



Speech by

**Mrs J. GAMIN**

**MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH**

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Hansard 30 July 1998

### **MOTION OF CONFIDENCE**

**Mrs GAMIN** (Burleigh—NPA) (12.39 a.m.): Mr Speaker, may I add my congratulations to those of other members to you on your elevation to your position. I wish you good fortune in your appointment.

I cannot support this motion of confidence, because I am not confident that a Labor minority Government is best for this State. I am not confident that structures put in place by the former coalition Government will not be dismantled. I am not confident that many of the fine achievements of the former coalition Government will not be destroyed. I am not confident that a Labor minority Government is capable of managing the State's finances as well as the former coalition Government did. Labor Governments have a reputation for being big spenders but poor managers. I am not confident that we will not see big spending on social welfare programs to the detriment of major infrastructure for our State that would provide more jobs for Queenslanders.

Let me just run through a few of the achievements of the coalition in just two short years before the events of 13 June 1998. The former coalition Government undertook a \$59m redevelopment of the Gold Coast Hospital; pressed ahead with building the \$48m Robina Hospital, which was opposed by Labor's medical lobby group; in two State Budgets provided almost 2,000 new teachers, 640 more police and an extra 1,000 Queensland Health doctors, nurses and allied health staff; almost completed construction of the \$4.8m Palm Beach Community Health Centre; established a Crime Commission to battle major and organised crime; built the Palm Beach Police Station, despite Labor's Opposition to the station; and created 91,000 new jobs—40% of all new jobs in Australia—despite Queensland having only 18% of the national population.

The former coalition Government also boosted expenditure on State schooling above the national average for the first time in history; financed record spending on health, law and order, education and the environment; boosted spending on the needs of the disabled from \$242m in Labor's 1995–96 Budget to \$558m in 1998–99; reduced Category 1 surgery waiting lists at the Gold Coast Hospital to an all-time low and made significant cuts in other waiting lists; reduced payroll tax, land tax, betting taxes and stamp duties; established Queensland as Australia's lowest tax State and restored business confidence in Queensland's future as the growth State; attracted major companies to relocate in Queensland, including Boeing, Comalco, Shell's global coal interests, et cetera; and facilitated projects worth \$25 billion under way or on the starting block in the north-west minerals province alone.

That is not meant to be a comprehensive or exhaustive list. There are hundreds and hundreds of other fine achievements over the whole range of ministerial portfolios and Government departments. That is why Queensland would have benefited much more from a coalition Government and that is why I am not confident that a Labor minority Government can come anywhere near matching the coalition's achievements.

The two terms of Labor in the early 1990s saw years of neglect of power stations in this State. Queensland needs to increase its electricity supply every year to keep pace with the demand created by the State's unprecedented population and industrial growth. In six years of Government, Labor imperilled Queensland's power supply by cancelling the coalition's Tully/Millstream hydro-electric project and then by failing to build any new stations, despite warnings as early as 1990 that its neglect could lead to problems by 1997. Labor's only attempt to increase supply was to negotiate to buy electricity from New South Wales, but at double the price at which Queensland produces its own electricity.

Despite Labor's claims, this extra power via the Eastlink connection would not have been available during the load shedding emergency earlier this year. The only addition to Queensland's generating capacity during Labor's two terms of office was a small privately owned station at Barcardine. When returned to office two years ago, the coalition moved quickly to remedy Labor's neglect by refurbishing and recommissioning, at a cost of \$200m, the Collinsville and Callide A stations, which had been dormant for a decade. Callide C was to be built alongside the A and B stations to be fully operational by the year 2001. Two stations at Townsville and another at Oakey on the Darling Downs were in our pipeline to be operating next year and the year after respectively. We had plans for a \$1.7 billion power station and coalmine at Wandoan in the Surat Basin in a joint venture with Mount Isa Mines and to include expansion of the Tarong station in the South Burnett.

The coalition would have assured Queenslanders of cheaper power for many years to come and to selling power to interstate customers on the national electricity grid, with further reductions in industrial and domestic charges. If corporatisation was to blame for the industry's woes earlier this year, then Labor has only itself to blame. The power industry was corporatised in 1995 by the then Goss Labor Government. I am not confident that a Labor minority Government has the capability to complete the coalition's excellent program for the power industry.

The coalition has done a great job in terms of roadworks, especially in southern Queensland. The Pacific Motorway project is forging ahead. On the Gold Coast, major works will bring major improvements to the Pacific Highway at Nerang. The Pacific Highway has been duplicated between Reedy Creek and Tugun. Bermuda Street has been extended to the Pacific Highway. The further upgrade of Bermuda Street has already commenced and is on track for completion by December this year. The total cost of the project will be \$16m. It will provide a vital infrastructure development for the Gold Coast. The project will involve the construction of an additional two lanes parallel to the existing lanes from Rudd Street to Christine Avenue. This means that the current lanes will be used during construction and disruptions will be minimised. As well as this, noise minimisation measures will be implemented to dramatically reduce tyre noise.

