



Speech by

JOHN GOSS

MEMBER FOR ASPLEY

Hansard 2 March 1999

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mr GOSS (Aspley—LP) (2.49 p.m.): I pledge my loyalty to Her Majesty the Queen, and to her representative in Queensland, His Excellency the Governor, Major General Peter Arnison, and I assure the electors of Aspley of my continued efforts on their behalf. I am honoured to have been elected once again to represent the residents of the Aspley electorate. Since being elected to the Brisbane City Council in 1982, this most recent election was my seventh. Of the four State elections I have contested, this most recent election brought about my second best result.

I thank all those who came forward to assist me at the election. I express my sincere thanks to the ever-present branch members who have been there to help and assist in so many ways over many years. Some of them have assisted me at all elections I have contested. I also express my appreciation to the many people who at each election contact me and offer their help and services. Many of these people are non-political but come forward at each election to assist me.

As I have said previously, I am very pleased with my result in Aspley, although I could not miss the sour grapes of the local ALP campaign director, who made a great issue in the local press that I was elected on One Nation preferences. I admit that is true. I outpolled the Labor candidate in the primary vote and received more One Nation preferences.

What the Labor Party campaign director, in his moment of losing disappointment, failed to realise is that it is the constituents of the area who vote and allocate their preferences, not the parties. The ALP booth workers handed out bogus how-to-vote cards to One Nation voters in an attempt to get their preferences. Labor went begging to One Nation voters for their preferences. Unlike Labor booth workers, who handed out two how-to-vote cards, I can honestly say that my booth workers handed out only the official Liberal card. Labor's sneaky tactic was seen by the electorate for what it was: a win-at-any-cost campaign.

Never have I had so many election signs defaced, stolen and burnt. It was a very well-organised campaign. With the help of my campaign workers, there were always sufficient signs to replace the ones that had been destroyed. On one occasion I went out to replace a burnt sign and a six-year-old boy came out of the house. He stood there, watching me put the sign up. When I had finished he said, "Is that you?" I said, "Yes." He said, "It doesn't look like you." The sign was 14 years old and I had to put "Aspley" over the former electorate name. Fourteen years ago I looked thinner and had more hair; that was the only difference.

I take this opportunity to thank my wife, Tricia, who has always been there when help is needed. Those who know her know that she has boundless energy. I also place on record my thanks to the people who do so much voluntary work in the electorate—the neighbourhood watches, the club committees, Meals on Wheels, the Bald Hills Bushies, the service clubs and the P & Cs and P & Fs. They have made such a significant contribution over many years. I am pleased to say that the majority, if not all, of the sporting clubs in my electorate are junior sporting clubs. That makes me very proud.

One of my proudest achievements over the years has been the preservation of bushland. That includes the Raven Street reserve, the West Chermside hills and 60 hectares of bushland at Albany Creek near Bridgeman Downs. In fact, last year I received an award from the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, whom many members would know quite well, to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the opening of the Downfall Creek Bushland Centre.

One of my greatest honours was when the residents of the electorate petitioned to have an area named the John Goss Reserve. At the unveiling I was rather worried that the word "memorial" may have been on the sign, but I had two options: either physical or political death. The John Goss Reserve represents a great honour bestowed by residents in the electorate.

Over recent years I have been pleased to see the refurbishment of the older schools in my electorate, particularly the Aspley East and Bald Hills State Schools. Other schools have also benefited from the upgrading of facilities. Aspley State High School has many new facilities, thanks to a very active P & C community.

The Aspley Special School has an outstanding record for dedication in the upgrading of their facilities and for fundraising. In fact, their fundraising activities have to be seen to be believed. This school paid for its own therapy pool without even a subsidy from the Government. The P & C members at the Aspley Special School are real workers. They are determined and they are very resourceful. I pay tribute to the former principal of the school, Glynn Brown, and to Harry Johnstone, who is responsible for the recycling and environmental centre at the Aspley Special School. The Pine Rivers State High School is also a great school. The P & C there is very active and is very involved in the school, as is the P & C at the adjoining Strathpine school.

Another pleasing achievement in the Aspley electorate has been the refurbishment of many of the State houses, which have had very little spent on them over the last 40 or 45 years. The project has transformed an area of Zillmere, much to the delight of local residents. Also, another pensioners complex has been constructed in the area. That has been very helpful. Many of the people in the area are aged and many of them occupy two, three and four bedroom homes. We found that they were occupying these homes because they did not want to move away from their friends. When they found that they could move into a new complex at ground level, many of them were happy to move in. This made the refurbished houses available to people on the waiting list. These people have been able to stay close not only to their neighbours but also their friends. They have been able to maintain association with their local clubs.

I am relieved that the activity centre at the Aspley State School is now completed. For 14 or more years the P & C raised funds and sought financial assistance. The former hall had been condemned by Workplace Health and Safety. Not only is the new hall an asset to the school; it also provides a venue for church, sporting and community groups. I congratulate the many P & C committees and the parents who worked so hard and so long over all those years to raise the enormous amount of money needed to construct the activity centre.

