



Speech by

Mr P. PURCELL

MEMBER FOR BULIMBA

Hansard 3 April 2001

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mr PURCELL (Bulimba—ALP) (3.28 p.m.): I, too, would like to congratulate the Speaker on again attaining his office. I am honoured and humbled, once again, to stand here as the member for Bulimba. I would like to thank the voters of Bulimba for once again placing their faith and trust in me. I am proud to enter this, my fourth term of parliament, representing the Bulimba electorate—the best electorate in Australia! It is a great family area and a very good place to bring up a family, and there are a large number of people working very hard to keep it that way.

Many people have continually assisted me and, because of their help, have certainly made my job in this place a lot easier. Firstly, I would like to thank my campaign manager, John Shepley. John is a barrister, and I think we all know what they charge per hour. If John ever decided to bill me for his help, I would be in a lot of trouble! Throughout the entire campaign, John was there every hour, every day, to oversee everything—approve written material and do anything else that needed doing. I know that he worked late into the night running up his phone bill. I thank John very much for his help and guidance but, most of all, I thank him very much for being a good friend.

Bobby Halls was there every day after he finished his own working day, always ready and willing to do any task that he could do to help. You could not find a better mate than Bobby. Bobby has been a long-time mate, and I know that he got a lot of joy out of the great win that we had in Bulimba.

Monica Fleming and my wife, Margaret, went out every day to assist with the electoral visitor votes. Every member of this House would know what an extremely important job that is and how essential it is that a reliable and polite person is going into people's homes acting as their personal representative. The excellent job they did is reflected in the fact that I got 86.3 per cent of the electoral visitor votes—not a bad percentage at all. But we are looking for that 13.7 per cent that went missing. Next time we are aiming for 100 per cent. I thank Monica and Margaret.

I would also like to thank my friend and colleague Councillor Sharon Humphreys and her ward officer, Brenda Nolan. Sharon Humphreys is one of the most astute people I have ever had the pleasure of knowing, and her advice is always very valuable. I thank Sharon and Brenda for all their help and, most importantly, their friendship. I would like to thank my federal colleague Kevin Rudd for his support and the support of his office also during this campaign.

As all members know, branch members are the backbone and support of every member of parliament. Without the support and help of branch members, not one of us would be here today. I would like to name each branch member individually, but I have been advised that that would put everybody in this place to sleep. I will not subject them to that, but I will compromise by naming the executive members of my local branch and some of the long-term members of those branches. I extend my thanks to all my branch members, who I know will continue to work for the ALP in our area, and who will continue to make sure that it is a strong seat for the state government and that Bulimba will always return an ALP member to this place.

I will name and thank branches in alphabetical order, starting with the Bulimba branch. The president is my long-time friend Brian Daley. Brian and his wife have been friends of mine for many years. Their children have grown up with my children—they went to St Peter and Paul's together—and it

seems that we have known one another for a lifetime. As well as being branch president, Brian is also one of the mainstays in the local St Vincent de Paul Society and president of the local ambulance committee. As the saying goes, if you want to get a job done properly, ask a busy person. That is very true in Brian's case. Brian is always first to volunteer to help his neighbours, his friends and his community. On polling day he is always up bright and early and down at the Bulimba booth where he spends the entire day. As a long-time local, he knows just about every person who goes there to vote. Considering nearly 1,200 votes are cast at that booth, that is really saying something. I thank Brian and Barbara.

It would be remiss of me not to mention Shirley White, who is also a member of the Bulimba branch. Shirley and her husband, Reg, formed the Queensland Asbestos Related Disease Support Society when Reg was diagnosed with asbestos plural plaques in 1992. Their purpose is to assist families who have found themselves in the same situation. Their home is virtually a motel, with out-of-town families—and I mean out-of-town families from all over Queensland—staying there while their loved ones are in Brisbane having medical treatment. They provide counselling to sufferers and their families and produce a monthly newsletter. Besides being a full-time carer for Reg, Shirley is constantly fighting to see justice for all asbestos sufferers and a safer working place for workers. Shirley is always the first to volunteer to offer her assistance to any person in need of help. She is one of the most caring and loving people I have ever met and have the pleasure of knowing.

I would also like to thank my electorate officer, Trish Brookes. She belongs to the Bulimba branch. She is the secretary of that branch and is the longest serving electorate officer in Queensland. At election time, there are 1,001 things that have to be done, and Trish handles them very well. She has been handling them for many years and, I am sure, will continue to handle them for many more years to come.