Major works on Reedy Creek Road have been of enormous benefit, as well as bus lanes and set-down areas outside Marymount College, which was a jointly funded effort between the Department of Main Roads and the Gold Coast City Council. Reedy Creek Road was a huge undertaking, as massive stormwater drainage had to be included. That road used to be a nightmare. It is now a pleasure to use. Work has started on the duplication of West Burleigh Road—another very big job also involving stormwater drainage.

I mentioned the construction of the new police station at Palm Beach, which was purely a coalition project. During its previous term, Labor actively opposed a police station at Palm Beach, and I am proud to have achieved this ambition once the coalition came to power, together with a 100% increase in police numbers for the southern Gold Coast. The station is a 24-hour operational station and has two cars on patrol targeting crime black spots in Burleigh Heads and Palm Beach. In addition to these cars, lap-over cars are rostered to roam the district to assist other cars. Previously, there was only one car on patrol in the Palm Beach/Burleigh area.

Uniformed police from the Palm Beach Police Station are also rostered to perform beat patrols within the Burleigh Heads CBD, Burleigh Town Marketplace, Treetops Shopping Centre, the Pines Shopping Centre and the Palm Beach CBD. From time to time, plain-clothes officers based at the Burleigh Heads Police Station also patrol these areas. Both of these types of patrols have proved to be very successful.

The Palm Beach Community Health Centre is nearing completion. After Labor completely messed up this project, the coalition stepped in and the \$4.8m project will now provide an extended range of health services. The centre will contain a community and child health service with a day-stay centre to educate and support parents experiencing difficulties, a baby clinic, a hearing and development screening program for older children and a day therapy centre offering rehabilitation and transitional care for the chronic disabled and frail aged. The health services also include adolescent and youth health, health promotion, home care and visiting specialists, community nursing and allied health services, social workers, community psychologists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists. The three storey building in Fifth Avenue will house the Mental Health Service to be relocated from rented premises at Miami, and there will be no methadone program or needle exchange. The dental clinic will have four chairs and will provide standard public dental health services. When fully operational, the dental service will see approximately 250 patients a week. The Palm Beach Community Health Centre will also have semi-basement parking for 34 vehicles, most of which, of course, will be Queensland Health vehicles.

With mental health services moving from Miami to Palm Beach, a very good support group called Living Skills looked as if it was going to be homeless. At Miami, Living Skills offers clients a large day care room in which to meet and chat and make themselves a cup of tea or coffee. The organisation has provided a tutor in computer skills for more than two years. This program has been a

great success in helping clients, especially those who are keen to return to the work force. There is also an art group which not only encourages clients to express themselves but also favours those who wish to escape from the isolation so often experienced by mental patients. I am pleased that the district health council has listened to my representations on behalf of Living Skills. Space will be found for them at the old leased premises adjacent to the new centre.

The extension of the Brisbane-Beenleigh rail link from Beenleigh to Robina was an initiative of the Ahern National Party Government. I remember it well because I announced it myself in August 1988 during the 1988 by-election for the seat of South Coast. Coomera was opened first, then Helensvale, then Nerang, and the final link of the Gold Coast railway extension to Robina was opened on 1 June and is already proving popular with local residents.

The proposed extension of the railway to Coolangatta and the Tugun bypass road have already been announced and welcomed by southern Gold Coast residents. After months of worry about possible residential disruption, the route chosen is a much more satisfactory solution than some of the options that were put forward. The rail link will follow the eastern side of the Pacific Highway from Robina to just north of the West Burleigh Tavern where it will cross to the western side of the highway. It will continue on the western side to Tugun Heights where a tunnel is proposed, then west of Coolangatta Airport together with the Tugun bypass road. I hope that the minority Labor Government does not mess around with these priorities. Too much work has gone into identifying the most satisfactory route—the route which will cause the least disruption to residential areas.

During recent months and under a coalition Government, additional capital works have been provided for schools in the Burleigh electorate: Palm Beach, Burleigh Heads and Caningeraba State Schools and Miami State High School. All schools wanted both big and small painting jobs to be carried out as well as other minor works. I am pleased with the success of my representations on their behalf.

We have not yet seen Labor's Budget. We are asked to support this motion of confidence and take the Labor Budget on trust. The coalition brought down a great Budget in May of this year and, if the coalition had been allowed to govern, this Budget added to our campaign commitments would have been of great benefit to Queenslanders. Time will not permit me to go through the coalition Budget item by item, so I will just touch on a few points.

