



Speech by

**JULIE ATTWOOD**

**MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY**

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Hansard 22 March 2001

**ADDRESS IN REPLY**

**Mrs ATTWOOD** (Mount Ommaney—ALP) (4.48 p.m.): I would like to comment on the recent elections. As if Peter Beattie's landslide victory in Queensland was not enough, on top of all that the swing to Labor federally in the Ryan by-election must surely be an indication that the John Howard government must rethink its policies. The born-to-rule ideology does not work for the people of Queensland, particularly when the results of his work are that the economy is gloomy, unemployment is higher than ever, petrol prices continue to skyrocket, the GST is another word for gutting small traders, the poor get poorer and big companies make embarrassing profits.

And that is not all. Education favours the rich. \$500,000 that could have gone to poor schools has been wasted at the whim of John Moore, families are paying more on their grocery bills, pensioners continue to get further behind and nursing home conditions worsen. It does not matter if the Liberal Party manages to claw its way back into the blue ribbon seat of Ryan, the message is absolutely clear. People are asking for someone to clean up the mess, and the man to do it is Kim Beazley.

As one of our new state members so eloquently put it recently, what we need in our leader is compassion, commitment and courage. John Howard has a shortage of the former when it comes to the welfare of the workers in Australia. Kim Beazley went out and spoke to voters in their homes. That takes courage and a lot of compassion.

Does John Howard know how much a loaf of bread costs? Does he know how difficult it is to get a job? How can someone who is so out of touch have the knowledge to manage our sliding economy and to know what is needed? The answer is, he does not, and that is why the country is in such a predicament—a mess that will get worse the longer he stays in Canberra.

The voters of Ryan, the epitome of middle-class Australia, tell him that he is going down the wrong track. I would like to acknowledge the enormous effort of candidate Leonie Short who indeed sent that short, sharp message to Canberra and the hundreds of campaign workers who came out in force to help get that message across. They deserve to win this by-election.

Although a handful of votes will decide the future of Ryan, the message is indeed enormously clear. As that old saying goes, it is time for a change; it is time for Kim Beazley and the ALP to lead us out of this mess.

In the state election, Mount Ommaney residents overwhelmingly supported the return of the Beattie government. The 13 per cent swing on the primary vote indicated that people knew exactly what they wanted on polling day. However, this result will not be taken for granted and I will continue to work hard for the people of Mount Ommaney in every way that I can.

The issues of most importance to the residents in my area are health, education, transport and main roads, multiculturalism, crime and the environment. Last year, 41 per cent of the old hospital site was handed over by the Minister for Health to the Brisbane City Council for use as a great park in the heart of the Centenary suburbs. I thank the Minister for Public Works and Minister for Housing, Robert Swarten, for his lateral thinking in assisting with the construction of a war memorial on the corner of this site. As part of their apprenticeship training, Q-Build apprentice stonemasons will carve the stone in readiness for Anzac Day 2001. The site is currently being prepared through funding acquired by Don Robertson and the Centenary War Memorial Gardens Committee. The idea of a war memorial was

mooted about seven years ago and hard work and commitment by a number of people has finally brought this to fruition. The newly formed Centenary sub-branch of the Returned Services League is looking forward to being able to conduct its services at the local venue. As their patron, I look forward to playing my part in the 8 a.m. service on Anzac Day.

Other local facilities achieved for the Mount Ommaney electorate include a community health centre at Corinda, which is currently under construction; stage 3 of the Centenary High School; a massive upgrade of the Corinda State High School; disability access to the Oxley and Corinda Railway Stations and a Police Beat for Oxley. This is over and above the new Centenary Ambulance Station, which was opened last year.

I thank the Minister for Health, Wendy Edmond, for her cooperation and support in making funding available for a new community health centre. This will provide much-needed services to young families and the elderly in the Sherwood, Oxley and Corinda suburbs.

The schools in the Mount Ommaney electorate will continue to be well maintained. Parents in the Centenary suburbs are looking forward to the commencement and completion of stage 3 of the Centenary State High School, which will provide for a performing arts centre. This is a school where the arts are given a high priority and participation by students is strongly encouraged. A healthy balance of the curriculum is necessary for the students' social development.

