



Speech by

GORDON NUTTALL

MEMBER FOR SANDGATE

Hansard 18 November 1998

UNIVERSITY OF THE SUNSHINE COAST BILL

Mr NUTTALL (Sandgate—ALP) (11.16 p.m.): It is imperative that from a Government perspective—and not just from an Opposition perspective—the residents of the Sunshine Coast realise that the initial legislation was introduced by a Labor Government. That is an important point to be made in the debate. For far too long, honourable members of the conservative parties on the Sunshine Coast have seen fit to take credit for everything that has ever happened on the Sunshine Coast. It is important that residents of the Sunshine Coast realise that the Goss Labor Government and this Labor Government were the main instigators of the university on the Sunshine Coast.

Mr Horan interjected.

Mr NUTTALL: I hear what the member for Toowoomba South says, but the realities are—

Mr Horan: You just happened to be there.

Mr NUTTALL: No, I do not accept that, because the reality is that we were the ones who pushed it through. That comment is typical of members opposite.

Earlier tonight, the honourable member for Mooloolah berated the fact that we wanted a railway line to the Sunshine Coast. The railway line to the Sunshine Coast has been an ongoing issue for many years. Up to 1989 it was not deemed a priority; however, between 1989 and 1995 it was a priority. From 1996, when the coalition won Government, to when it lost Government in 1998, it was no longer a priority. The member cannot have it both ways. If members opposite want to take credit for all the facilities that have been provided on the Sunshine Coast, they must also take the rap for facilities that have not been provided. They need to accept the blame as well as take the credit. It is important that Sunshine Coast residents realise that Labor Governments have been the main driving force behind this university.

As the previous speaker said, over a couple of years there has been a marked increase in the number of students—from some 500 to 2,000. That is a remarkable achievement. I believe that a lot of the credit for that has to be given to the administration of the university, and I commend the people involved.

The university has an annual budget of some \$14m. In my view, that is a great boon to the economy of the Sunshine Coast. The capital infrastructure of the university was some \$40m, of which the State Government contributed \$14m. Again, that was a great boon to the Sunshine Coast. One of the spin-offs of that funding has been the Chancellor Park Estate, which is built adjacent to the university. That estate is a well-known and well-established residential area. In my view, the quality of the housing in that estate and the quality of the facilities for the residents of that estate are something to commend to all developers. Obviously, it also provides for the students residences located very, very close to the university.

As I have said, the Bill repeals the Sunshine Coast University College Act 1994. It changes the name of the university to the University of the Sunshine Coast. I believe that the Sunshine Coast is the better for having the university. However, I say to those who run the university—and I note that the honourable member for Mooloolah talked about the synthetic athletics track—that I hope sincerely that they encourage the local schools and sporting groups to use that facility. One of the great problems that we have experienced in general is that many of our facilities are locked up and not used by the

broader community. I sincerely hope that the university acts as a good corporate citizen and ensures that it involves the local community in a number of its activities. I would like to see the university hold such things as open days so that the local residents are aware of what the university has to offer for the region of the Sunshine Coast. I congratulate the Minister on bringing this Bill forward and I commend the Bill to the House.