We had planned to boost funds for women's services by more than \$14.5m over the next four years. The extra money was to be used to upgrade cancer screening, domestic violence and family support services, sexual assault services, counselling, training, employment and the care of children outside school hours. These were identified as priorities during a six-month survey of 5,000 women. We would have extended concessions for Seniors Card holders, including car and boat registration charges. I hope that the new Government will honour these commitments.

A couple of weeks ago, I launched Palliative Care Week on the Gold Coast. Funding for palliative care is a matter in which I am keenly interested and of which I am supportive. The coalition's recent State Budget Ministerial Program Statements showed that \$5.4m of palliative care funding was provided to non-Government organisations and district health services for community-based activities in 1997-98. Further funding had been planned to enhance aged care facilities by a huge refurbishment and rehabilitation of Government owned nursing homes as well as other programs for aged care and the care of the terminally ill, including palliative care.

Key elements in our election campaign platform were a \$13m program over two years to improve Queensland's palliative care services with concentration on a range of patient choice settings, including hospitals, residential organisations in the community and hospices. We announced provision of palliative care services in all Queensland hospitals, refurbishment of existing public hospitals in rural and remote areas to provide for in-patient and/or respite facilities, encouragement of community involvement in planning and development of new palliative care facilities or services, for example, hospices, and provision of three-year service agreements for existing community hospices.

I cannot stress strongly enough to the new Government the importance of palliative care services—the care of those patients with illnesses that cannot be cured and where survival is limited and death is inevitable. Not only do the sufferers need the skill of those doctors, nurses and health professionals who are dedicated to palliative care, so do their families and loved ones, who need to come to terms with the inevitability of death, bereavement and grief.

Continued funding to mental health services on the Gold Coast and continued funding to drug and alcohol rehabilitation services are also of great concern to me. I hope that the new Minister for Health will take the time to visit the Gold Coast Drug Council's excellent facility at Mirikai in my electorate to examine the work of this remarkable non-Government agency and to look at its success rate in achieving a turnaround in the lives of persons with ruinous drug dependencies.

I have spent some time browsing through many matters of interest to my electorate or of concern to me as we face this motion of confidence. Before I close, I want to mention two issues that

are causing anxiety which I did not have time to get finalised before that fateful day, 13 June. The first is the matter of noise abatement fencing along the Pacific Highway at Palm Beach. Constituents of mine whose properties back onto the Pacific Highway suffer considerable nuisance from noise and vibration caused by traffic on the Pacific Highway, especially from heavy trucks. Noise barrier fencing was at first welcomed. However, there is no doubt that the existing fencing is quite useless and might as well not be there. Despite public consultation, the type of material used is far from satisfactory, and placing fencing about one metre from property boundaries is also far from satisfactory.

The former Minister for Transport and Main Roads had given me a commitment that this matter would be seriously addressed if the coalition Government was returned. More public consultation was promised and the department would carefully examine proposals for high earth mounding between the Pacific Highway and property boundaries, plus heavy vegetation with better fencing on top of the mounding. I noted that the Labor candidate who opposed me tried to turn this into an election issue. He made the extraordinary statement to local residents that, if he was elected to represent the seat of Burleigh, Mr Peter Beattie had promised him \$1m for road resurfacing to reduce tyre noise from trucks using the Pacific Highway. I need to know whether Mr Beattie will keep this commitment. I need to know whether the people of Palm Beach will still be assisted in the matter of reducing noise and vibration from the Pacific Highway. Better noise alleviation at Palm Beach is a problem that I will have to take up with the new Government.

The second ongoing matter in my electorate is the closure of the popular Ocean View track at the Burleigh Heads National Park. This has been closed for a year now as a result of substantial boulder falls. Large boulders ranging in weight from hundreds of kilograms to several tonnes have fallen onto the track, causing serious damage and threatening the safety of park visitors and staff. Obviously, rock falls in the park have been occurring for centuries, but the whole hillside is now very unstable. Investigations have so far not thrown any light on how stability can be re-established and how the track can be reopened without danger to the many thousands of people who enjoy using it.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service, a division of the Department of Environment, has constructed a link path to join up with the upper track, but the steps are rather steep and cause problems for elderly visitors and they cannot be used by disabled visitors at all. The coalition allocated \$35,000 in our recent State Budget for further professional and engineering advice on how to solve this really serious problem, and I urge the new Minister for Environment to continue with the efforts to stabilise the boulder falls and to get the track opened as soon as possible.

I cannot deny that the Burleigh electorate has done very well out of the coalition Government. Many of our big ticket items have either been completed or are too far advanced to stop. I do not apologise for being a very parochial member. My first and major interest is the welfare of my constituents and the welfare of my electorate. I do not support this motion of confidence because I do not believe that the Burleigh electorate will benefit from the new Government and, on the wider scene, I do not believe that Queensland will benefit from a minority Labor Government.

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