



Speech by

GRANT MUSGROVE

MEMBER FOR SPRINGWOOD

Hansard 5 August 1998

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mr MUSGROVE (Springwood—ALP) (2.40 p.m.): It is a great honour and a privilege to take my seat in this place as the representative of my local community. I congratulate you, Mr Deputy Speaker, on your role as Chairman of Committees, and I ask you to pass on my congratulations to the Speaker on achieving his high office.

To grow up in an area and then to go on to represent that area in the Parliament of Queensland is indeed a huge thrill and a privilege. I understand that, with that privilege comes a great responsibility. The responsibility is to represent my constituents in this place to the very best of my ability, to put their interests before my own and to strive to raise the standard of living in the seat of Springwood and throughout this great State.

My parents, Ron and Joy Musgrove; my brothers, Ross and Ashley; and their wives, Lynne and Sarah, have been a fantastic support for me, not only throughout the campaign period but, in the case of my parents, throughout my life. When growing up in our house, politics was an everyday topic. We were encouraged as children to discuss current affairs and politics. We were encouraged to think about the world in which we lived and whether or not it could be made better. I would like to pay tribute to my parents for enabling me to grow up as an informed and inquisitive person.

I come from a modest upbringing, attending local public schools Springwood State High School and Rochedale State School. I pay tribute here today to those schools for the impact that they had on me during my formative years. Indeed, the choice of educational facilities available for families in the Springwood electorate is extensive and impressive. There are no fewer than five State primary schools as well as St Edward's College and Logan Uniting Primary School. In terms of high schools, both Springwood State High School and John Paul College offer excellent curricula. It was particularly gratifying to return to Springwood State High School recently for the presentation of the school's academic awards. It was also pleasing to see the vice captain of that school, Rachel Crossland, in this place on work experience for the opening of this, the 49th Parliament.

I would like to place on the public record the contribution made to my local community by the Rochedale Rovers Soccer Club. This club began 25 years ago and has now grown into a marvellous sporting and community facility alongside many other fine clubs at the Underwood Park sporting complex. I pay tribute to the members of the club board—both past and present—for their work and to the supporters club for their good cheer and good wishes. The Springwood electorate is blessed with many fine sporting clubs representing all codes of football, netball and a first-class lawn bowls club, which I am proud to sponsor.

For me, the decision to enter politics was made because it was the best practical way to act on local issues. I am looking for new ways to do politics, because I believe that Government can make a difference in my local community. My campaign for Springwood was very much a grassroots one. Walking from door to door was a great way to hear the views of many thousands of local residents.

Last year I distributed a community issues survey throughout my electorate, with almost 500 families choosing to respond. The three issues that topped the survey were jobs, crime prevention and environmental protection. I took these concerns to the then shadow Cabinet, which met at the Rochedale Rovers Soccer Club. They listened carefully, and then we got down to planning specific

policies to address the concerns of my community. The shadow Cabinet agreed that Labor in Government would establish a Police Beat in my electorate, establish an air pollution monitoring station and protect Daisy Hill State Forest for generations to come. I believe that the visibility of police in the community will do much to reduce crime in the surrounding area. Not only is this a great way for local police to get to know local shopkeepers but it is also an effective way of reducing the amount of crime, including car thefts, shoplifting and disorderly conduct. This shopfront will be staffed by additional officers assigned to our local area.

The establishment of Logan City's first air pollution monitoring station in my electorate is something of which I am very proud. The previous Government was forced to admit that it had done no air pollution modelling in drawing up its plans for the widening of the South East Freeway. In fact, the nearest air pollution modelling station is at Mount Warren Park, which is of cold comfort to my community. The previous Government's own figures show that there are up to 82 pollution-related deaths in Queensland every year. This is simply unacceptable. I want to make sure that Springwood residents know what they are breathing in.

Growing up in my electorate, I experienced Logan's poor public transport system first-hand. The previous Government's decision to stop the busways from Brisbane approximately four kilometres short of Springwood shows a lack of commitment to public transport generally and to the Springwood area in particular. The Beattie Government's commitment to extend these bus lanes into my electorate will give my constituents access to the Brisbane network for the very first time.

It is also a great honour to take my seat in this House alongside four people who, over the years, have provided me with inspiration, advice and encouragement: the Deputy Premier, Jim Elder; the Minister for Police and Corrective Services, Tom Barton; the member for Logan, John Mickel; and the member for Lytton, Paul Lucas. I owe them a great deal. To my campaign workers I owe an endless debt of gratitude. My campaign director, Hazel Hubbard, was a source of inspiration and guidance to the whole team. She has given a lifetime of service to the Labor Party, and she has never once asked for anything in return. For her, the election of Labor Governments is reward enough. To Shaun Rohrlach and his wife, Veronica, Paul Harrison, Aaron Broughton, Rod Shaw, Sue Simpson and Gary Fogarty I offer the most heartfelt of thanks. At the age of 30, it is an honour to be Labor's youngest-serving member. Labor sees it as an important part of generational change that we put up fresh faces with new ideas, energy and enthusiasm.

