



Speech by

**Hon. KEN HAYWARD**

**MEMBER FOR KALLANGUR**

---

Hansard 6 August 1998

**ADDRESS IN REPLY**

**Hon. K. W. HAYWARD** (Kallangur—ALP) (5.04 p.m.): It is certainly a great pleasure for me to have this opportunity to speak to the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. Before I discuss some issues of concern to the electorate of Kallangur, I will make what I consider to be some important acknowledgments and say thankyou. Mr Deputy Speaker, will you please pass on my congratulations to Mr Hollis, the member for Redcliffe, on his elevation to Speaker of this Parliament. Over the years, I have come to know him very well. I am sure he will do a very good job. I particularly want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the people who constituted my campaign team during the last State election, especially my campaign manager, Ian Burgett, who again demonstrated a tireless commitment to the Labor Party and the labour movement. I particularly want to take the opportunity to thank all the campaign team and the party members for their hard work during the last State election. I take this opportunity in the Parliament to acknowledge and thank my wife Janet for her support, particularly her work over the years in the electorate and especially during the last campaign.

I congratulate the new members of Parliament, particularly the new Labor members. In common with most members, I have had the opportunity of listening to the members' maiden speeches. I think the importance of those maiden speeches is that they establish what those MPs will be like in the future in this Parliament. Importantly, most of them took the opportunity to talk about their electorates and to raise issues of importance in their electorates. That is what our role as members of Parliament is all about.

In population terms, the electorate of Kallangur is the largest electorate in Queensland. In fact, the member for Sandgate referred to future redistributions. No doubt the electorate of Kallangur will be affected in some way by a redistribution. It certainly has been affected by previous redistributions. Its population is a reflection of the growth in the Pine Rivers Shire and the Caboolture Shire north of Brisbane. Over many years, that growth has not been without demands on everybody who lives in that area and particularly on the elected representatives in the shire councils and in the State and Federal Parliaments.

During the State election, I campaigned on a number of issues. In the Kallangur electorate specifically, I campaigned on three issues that stood out to people who live and work in that electorate. The first issue is the need for a new high school to service the Burpengary/Narangba area. In 1999, there will be over 800 Year 8 students coming from feeder primary schools within that area, so the pressure is on. As I did with the previous Minister, I will be putting the same effort into putting pressure on our Education Minister, the Honourable Dean Wells, to ensure that that project will go ahead in the near future.

The second issue that is most important to the people who live in Kallangur but important also to the people who live further north of that area is the widening of the Bruce Highway. I know that that is a Commonwealth and State matter. Anyone who listens to morning traffic reports on the radio will have heard about traffic jams and traffic chaos that are now extending to Narangba in the Caboolture Shire and in the electorate of Kallangur. Through our Transport Minister, this State needs to pressure the Commonwealth Government to get on with it. To start with, we need to get six lanes to the Bribie Island turn-off. The honourable member for Caboolture preceded me in this debate. I am sure that he would acknowledge the importance of that feeder route to enable people to live in the area and still get to Brisbane for work, pleasure or any other reason. The Commonwealth Government seems to have

forgotten that project. Every three or four months, it issues a press release about it. All that the Commonwealth is doing is talking about it.

The third issue that I campaigned on, which I think is very important, was for improved services to the Caboolture Hospital. When I was the Health Minister, I played a major role in the construction of that hospital and, in fact, opened it. That hospital has been a great success. In many ways, it has been too successful. Because of the population pressures on the area and the good reputation that that hospital has developed within the community, more and more people are choosing to go to it or are being referred to it for medical attention. Over the years, issues are raised continually in the health area about budgetary problems. All in all, I believe that the Caboolture Hospital has been an outstanding success.

In 1995 I announced a proposal to co-locate the Caboolture Hospital with a private hospital. I am pleased to see that the contract has been let and construction of that private hospital is under way on the site of the Caboolture public hospital. That provides significant advantages for the whole of the Caboolture Shire. It provides advantages because there will be more specialist staff. Doctors will be able to attend to both their public and private patients. That will provide more opportunities for public patients to be treated. The range of services offered will be increased. There will be an improved medical skills base. As that hospital expands, greater employment opportunities for people generally in Caboolture will be provided. Most importantly, that hospital is part of the fabric of the society within the Caboolture Shire and within the electorate of Kallangur. It means that people are able to be treated in the community in which they live.

I spoke about three local issues that were important during the election campaign. However, the big issue in the campaign—and it is the big issue wherever we are and with whomever we talk—is jobs and job security. The great strength of the Labor Party's campaign was that it was able to focus very clearly on that issue. In doing that, it tapped into the mood of the community of concern about not just getting a job but keeping a job.

