



Speech by

**GARY FENLON**

**MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES**

---

Hansard 3 May 2001

**ADDRESS IN REPLY**

**Mr FENLON** (Greenslopes—ALP) (2.30 p.m.): Madam Deputy Speaker, it is a great pleasure to join this Address in Reply debate. I congratulate the Speaker on his appointment to his high office and ask you to please pass on those congratulations to him. I know that Mr Speaker will continue to carry out his role as diligently as the way in which he serves his own electorate. It is great to be part of this very historic 50th Parliament in a year in which we celebrate the centenary of the establishment of the Commonwealth of Australia. The many events that will be held this year in celebration of that historical event will mark the point in history very well.

I would also like to congratulate the new members, and particularly the many new women members, who I am sure will change the face of this parliament forever. I am sure that, in many ways, they have already. I thank the voters of Greenslopes for their support in delivering the highest margin for Labor ever experienced in that electorate. I thank the individuals who spoke to me personally before the election, during the election campaign, on election day and since, conveying their personal support for me and for the work that we have done in that electorate, of which I am very proud. But I know that, however hard I have worked over the years in that area, I must thank Peter Beattie for the leadership he has displayed in showing that Labor's focus was upon positive policies, was upon building upon Labor's achievements and was upon conveying a vision for Queensland and for our future.

That positive approach exhibited by the Premier was in stark relief to the appalling behaviour of the opposition parties, particularly the Liberals. I should probably deliver a long list of thank-yous to Mr Jaeschke of the Liberal Party. This is not just a cynical view; it was the strong view of electors who throughout the campaign conveyed to me their disgust at the negativity and dishonesty of the Liberals as well as their complete failure to deliver policies.

However, we should focus a little more upon the unfortunate leadership and performance of the Liberals and the Nationals. We have seen a leadership circus, I suppose I could call it, with Mr Horan versus the member for Southern Downs and the member for Maroochydore. We can put some very distinct labels on the opposition parties. Certainly, from the way in which the Liberals have behaved, in a very colloquial sense we can only describe the members of that party as real cowboys, that is, they were reckless, crash, boorish and attempting tasks far beyond their abilities. We see the Nationals as farmers, traditionally. Obviously, there has been terrible falling out in the coalition since the election. The pretence that the two parties had unanimity to govern could no longer be continued. It is no longer tenable.

So it is a very sad state of affairs—and I must say that tongue in cheek—for the coalition. On the one hand we have the farmers and on the other hand we have the cowboys, and they are no longer friends. I can hear choruses starting in the distance that the farmers and the cowboys should be friends. I know that I can borrow a lot more from the musical *Oklahoma*.

I refer to the former Leader of the Nationals, the former member for Surfers Paradise. I think I can hear some tones—again evoking memories of *Oklahoma*—with the chorus of, 'Poor Jud is dead'. The National Party members looked at him, shook their heads and said—as the chorus goes—'He looks like he's asleep and we wish that he could keep, but it's summer and we're running out of ice.' It was clear that the by-election would be necessary. I understand that there is at least consensus in the

Nationals camp that—as the chorus goes again—'The daisies in the dell will give out a different smell now that the member for Surfers Paradise is underneath the ground.'

But what a dilemma this left for the National Party in terms of finding a replacement leader—somebody who could do an adequate impression of 'Poor Jud is dead'. It is quite logical really: who else should they turn to but that purveyor of the impression of sleep, that necromancer of the Nationals, the man who brought the sleeper hold to world championship wrestling, the somnambulist of Toowoomba South! And what a fine choice that was. The member for Callide entered the leadership debate. Indeed, I think he was singing *The Surrey with the Fringe on Top* at the time. The member for Maroochydore entered the leadership debate singing *Oh, What a Beautiful Morning* and 'Why should a woman who is healthy and strong', et cetera. Some very strong verses came in there from *Oklahoma* as well.

But the best was reserved for the deputy leader. The member for Gregory entered the contest against those losers in the leadership round when the member for Toowoomba South asked him to stand. What did he say? He said, 'I'm just a girl who can't say no. I'm in a terrible fix.' Of course, Curly is one of the characters and the hero of the musical. I will leave it to members' imagination as to who might fill that role, even though he does not have enough hair to do so. He is certainly a great hero and he has done the job well.

I turn now to some matters that are relevant to the Greenslopes electorate, and in particular what we advanced to the electorate before the recent election. One fundamental fact that I believe Labor conveyed to the electorate was that we did have a vision for the future and that has taken a very concrete form in terms of a number of developments in the area. The first one that is a very major development for the Coorparoo area is the development of what we are now describing as the Coorparoo education precinct. The Coorparoo education precinct consists of several elements. One fundamental part is AccessEd, which is currently under construction within the Coorparoo campus, which was the former TAFE campus at Coorparoo consisting of two wings which were classrooms—in fact, a butchery and bakery teaching facility—and the Queen Alexandra Home Community Centre.

Thanks to this government, \$9 million is being spent on refurbishing that complex to bring it to a state where AccessEd can enter the campus. The \$9 million will be spent on refurbishing the two wings. It will bring the Queen Alexandra Home Community Centre into a state of much greater utility by way of the establishment of airconditioning, double glazing and lifts. It is also now very clear to the community that the building will continue its multifaceted purpose in that it will be a facility that will be used not only for educational purposes but also for the community.