Brisbane's town plan is of serious concern to me. As development increases in our city, the destruction of trees and open areas around the city with high-density development and unit development becomes obvious. That development covers the land, which acts as a sponge in times of heavy rain. And because the earth is being covered by roadways and houses, there is less area to absorb the rain. Therefore, that rain is channelled into the creeks. But no-one is prepared to undertake major creek reconstruction work because that would ruin the environment.

I believe that Brisbane's town plan is leading Brisbane into a disaster. Already people in Brisbane tell me that they cannot get flood insurance. And those who are getting flood insurance in some new areas have to do deals with their insurance companies to give them all their insurance. But there are some people who will never get flood insurance, or for whom the cost of flood insurance is so high that they cannot afford it.

The run-off peak is going to get higher as development increases. Perhaps it is the responsibility of the State Government to look at the intensity of development in relation to flooding in our city. Although the State Government provides assistance for roads that flood, together with emergency assistance, it is getting to the stage where I believe that the Government should be responsible for people whose properties flood when it has allowed them to build on flood-prone land.

Unfortunately, the Aspley electorate suffers from people who are travelling to the north coast, particularly at weekends, and who use local roads as a short cut to the Bruce Highway from the western suburbs. One of the things that we have to consider seriously is an alternative route to the west of Brisbane. The traffic congestion on two-lane roads throughout the Aspley electorate on Sundays, weekends and on Friday afternoons is creating enormous congestion. In fact, people along those routes are even having problems getting in and out of their properties.

I am very proud of the years that I served on the Travelsafe committee. One of the interesting things that was trialled in my area at St Dymphna's School on Robinson Road was flashing lights to reduce the speed limit during the morning and afternoon school arrival and departure times. From talking to the P & F at that school, I learnt that, before the flashing lights were put in, the police estimated that perhaps one in 100 motorists would slow down to the required speed. Most motorists did not slow down at all. But since the flashing lights have been installed, the vast majority of motorists now observe the speed limit past the school. I must admit that the school is in a dangerous location. It is

located on the crest of a hill, the pedestrian crossing is right on that crest, and one does not see the white lines until one is almost upon them. I say thank you to the people in road safety and my colleagues on the Travelsafe committee who were keen to try new ideas, such as the flashing lights.

Another issue that is of great concern to me is the defacing and removal of traffic signs. This can be extremely dangerous. I personally knew someone who died at an intersection after a stop sign was removed. Apparently it is not unusual for the council to find keep-left signs changed with an arrow and felt pens to "keep right". One thing that I encourage the Travelsafe committee to consider seriously are the penalties for defacing and removing street signs. The staff of the ambulance and fire services have their maps and they know where they are going, but doctors who are called out often do not.

Quite frequently around the city I see evidence of street signs that have been removed by youths. That can delay emergency services to people. We should consider making the penalty for defacing, altering or removing traffic signs—whether they are temporary or permanent—a much more serious offence. I have noticed in recent months an alarming increase in the number of traffic signs that have graffiti painted over them. It is an enormous cost to the Brisbane City Council and the Main Roads Department to have to keep replacing those signs.

I also pay tribute to the Metropolitan North Boondall division of the Police Service for their activities in the area and their participation in the Neighbourhood Watch Program. I pay them a compliment, because sometimes, if you phone them up, some police will go out with you in their own time after hours to inspect problems in your area. We had a problem in my electorate with groups of young people gathering in cars at the shopping centre. When several hundred cars gather around at the local shopping centre and a few irresponsible people are doing wheelies through the shopping centre, that is a concern to everybody. For example, parents were afraid to take their children to McDonald's on a Friday as a treat after their swimming lessons. I must admit that the police did a magnificent job. Ninety-five per cent of those people were there just to get together with their colleagues, and there is nothing wrong with that. But there are always those few people who act irresponsibly and put other people's lives in danger. The police took many weeks to sort out that problem. They worked tirelessly and set up a task force.

Now, I respect the right of people to get together. But I believe that it is time that Government treated amateur motor sport on the same basis as it treats other sport. We acknowledge Mick Doohan, Jack Brabham, Alan Jones and all those other people who were world champions. But when it comes to the amateur side of the sport, we do not want to know about it, and we do not assist those sports clubs in providing facilities where they can drag-race their own cars without going to great expense. Some sporting clubs have quite a bit of money to put together, but they just need a site for their facilities. That is something that we should be considering seriously.

I also thank the Main Roads staff for their consultation in relation to sound barriers in my electorate. They have been of enormous help to local residents. Most of their landscaping work has been a great success in the beautification of Gympie Road. One of the sad things is that, although they have recently finished landscaping out there—and it is right on the border of the electorate of the member for Chermside—they tell me that they are now likely to rip up some of that landscaping and change the road design. As the member for Chermside would know, there is nothing worse than people seeing something being done and then, a matter of months later, they see someone coming along and ripping it all up again. Fortunately for the member for Chermside, the landscaping in question is on my side of the boundary road between our electorates. However, I pay tribute to those workers in Main Roads who maintain the roads in that area.