Labor has established a target rate of unemployment of 5%. When Labor first released that target, its political opponents rubbished it as irrelevant and impossible. However, the importance of that target can never, ever be misunderstood or understated. It meant to the people in the electorates who were concerned about jobs and job security that a party campaigning for office was prepared to try and was prepared to make a statement that that was what it wanted to do. It was such an important statement and it helped very considerably in the election and re-election of members of the Labor Party and in giving it the opportunity to form a Government.

As I said before, I have had the opportunity to listen to a number of speeches in this Address in Reply debate. I am reluctant to comment specifically on members' comments. However, a couple have stayed in my mind. The member for Gregory, Mr Johnson, and the member for Crows Nest, Mr Cooper, raised the issue of the National Competition Policy, which they considered important and spoke about in great detail. They raised it in terms of competition itself being some kind of ogre, something that needed to be mistrusted—something that could not be believed—and something that was not the right thing for the community. Those members spoke negatively about competition without explaining the problem. They simply berated the National Competition Policy without giving members any idea of the issues involved. They spoke negatively about it in terms of job losses, which they said have occurred or would occur. As an aside, those members' speeches are laced with hypocrisy because I never heard from them the same enthusiasm for job security when the maritime dispute was on. There is no argument about it: they were in their boots and all. They wanted to see the waterside workers sacked. So in many ways what they said is laced with hypocrisy.

Nevertheless, whatever we think about competition, in general people in our community like competition and they understand what it means. In schools we are taught basic economics and what competition is about. We have seen it demonstrated. We know that competition produces better products and lower prices. So people understand the positive aspects of competition. In a simplistic sense, all of us know about competition in terms of football, netball or other sports. I want to make it very clear that there is nothing wrong with competition itself. The important issue is that our society remains fair.

Clearly, the role of Government is to ensure that safety nets are put in place so that, in a competitive environment, the benefits are seen but the people who cannot cope with competition, whether that is in the short term or in the long term, are able to access those safety nets. We know what the safety nets are. The simple fact is that, in many ways, the Federal Government has junked many of them. We have an Opposition and another group on the parliamentary crossbenches, the One Nation mob, who are prepared to junk the safety nets—who are prepared to sit here and whine about National Competition Policy, but when it comes to addressing the issue of safety nets, they say, "We cannot do that." Safety nets are important. They include such measures as the opportunity to access education, the training for new employment and, importantly, the more effective matching of the jobs that are available with job seekers.

As I see it, the problem for the Opposition and the members sitting on the crossbenches is that many of them were elected because they made an absolute art form out of attacking safety nets. We all remember a couple of weeks ago when the One Nation people were attacking the family allowance. We all remember when they were talking about unemployment benefits. They have coined terms such as "the Aboriginal industry". In all of that, they have denigrated the notion of safety nets.

So when we talk about the National Competition Policy, we must understand that competition is important and that it is vital to our society and Australia's capacity to compete in the world market. We need to ensure that Governments are prepared and are able to put in place those safety nets. As a Parliament, we should not denigrate, rubbish, criticise or generally bash people who access those safety nets but be supportive of those people. We need to ensure that those safety nets are in place so that people can access the benefits of competition and not fall out of bed because they are unable to cope with some of the fallout of that competition.

The problem with that is that some members of Parliament are here because they attack the provision of safety nets. That is their reason for existence. They just want to stand on and attack people who access any form of assistance. We as a Parliament and as a community in general are then stuck with the problem of being unable to expand on those safety nets, which is what is required if we are to deal with the problems that arose through National Competition Policy. We all want the benefits, but there are some trade-offs. We cannot expand or develop the safety net, because we have elements within our Parliament and within our community that just thrive on attacking it.

The first policy challenge for this Government—and for us all, I think—is to not dump the notion of competition. Competition is a notion which is understood perfectly by our society. It is ingrained in us from the minute we commence education in high school. It is there all the time. It is something we see every weekend on our televisions. We cannot just dump the notion of competition.

The challenge is, as I have said before, to develop a sound safety net for people who are adversely affected by competition. To do that, we all need to be on the same tram. We do not need to go around criticising people who access the safety net. We need a safety net which ensures that people adversely affected by National Competition Policy or any form of competition policy within our society are not permanently affected.

This challenge is for all politicians. As I said before: some members are here because they want to rubbish, denigrate and ridicule various safety net provisions of our society. The challenge for all politicians is not to attack those provisions and not to stigmatise or stereotype people because they are accessing them—because they do access the family allowance, because they are on unemployment benefits or because they are going back to school later in life. That is the point; we must not do that. We must not attack the safety net and we must ensure that people have the chance to access opportunities that are available within our society generally.

I take this opportunity to thank the people of the Kallangur electorate for their confidence in returning me as the member for that area on behalf of Labor. I assure all people of the Kallangur electorate that I will do my best to work diligently on their behalf.

---