My next branch is the Cannon Hill-Morningside branch. This branch typifies what the Labor Party is all about. The members of this branch are good, hardworking, honest battlers—the salt-of-the-earth type people: people like George Davis, Les Gray, Morrie Gemmell, Glen Stephens, Col McDougall, Ray Uhlmann, and Norma Nicholson, who have been party members and supporters all their lives. These people are the soul of the Labor Party. I must also mention Allen Snow and John Mason, who belong to this branch. These two men organise and staff the Murarrie booth single-handedly. Both of these men are institutions in Murarrie and they do an excellent job there. Modesty forbids me from bragging about my booth figures for Murarrie, but I will just say that they were in excess of 80 per cent. John and Allen tell me that they are looking for those that went missing. I thank all those people. It makes me feel proud to have their support and friendship down there at Murarrie.

The Galloways Hill branch is only a small branch, but its members are very close. They are very supportive of each other and as a result have formed close friendships. Dave Ryan, who is 76 years old and a life member of the ALP, has just stood down as branch secretary after countless years in that position. Brenda Witt has just taken over the role of secretary, and Henry Armstrong is the president. George and Delma Nicholson, who have been members of the branch for as long as I can remember, Jean Carlile and Max Faull are just some of the members of this close-knit group of friends. I know that of late Max Faull has not been well, but he would not miss a branch meeting if you paid him. I think that some of the longest branch meetings that I have ever attended have been at this branch. They get very, very involved in party policy and I can assure members that they take being a branch member of the ALP very seriously.

I must make special mention of Allen Witt, who is not only treasurer of the Galloways Hill branch but also treasurer of my EEC. He does a remarkable job there in seeing that I have enough funds to run a decent campaign. He makes sure that all the accounts are balanced and all the financial returns are in on time. I thank Allen for his help over the years.

Last but not least is the Hawthorne branch. It is difficult to know where to start with thanking the members of this branch. Ben Humphreys, the former member for Griffith and the former federal Minister for Veterans Affairs, belongs to this branch. He and his wife, Beryl, organised their family and friends for the Hawthorne booth. It is one of the best staffed, best fed, best looked after booths that you could possibly have. I do not have to worry about that booth; it is always looked after by the Humphreys, their family and their friends. I thank Ben and Beryl very much.

Jann Piasecki very ably organised the rosters and ensured that everything went to plan on election day and is one of the most capable and efficient people I know, as well as one of the nicest. I thank Jann. Barry Cosgrove was booth captain at Norman Park State School and also scrutineered. Barry has consistently worked on every state, federal and council election campaign since joining the party as a lad. You would not get many more dedicated branch members than Barry Cosgrove. He is not only dedicated to the party but also puts a lot of effort into party policy and the workings of the party. He is a real working-class bloke.

My good mates Sam Beardmore and Vonnice Morton, Loretta and Scott, Shaun, Luke McCormack, Rebecca Williams and John Currie are just a few of the people who worked so hard for

that branch on election day. I would also like to mention my good friend Shane Cowan, who gave up his time to work on polling day. His youngest daughter, Jaydon, had just come home from hospital only the day before. She has undergone numerous major operations this year and was one very sick little girl. I thank Shane very much for his help and I also thank Shane's wife, Leeanne, for lending Shane to us so often to work for the ALP and in the community. Shane and Leeanne have informed me that Jaydon has settled well into her new school and has the makings of a swimming champion. If you knew Jaydon, you would know that that is no mean feat. After winning two firsts and winning two blue ribbons in her very first swimming carnival last month, I say: go, Jaydon, go! Well done. My children and probably most of the other children in the Bulimba area at some stage—particularly those from St Peter and Paul's—would have learned to swim in the Cowan pool. So Jaydon is taking after her grandfather and her father.

It would be remiss of me not to mention Shane's nephew, Nash, who assisted with the signs, along with Steve Perry and my brother Reg, who made sure that the election signs were up on the day the election was announced and, just as importantly, were all down after the election. To them, I say: 'Thank you guys. Well done.'

I thank Patsy McDougall, who is a lovely lady and a good friend of mine, and who was up before 5 a.m. on election day making sandwiches. It is very important to feed the troops on election day. We feed any and all troops, including those from the opposition. This year it was very handy that we had only one opposition, because we normally had a few more and we have to cut a lot more sandwiches. The sandwiches are always fresh and we feed the troops very well.

Last but not least, I say a very special thank you to my own family, not only for helping on election day but for their unconditional love and support throughout the whole year. I thank my wife, Margaret, who so ably assisted Patsy in the food preparation. I thank my eldest daughter, Jenni, her husband, Craig, and my grand-daughter Madeline, and Gabrielle and her boyfriend JJ who came up from Sydney to work for the day. It is not bad going for a boyfriend to jump on a plane and come up here to work.

Mr Neil Roberts: He's frightened of dad.

