



Speech by

CATE MOLLOY

MEMBER FOR NOOSA

Hansard 5 April 2001

FIRST SPEECH

Mrs MOLLOY (Noosa—ALP) (2.51 p.m.): First, let me say this: thank you to my family, my husband, Ivan—my mentor and guru—you who have guided and encouraged me to be the woman I am today. Without you, I would not be standing here in this place. You are my hero, Ivan. Also, thank you to my three daughters, who have also been the inspiration and reason for my being here today—Honorlee, Melanie and Bonnie. I want to leave with them a world to be proud of, a world in which they will have a future. You, my daughters, know this. Thank you, my darlings, for all the love and joy we share.

The others whom I wish to acknowledge and thank are those people who supported me in my political endeavours: Emily's List, Anne Kennedy, Peter Baulch, Pam Lethall, Cheryl Froude, Chrissie Phillips, Lil Ganley, Stephanie and Tony Haslam, Ted, Ray Lower, Sheila Ward and my friends Marie and Bill Turner, Ted Vale, Peter Slade, Dr John Dalton, Ron Reavell and Debra Turner. Others who could not be with me today are Leah and Gary Koch, my sisters and brother, Biddy Anne and John. They are here, nonetheless, in spirit. I acknowledge also my branch members and other supporters and give a huge thanks to my husband's parents, Beryl and Matt Molloy, who helped keep my home together not only during the campaign but throughout my adult life when called upon.

There were other friends who also lent a hand, looking after Bonnie when Ivan and I were out on the hustings—Ian and Leanne Treloar, Charlie and Nes Nery. Thanks, guys. And to the Noosa electorate I say: thank you for delivering Noosa to Labor once again. This is now your chance to be meaningfully represented, and I am the woman who will do just that. To the wonderful branch members in the gallery, my friends Duncan and Nes and dearly loved family: welcome to Queensland's 50th Parliament.

I am Cate Molloy. I am the newly elected member for Noosa, and I am very proud to be here today—proud to be in this place and very proud to be giving my maiden speech in the Queensland parliament. Firstly, who am I? And what is my background? The second question is rather easier to answer. I was born in Melbourne, the youngest child of Nell and Jim Keating. I come from a happy home life that enriched my life with social values that I hold very dear today—values that will become more apparent the more members get to know me in my time in this place. Thank you, mum and dad. I am extremely proud of you and what you have done for me. Happy 80th birthday, dad.

I grew up in Melbourne. I did my primary, secondary and nursing education there, before embarking on a nursing career. I was educated by FCJ nuns, who added yet another dimension to the already rich fabric of my life. I eventually married my husband, a university academic and political scientist. We then spent many years working, travelling and, indeed, living in many parts of Australia and overseas. In the course of that time, we had three glorious daughters and many incredible life experiences.

So who do I come to this place as? Yes, I obviously come to this place as the member for Noosa. But who is it that comes with this label? I come to this place with enormous pride in being a mother, a nurse and a surf-lifesaver. But more than that, I come to this place as a humanitarian, a fighter for human rights, an advocate for the environment, a fighter for a fair go for all in our community and equal opportunity for all. In a nutshell, I come to this place as a determined political activist.

Now, while I may be currently presenting my maiden speech, unlike others have before me I do not claim to come here as a maiden in that simplistic moralistic sense—heaven forbid! But if we must boast about our sexual credentials as if to gain some sense of moral high ground and, therefore, political advantage, as I have said I come to this place proudly as a mother. But more than that, I come here also as a loving partner in all senses of the word. And I do not shrink from saying that. Political correctness for me can sometimes be no better than intellectual fascism. I love being a woman, looking like a woman and acting as a woman. And above all, I love the opportunity to now come to this place as a mature, sophisticated female of the species determined to do her job.

So why have I come to this place? In order to answer this question, it is appropriate for me to first explain a little bit about what I believe in. Unlike those on the other side of this House who seem so preoccupied in promoting a so-called libertarian society in which the rule of social Darwinism is paramount—and by that I mean a society in which the norm is the survival of the economic fittest—in stark ideological contrast, I come to this House steeped in communitarian values—those who believe in championing the interests of the community first and believe in a caring government as an expression of that community.

I come to this place as one prepared to champion the notion of good government. I come to condemn privatisation and economic rationalism for their own sake. For those on the other side should take note: efficiency and profit making do not necessarily equate with a community good. Only when benefits are distributed equitably and fairly is the common good actually served. I have come to this place to help keep the light on the hill burning—that ideological beacon of Labor values that all in our community should be able to see and take faith and hope in. Because remember: that beacon represents good and caring government, a government with a social conscience, determined to provide equal opportunity for all—just the kind of government that Peter Beattie now heads and the type of government that I am so extremely proud to be part of today.

