



Speech by

JOHN KINGSTON

MEMBER FOR MARYBOROUGH

Hansard 2 March 1999

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Dr KINGSTON (Maryborough—IND) (5.50 p.m.): Through you, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to thank the Governor for his kind words when he opened this Parliament. May we live up to his expectations.

I take this opportunity to talk about Maryborough—the multi-skilled electorate. My electorate, based on the City of Maryborough, is a skilled and diversified community. The strength of the City of Maryborough is the variety of specialised engineering works and their skilled staff. Members will be aware of Walkers and Adtrans and the tilt train and their success in this country and overseas. I thank the Government for its continuing support for these two companies. Please keep it up.

I am delighted to announce that we have added three more specialised industries to our portfolio: firstly, the designer and builder of oceangoing multi-hulled yachts made of a very light material; secondly, a renovated slipway now servicing a steadily increasing number of east coast and gulf trawlers—increasing because all the skills needed are within Maryborough; and thirdly, our latest addition, a ceramic pot manufacturer who has already secured impressive contracts.

Forestry and sawmilling are vital to our economy. As the Deputy Premier personally witnessed last week, Hynes and others are aggressively addressing the changes within their industry. But our timber industry desperately needs resolution of the regional forestry agreement and clear signals and encouragement from all levels of government.

The sugar industry is the biggest employer in the Maryborough electorate. The Maryborough sugar factory has expanded production area, irrigated area, the use of sewage effluent and is now upgrading mill capacity. It is very disappointing that the prolonged negotiations to convert an area of good agricultural land currently under plantation pine to irrigated cane land have finally collapsed. I look forward to the time when environmental and land use issues can be debated and resolved in a factual, scientific and responsible manner.

Despite our diversity and skills, the Maryborough electorate is suffering. The recent NIEIR report—"The state of the regions"—recorded that the Wide Bay/Burnett region has been identified as having amongst the highest unemployment and the lowest household incomes. If this Government is to achieve the admirable objective of 5% unemployment, Wide Bay, and thus the Maryborough electorate, is a key area for positive action. According to DEWRSB figures, in March 1998 there were 1,795 unemployed in the local Government area of Maryborough, 336 in Tiaro, 218 in Woocoo and 3,784 in neighbouring Hervey Bay.

But the Maryborough community decided that such unemployment is unacceptable. The local newspaper and CHR office combined. Their aim was to create \$1m worth of jobs. Their awareness campaign created jobs worth \$3.8m.

Maryborough has just hosted the meeting of 21 Wide Bay/Burnett mayors under the leadership of Bill Trevor. Our communities are prepared to work together and to build from within rather than sit on our hands and wait for Government handouts. Having said that, I want to identify that the Maryborough council and the thinking community, with the support of the Hervey Bay, Tiaro and Woocoo councils, have been working hard to convince the Corrective Services Department that we have the best site for the 900-bed prison currently under consideration. The economic boost resulting from the siting of the prison in the Maryborough vicinity will give the Maryborough electorate the economic kick-start and the confidence boost currently so badly needed. I commend this fact to the Ministers concerned. Help us to help ourselves. Thank you.