBER FOR MOOLOOLAH

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UNIVERSITY OF THE SUNSHINE COAST BILL

Mr LAMING (Mooloolah—LP) (11.12 p.m.): This is an important day, not just for the University of the Sunshine Coast but also for the Sunshine Coast as a region and for tertiary education in Queensland. I spoke at some length during the passing of the Sunshine Coast University College Bill in 1994. I do not intend to traverse all the same ground. However, I would like to revisit a few of the relevant points that I made at that time.

In 1994 I mentioned the arrival on the coast of Professor Paul Thomas and his personal secretary, Judy Jakeman, who got things moving on the ground. They were to be joined by many others who contributed to the campus that we have today. I am pleased to report that Paul and Judy are still on the job. I acknowledge the presence of Professor Paul Thomas in the public gallery. It is a measure of the man that he was here for the passing of the previous Bill. I think he had to make two trips to Brisbane at that time, because the Bill was deferred. I am glad we are on time on this occasion.

In 1994 I mentioned the possibility that most students would have had to pay a toll to get to the university. That is no longer the case. I am sure that that is appreciated by the students, many of whom would have found the expense quite onerous. Back then I signalled that I would be pursuing an international-standard synthetic athletics track. It is now under construction. I acknowledge the support that I received from many people in the community and the former Minister for Sport, the member for Southport. I also acknowledge the financial assistance of the Maroochy Shire Council. I am hoping for a little extra help from the other two councils on the Sunshine Coast. At that time, I acknowledged the desire for the University of the Third Age to find a home. I suggested then that perhaps that could be at the university. That, too, has happened.

It was suggested in 1994 that the university would have 2,000 effective full-time students by the year 2001. I believed it would happen sooner. It has happened by this year—three years earlier than anticipated. So confident was I of a higher growth than that which was forecast that I moved an amendment at the Committee stage of the Bill to change the review period of the university's status from not less than 10 years to not less than five years. Unfortunately, the amendment was not accepted at the time. The Minister of the day, the Honourable Pat Comben, said that it was beyond his comprehension to think that the university college could stand totally by itself over the next 10 years. History has shown that even my estimate was a little conservative. The university continued to develop. I recall with much satisfaction the official opening by Her Excellency the Governor, Mrs Leneen Forde, the opening of the award-winning library building by Sir Zelman Cowen, and especially, in less grand circumstances, the opening of the sports clubhouse by me, standing in for the then Minister for Sport, the member for Southport.

In the interests of brevity, I will return to the Bill before the House. It was the "college" tag that seemed to irk so many in the university community and also in the wider community. All the Sunshine Coast members made representations to the previous Minister, the member for Merrimac, to have the "college" tag developed. The then Minister insisted on a review process by a panel of distinguished interstate academics. I was pleased that the university council agreed to follow that process. No-one was more delighted than I—with the exception perhaps of Professor Thomas—that the review panel found no academic grounds for the institution not being accorded the status of a university. That was a better outcome than simply a decision to drop the "college" tag. I am pleased that this university will be

known as the "University of the Sunshine Coast" rather than the "Sunshine Coast University". I say that because the university staff and students have been most determined to become involved in every facet of Sunshine Coast life, be it academic, economic, social, environmental or sporting. It is indeed a university of the Sunshine Coast.

I would like to acknowledge the role of QUT and the Office of Higher Education. I thank the former Minister, the member for Merrimac and the Honourable Pat Comben, for their efforts. Pat Comben introduced the original legislation. I also commend the current Minister for concluding the process in time for the new year and my coalition colleagues for allowing the Bill to be brought on early. I must also heartily congratulate the Chancellor, Mr Ian Kennedy, the university council, the staff and the students on what has obviously been a remarkable achievement. I have great pleasure also in joining with my other colleagues in commending the Bill to the House.