The Corinda State High School is continuing to grow with a population of over 1,400 students. The \$7.2 million upgrade has been long awaited and construction works have commenced. The new and renovated facilities will at last match the quality of learning provided by the principal and teaching staff at this excellent school. I will continue to lobby the Minister for Education to ensure that community views are listened to in relation to the Oxley Secondary College site.

Just as important as education is access to the school of one's choice. Last year there were concerns about the availability of student transport to schools outside the Centenary suburbs. Centenary Bus Lines could no longer provide buses out of the area due to financial viability reasons. As the local member, I took it upon myself to intervene and called meetings with the major stakeholders to look at some solutions. We looked at the available council and state government transport options in existence and sought to fill the gaps. I thank Brisbane Transport for its cooperation in providing extra services to meet the needs of the affected students. Use of the innovative Citytrans service from Riverhills was only one of the options available to students. This service coordinates bus and rail travel and cuts 15 minutes off travel time to the city. It also relieves the burden on the Centenary Highway to some extent. I encourage all residents in this area to make use of this option.

Other railway stations along the Ipswich line will be receiving an upgrade of access and security. The Oxley Railway Station will have a ramp and a lift installed and the Corinda Railway Station will be upgraded with three new lifts. I believe that this will encourage the use of rail transport by the elderly, people with disabilities and parents with prams. Residents of Oxley and Corinda tell me that they are looking forward to improved access at these stations.

People tell me that small-scale criminal activities occurring around the Oxley Railway Station are a deterrent to its use. Shop owners at the Oxley Shopping Centre opposite complain about the increasing incidence of break-ins. The former Minister for Police, Tom Barton, was made aware of these issues. I thank the minister for his cooperation in agreeing to provide a Police Beat for the Oxley area. This will complement the existing stations at Mount Ommaney and Sherwood. It will provide country-cop style policing in Oxley and act as a deterrent to shop breakers and youth gangs that congregate around the railway station.

I firmly believe that this type of policing is the way of the future. Trained police officers are better utilised out in the community fighting crime. Time spent writing reports should be minimised through the use of qualified clerical assistants and public servants enabling police to maximise their time out of the station.

The Beattie Labor government will continue to make changes that will enhance our living conditions. As the local member for the people of Mount Ommaney, I will continue to provide a thorough representation of their views to the government of the day. Some of the practical efforts I will make during the next three years in my electorate will include the continuation of the four community consultative committees I created to keep me informed about major issues in the suburbs. These groups from all parts of the electorate will act as a sounding-board for me and provide me with feedback from their specific sector of the electorate. Consultation with youth through a youth forum to meet on a quarterly basis will ensure that I am informed about youth issues and it will enable me to address their concerns as another constituent group and not just as a market segment that is targeted at election times. I will continue to consult widely on issues raised by community members and continue to report back to them through regular newsletters and direct mail.

I will also continue to take my office to the eastern part of the electorate on a monthly basis. This enables the residents of Oxley, Corinda and Sherwood to have access without travelling to the

other side of the Centenary Highway. With the aid of a postgraduate student, I will conduct a study into public transport availability in these suburbs, which will include the examination of traffic hot spots along the Centenary Highway.

I will continue to bring the community together by promoting local community activities, consulting with community groups over major issues and ensuring that all residents are well informed about government matters that concern them. On a regular basis I will doorknock parts of the electorate to maintain a grassroots approach with individuals in the community.

Having considered the demographics of the electorate and the large proportion of non-Australian born residents in it, it is important to promote multiculturalism and racial tolerance. An ethnic community council comprising Australian born and non-Australian born residents will meet periodically to address issues that arise. With the assistance of the Minister for Women's Policy I will invite regular forums to address women's issues in the electorate.

Unemployment for the over 40s is becoming an increasing problem. I will actively promote the Labor government's policy regarding this matter as applicable to members of my community in my capacity as the patron of the Centenary and Districts Chamber of Commerce.

As the local representative of the people of the Mount Ommaney electorate, I will continue to provide thorough representation of their views to the government of the day. I look forward to continuing to work with many community groups and ethnic communities in my electorate. It is important to encourage participation in volunteer groups whose members give their free time to ensure the safety and the wellbeing of the young, the frail and the disadvantaged in our community.

I congratulate the Premier for his strong action and support in maintaining the integrity of our government and its members. As chairperson of the Members' Ethics and Parliamentary Privileges Committee, I will do everything in my power to uphold and maintain the ethical standards of members of Parliament from all political parties.

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