



Speech by

Hon. KEN HAYWARD

MEMBER FOR KALLANGUR

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UNIVERSITY OF THE SUNSHINE COAST BILL

Hon. K. W. HAYWARD (Kallangur—ALP) (11.03 p.m.): It is a pleasure to speak to this Bill tonight. The Sunshine Coast University College was established and affiliated with the Queensland University of Technology in 1994. As a number of members who live in the area know, it was established in a place called Sippy Downs, which could best be described as very marginal agricultural land. Since that time that university college has gone from strength to strength.

The purpose of this Bill is to repeal the Sunshine Coast University College Act 1994 and provide for the establishment and operation of the proposed University of the Sunshine Coast. The university college was established on the Sunshine Coast as a result of what I believe—and there will always be arguments about this—was a pretty strong competitive process. There was a proposal at the time—and there still is—to establish a university at Caboolture. A plan was presented, a site was identified, local community support was gathered, and the University of Queensland was identified as the governing university. As I said, there was strong support from the local council, local members of Parliament and other people within the community. However, as history shows, that application was unsuccessful.

While I believe that support still remains for a university in the Caboolture area in the future, the way in which the local Caboolture community has supported the Sunshine Coast University College is fantastic. I look forward, as the Sunshine Coast University develops, to some courses being conducted in the township of Caboolture or in the Shire of Caboolture. I suggest to the powers that be at the Sunshine Coast University that those courses could perhaps be conducted at the TAFE college. We have existing educational facilities, but sometimes they are just sitting idle when they could be used for other educational purposes. So I see great scope for the TAFE college in Caboolture, for example, to be used for courses that are being conducted from the Sunshine Coast University.

Another important aspect of the Sunshine Coast University College has been the opportunity that it has presented for many people to undertake tertiary studies. Many people who probably would not have the opportunity—and some who would never have dreamed of it—are undertaking studies for all sorts of reasons. I was talking to the member for Caboolture tonight about the number of people I meet who reside within the Caboolture Shire and who are undertaking some form of mature-age study. It is amazing the numbers of them who are attending the Sunshine Coast University College.

From a personal point of view, my wife, Janet, left school after grade 10 to undertake a hairdressing apprenticeship. She had not been to school for over 25 years, but she gained mature-age entry to a university course based upon her work experience. She is in her second year as a part-time student, and I think that she has an excellent average grade. That is how I personally know a fair bit about that university. It is funny to sit at home and have people ring up asking to speak to somebody because they want to discuss a university subject or why they have not done an assignment or what happened in the exam. So one gets to know a fair bit about what is happening up there.

My wife is not the only one in that situation. A former Mayor of Caboolture is now a student at the Sunshine Coast University College. When I was at a farmhouse near Gympie one day, a former merchant seaman who had been on an invalid pension came in. Someone said to him, "Why don't you think about doing some study?" So he started studying, and a whole new career is now opening up for that fellow who, 10 or 20 years ago, would not have dreamed of such a thing. And if the university was not where it is, there would be no hope of his ever doing that. I believe that it has been great for the Sunshine Coast community and the entire area in general.

Last year, the Sunshine Coast University College achieved some sort of national status because of the different types of courses that it was conducting. Some members would know about these sorts of topics. The university is conducting a course for a study of society degree in a topic called grunge. I do not know whether anyone else in this Chamber would do well in that particular subject. Professor Ross Fitzgerald, when talking to me one day, made a comment about the course in grunge. He said that the best way to achieve a great pass in grunge would be to fail grunge. I simply do not know what that course is about. However, in its own way, the Sunshine Coast University College is identifying issues within our society and working with students in developing what those issues are about.

As to buildings, progress has been made on the campus over a period. I had the honour of representing Peter Beattie when he was the Opposition Leader at the opening of the sports club on that university campus. Today I spoke with Mr Laming, who was the member of Parliament who had the honour and the duty of opening that facility. In common with many of the other speakers tonight, I was impressed by the turnout of the Sunshine Coast residents who were present on that day. I am not referring to the MPs, the mayors and the usual gaggle of people who turn up to such events; I am referring to ordinary people who live on the Sunshine Coast and have a commitment to that university. That demonstrates to me that the university is more than just about studying and achieving a degree or some other recognition. By establishing the sports club on the university grounds, the university is able to pursue other activities that are not directly related to the various sporting and other student clubs that originated on that campus.

It is a great pleasure for me to be here tonight to say these few words in support of this Bill. I wish the University of the Sunshine Coast great results from its student body and all the people associated with that university. I am sure that it will become one of the great, successful universities in Australia. We will see that in the future.