Many people of my electorate are fundamentally disillusioned with politics and the political process. They are sick of uncertainty. Above all else, the good people of Springwood want to know that their jobs and the jobs of their families are secure. Job security and unemployment are surely the most important issues facing Australia today. But it seems that not a day goes by without hearing about downsizing, workplaces closing and people losing their jobs in the hundreds or thousands. BHP, school cleaners, the banks, Telstra and the public sector are all busy rationalising families out of an income. Young people as well as older, more mature workers are battling to find or hold a real job. The residents of my electorate never know when they might be downsized or surplus to requirements. I believe that, as a community, we cannot allow this to continue. The social cost is just too great.

As many of my Labor colleagues would know, I have long been a supporter of reform of the ambulance system in Queensland. I have debated this point in many party forums over the years, and I am proud to be a member of the Beattie Government which will bring about that reform. Many of the senior citizens in my community worry about having enough money to pay for their subscriptions or are reluctant to call an ambulance in times of need because of the high transport costs for non-subscribers. I am extremely pleased that an initiative of the new Government, designed to give peace of mind to all pensioners, Seniors Card holders and their dependants, means that they will receive free ambulance cover. This free service will save single pensioners \$41 per year and family pensioners \$55 per year.

My presence in this House is a product of many people's hard work and support over many years—people such as Bill Ludwig, Con Sciacca, John and Joan Budd, Mike Kaiser, Wayne Swan and Don Brown. To these people I owe my political education, and there are no better tutors in the Australian Labor Party.

This Parliament contains representatives of communities from across Queensland and competing ideas on the sort of society in which we live. We can contribute to the betterment of people in our electorate and the State by earnestly striving to excel in our position as their representatives in this House. Surely, after the result of the election only a few weeks ago, it is our duty as the people's elected representatives to redouble our collective efforts to ensure that we raise people's opinions of this institution. I believe that the people of Queensland need this State Parliament, and I know that many good and worthwhile deeds have been done here by members on both sides of the House.

However, the people of this State are frustrated with the circumstances in which they find themselves. I do not blame them. People all over are sick to death of change, sick of the goal posts being moved and sick of being caught in the middle. They want stability and time to catch their breath

before once again being forced to ride the rapids of economic upheaval. They need jobs—jobs for themselves, jobs for their neighbours and jobs for their children. We as a society must be able to offer our people something to look forward to other than dole queues and endless training programs. We need to give them the opportunity to have real employment. A person with a job has a sense of purpose, and a sense of belonging and self-worth. They actually see themselves as part of our society and not as an outsider who is not welcome. I believe it is incumbent on all members of Parliament and, indeed, everyone in the community to leave no stone unturned to ensure that we lower unemployment in this State. If we are successful, we will see a marked reduction in many other problems that affect our society.

It is a sad fact that our community is increasingly divided. Issues of race dominate the daily headlines. The politics of division have spread across this great country. The strong winds of change that have swept our community have injured interests and excited passions. We are now faced with two competing philosophies: the Labor philosophy of equality of opportunity for all versus the One Nation philosophy of equality of treatment for all, no matter how unequal the real world is. The coalition does not appear to have a philosophy, only a failed and immoral strategy. Its decision to enter into an unholy alliance with the prejudiced forces of One Nation will cost this State dearly. It will cost us jobs and investment. The coalition's preferences have delivered to this place half a dozen or more members of One Nation as members of Parliament. Labor's preferences returned many members of the coalition because of our principled decision to put One Nation last. In doing that grubbiest of deals, the coalition has told us only what time of the day it is. It is high noon.

We cannot and should not shy away from the debate before us. We must reach a consensus on what sort of society we wish to become. The choice is clear: either we retreat to a fortress Australia with an immigration policy based on the colour of one's skin—which will cost us both our morality and many thousands of jobs—or we can take our place as a modern social democracy with a particularly civilised brand of capitalism. To borrow an analogy from US President Abraham Lincoln, I point out that a house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe that society cannot endure permanently with two fundamentally competing visions. I do not expect the house to fall, but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing or all the other.

It is indeed an honour to have been elected to serve the people of Springwood in this place. I will endeavour to reward the trust that they have placed in me. I will never forget that first and foremost I am here to represent the people of Springwood.