The second and most obvious reason why I have come to this place is, of course, to represent my electorate, the electorate of Noosa. But I come to represent Noosa for Labor, the party that embraces public-spirited politics—or communitarian values, to use political philosophy terms—and those who value a healthy community and equal opportunity for all above all else.

So what is my electorate? Indeed, my Noosa is a curious, enigmatic place. Many would argue that Noosa is a glamour electorate, a tourist capital of the world. It has fine beaches, rainforests and glorious hinterland. It has fine restaurants, five-star accommodation, breathtaking scenery and environment. It has a beautiful climate and, many would argue, more than its share of beautiful people. It is indeed the crown jewel in Queensland's tourist industry, and as a seat and as a community it is also a crown jewel. But it is much, much more than that. It is a complex human community—a tightly knit community made up of people from all walks of life, people who have come from all over the world. It is conservative in some ways but progressive and truly cosmopolitan in others—and probably even more so than Brisbane.

Socioeconomically Noosa exists on two levels. It has a glamorous veneer but it also has many people living on the poverty line. It has many families, including single parents, struggling to exist. It has its share of high unemployment, crime and drug problems. It has many, many problems tucked away in its back streets like many growing parts of Queensland.

Noosa is a community under threat wherein developers want to drive roads through pristine natural environment, a community whose kids need an advocate, a community in which drugs and violence are a reality and a community struggling with traffic snarls. It is a community that cries out for a greater police presence on the streets to protect those who obey the law from those often forced to break it through desperation. It is a society that has to nurture the safety of its own and its visitors.

But what is wrong with Noosa, as in many parts of Queensland, cannot be blamed on the Beattie government nor others from our side of politics. In many ways, the issues confronting Noosa are due to years of conservative government neglect. Too easily has the promise of the good life, the glitz and glamour in Noosa blinded so many to its ills. We as a community are more than prepared to address these issues and not shy away from our responsibilities. Others might say Noosa's problems are much to do with globalisation and are repeated everywhere else, but to accept that is to accept simplistic associated myths of a very complex, long and ongoing process. Many of Noosa's issues are indeed just like those everywhere else, but they are more to do with the legacies of the social Darwinist attitudes of our political opponents—those who would encourage the rich while undercutting the safety nets of the poor.

So what needs to be done? Labor has done much recently to try to improve the lot of my community. Now it can go one better, for now I am here to directly represent the people of Noosa in a Labor government. I am the community's direct link to the ministers. The Noosa community demonstrates its caring nature by the mushrooming of community groups across the electorate—from the Kin Kin Rural Fire Brigade down to the Coolum Ratepayers Association. The groups cover a broad

range of care and concern such as the Landcare program of Pomona, the rural futures centre and the Coolumbusos who are running a mentoring program for the local young musicians out of the Coolumbusos RSL. We are actively supporting our youth with the great leadership that is Noosa Youth Services. Our surf-lifesaving programs, which are run by local volunteers, are a major supporter of our youngsters.

The environment is strongly protected by fabulous groups such as the Sunshine Coast Environment Council and the Noosa Parks Association. We have two of the best local councils in the state—Noosa and Maroochydore. These councils are a clear comment on what direction these communities have chosen to take. There are many more groups who love Noosa, too numerous to mention here today. My aim is to represent them to the best of my ability.

So what will I do? I will fight for more employment in my electorate. I will fight for education facilities, better roads and a clean and green environment. I will fight for a safer community and ensure that the functions of community volunteer groups such as surf-lifesaving and other emergency services can be improved. I am determined to improve on Noosa's tourist attractions and take Noosa to the world responsibly. I will fight for law and order and for better health services. Above all, I will fight for social justice. To our aged and the nurses who care for them: I am here to promote you because you need an advocate also.

So to conclude, let me say this: for the Premier and my other colleagues in the Labor Party, I have been most happy to deliver Noosa to the ALP and I will work to do my best to keep Noosa firmly Labor. Finally, as I have said, I have come to this place as a woman and I am deeply proud to be here, just like the rest of my female colleagues. Indeed, I agree with the Premier that, because there are so many of us, this place will never be the same again, and indeed it will not. We women are grasping our destinies and are here to promote our electorates' interests and those of Queensland. But in so doing, as nurturers, we shall represent both male and female much more fairly.

I have one final suggestion before I close. While we women may appear less—how shall I put it—aggressive in our approach or perhaps less uncouth, please do not underestimate the power of we women who now sit in this place. To paraphrase one of life's all-time greatest males—and I do not mean the Premier this time, but rather Mohammed Ali—while we might look like butterflies, beware all you men, because we can sting like bees! Thank you very much.