The amount of space that has been designated for the community is very generous. I must compliment AccessEd and, in particular, its leader, Gary Barnes, for the excellent job that they have done in moving into this facility and keeping in stride with the community itself. The community has been consulted at every step of the way and they have done that very professionally. I am very pleased with the way that that has been conducted and I know that the local community representatives are pleased as well.

It is anticipated that the campus will be reopened for community access at some time around the September holidays of this year. I hope that the facility will be used and optimised by commercial groups like never before. Indeed, there will be a threefold usage of the facility: commercial, educational and community. I know all parties concerned are looking forward to cooperating in a new partnership that will give each of those functions an organic linkage and, in particular, a linkage to the adjacent Coorparoo State School campus.

Given that AccessEd is at the frontier of the development of educational curriculum materials and the use of various technologies associated with education, this is a very exciting development for the Coorparoo State School itself, as well as for the wider school community and the teaching community. Several major teaching libraries will be located at the site and they will be used by teachers from not only Brisbane but also other places in Queensland. It is a very exciting development. I am very pleased and proud to have that facility in the Greenslopes electorate.

I thank the member for Murrumba, the former Minister for Education who is currently in the House, Mr Wells, who had the foresight to initiate this great project. I thank the current Education Minister for continuing her strong support for this project. It is well on track. If anyone drives down Old Cleveland Road they will see the building products flying about at the moment.

Part of an overall vision for the campus of the Coorparoo State School is a general planning process that is under way as a result of various other issues that were taken before the former Minister for Education prior to the election. In particular, the issues of increasing enrolments and the lack of space and facilities had to be confronted. We are now planning a great development for the whole campus, to make it more organic in terms of its interaction with AccessEd. The Coorparoo State School is about to celebrate its 125th anniversary. It is a very old school in Brisbane. It is timely to refurbish that campus and bring it up to a modern standard.

Those developments certainly are very exciting, but they are only part of the story in terms of the major educational changes that are sweeping through the older suburbs. They form part of the development within our secondary schools that is occurring under the auspices of the Secondary Schools Renewal Program. Major changes are occurring.

For instance, at Cavendish Road State High School \$5.8 million is being spent in developing a major new biosciences building, kinesiology laboratory and oval works. That will create a very firm place for the school in the higher quality secondary school environment that we have within the southside suburbs. Coorparoo Secondary College is also going ahead with the \$3 million development of an entertainment complex and centre for artistic development. Holland Park State School is spending \$700,000 on refurbishment to support the academic and vocational curriculum.

Camp Hill State High School is spending \$700,000 in the shorter term to refurbish and support its amalgamation with Whites Hill State School. A very innovative lower, middle and upper school vision is now contemplated for the overall campus. That will be a very exciting development and one which will fill a particular niche in providing a specific form of educational services in the Brisbane community.

I am very pleased that additional moneys have been allocated to primary schools in my area to fund projects that are now being implemented. One of the very much appreciated developments that has resulted from the additional funding provided for capital works and upgrades was the provision of \$26,000 for the installation of security cameras at Wellers Hill State School, which had a problem with vandalism. I am very pleased to say that since the new system was installed before Christmas—and I have not heard anything to the contrary today—no vandalism has been reported. The security cameras really work. We had a real problem because of bushland adjacent to the school. I am very pleased to say that the new system is really working. The school community is very grateful for that particular development.

I am also pleased to see the Hospital Rebuilding Program, which was commenced in the early 1990s, come to fruition. We were all very excited at the commencement of that program because, under the draconian vision of the previous Bjelke-Petersen government, Queensland's hospital building program lagged behind that of the other states. This was the catch up and, indeed, we have caught up in a hell of a way judging by the rebuilding of the PA Hospital. I am very proud that that hospital services my electorate. I was pleased to join the Health Minister and the Premier at the opening of that facility earlier this year. It is causing great excitement within the local communities, as shown by the great enthusiasm for and turnout at open days that have been held at the hospital.

There are several areas where we need to maintain that vision. We need to keep a vision of the future, to be creative in our policies and to provide our communities with what they want. One issue that has caused a great deal of interest in my area is the prospect of undergrounding powerlines. I was very pleased to be appointed by the previous Minister for Mines and Energy, as he was then, to a statewide committee to examine the feasibility of and processes necessary to implement the undergrounding of powerlines. I am currently working to re-initiate that committee, which I understand has the support of the new Minister for Energy. We look forward to advancing that project.

I believe that the undergrounding of powerlines is not a matter of if; it is a matter of when. It must be done, whether in the next couple of years or the next 10 years. In Perth, a significant undergrounding program is under way and we should follow that very good example.

The final matter that I will touch upon is one which I know is dear to many constituents, and that is our environment and, in particular, the Brisbane bay.

**Mr English** interjected.

**Mr FENLON:** I look forward to working with some of the new bay members to ensure that our bay is kept in pristine condition, that its environment is protected. Many of the constituents of Greenslopes use the bay area for recreation. They see it as their backyard. It is a very beautiful place; I take the interjection of the member. I look forward to working with other members to protect the bay in terms of fishing and recreation as well as preserving the beautiful environment of the bay islands. I commend the Governor's opening speech.

---