Mr PURCELL: He certainly gets in my good books. I thank my sons Anthony and Daniel. They all worked on the Purcell family booth. We look after a booth like the Humphreys. Jacqueline, my second eldest daughter, could not be with us on election day. She lives in England with her husband, Mick and their young daughter. My notes say that Jacqueline is expecting her second child shortly, but she had the baby yesterday. I received a call this morning to say that she had a girl, Mia, weighing six pounds. Good on you, Jackie! I also thank my brother Reg, who finally saw the light and moved to Queensland from Sydney. Only this week he purchased a house at Morningside, right in the heart of Bulimba. That is good stuff. I could not do it without every single one of those people.

I would like to thank many special people who live and work in the Bulimba electorate. Everybody in this House has such people in their electorates. Newer members of the House, who may not have had the same level of involvement with volunteer organisations as I have had, will find out that this country would not operate at all without volunteer organisations. It would stop today, straightaway. The volunteer work that people do in our electorates makes Australia's way of life what it is. They make it a lot better for all of us.

Laurie Latham is one such person. He is the administrator of the Balmoral Uniting Community Centre. He is now in his eighties, but he still continues to work a full week helping people. He is an outstanding role model and an inspiration to us all. For many years Vilma and Lenny Ward have worked for many organisations. They now work very hard down at the Bulimba Senior Citizens Centre to ensure that the centre is an ongoing place for friendship and activities for the aged in the area.

Ernie Adsett works hard for the RSL. Each year, Ernie and I do our usual rounds of the schools to ensure that schoolchildren understand the importance of Anzac Day, and to ensure that our younger generation never forgets. Ernie Adsett was a long-term official of the Storemen and Packers Union, and a very proud member of that union.

I also thank Acting Inspector Barry Bullion and Inspector Pat Black who, along with their team at the Morningside Police Station, work so hard to ensure that the area continues to be safe and a great place to live. Seven months ago, Barry Bullion and Pat Black created the Eastern Corridor Property Team, consisting of six police officers. Those officers work in conjunction with the latest crime intelligence. The success of the team speaks for itself. In the last month alone, some 46 offenders were arrested and charged with 192 offences, including 50 drug offences. Since the new police station has been operating and extra staff have been allocated to the area under the guidance of Barry and Pat, that place has been firing. It is doing so very well. It is a job well done. My congratulations go to all our hardworking members of the police force. On behalf of every member of my electorate, I thank them very much for the work that they do. They put in a lot more than the eight hours a day that is required of them. We ask them to continue to do that, because they are doing such a great job.

At present, approximately five to six graffiti offences are reported a week and possibly 10 or 12 offences go unreported. As a community initiative, Barry Bullion and I have actively worked to set up what we call the Graffiti Busters. Constable Carl Rohweder from the Morningside Police Station and local community representatives Denis Price, Tracey Rohweder, Bill Denam, Chrissie and John Webb, Tom Rowston, Richard Taylor and Shirley White have been active participants in this organisation. Bunnings Warehouse has put its hand up, through its manager Ron Caust, to supply paint and men for the project. We have a zero tolerance for graffiti in the area. The Neighbourhood Watch groups are also very supportive, and I thank them very much.

The Port of Brisbane Authority is assisting us with the donation of a trailer and equipment. I truly thank members of the authority as, along with Bunnings, it is one of our main sponsors. The port authority put its hand up straightaway. When it became known that we were looking for a trailer, there were no ifs, buts or maybes. They did not even query the cost. We thank them very much for that.

At our next meeting we propose to have in attendance representatives from Q-Rail, Main Roads, Energex, Corrective Services, Youth and Families, and the Brisbane City Council. I hope that relevant ministers take note and ensure that their departments are well represented at our next meeting, the date of which I will inform them.

I apologise to anybody whose name I might have missed. As honourable members have heard, I do not exaggerate when I say that Bulimba is the greatest electorate that one could ever wish to represent. It is because of all of the very special people who choose to make it their home that it is such an exceptional place.

I support my colleague from Fitzroy, who spoke earlier today about the casualisation of the mining industry. It is not the only Australian industry that is being casualised. The greatest of casualisation of labour at any time in Australia's history is happening right now. The federal government has gone out of its way to ensure that labour institutions are broken down, that unions will find it very difficult to organise labour and that, if they are successful, they will be penalised through the courts and the institutions that have been set up. The casualisation of labour is one of the worst things that could possibly happen. The Howard government says that it supports families, but it gives workers no length of employment and no help in trying to support their families. The federal government is making it difficult for workers to hold a full-time job. That is very degrading.

I worked in the building industry, which has crumbled to casualisation. Like the miners, they are fighting to prevent that happening. When I first entered the building industry, 95 per cent of people in that industry were full-time employees. Now, 95 per cent are casual workers. When I first became a builder's labourer, the award provided for sacking on an hour's notice. Now you do not even get that. There is no holiday pay, sick pay, wet pay, annual leave or rostered days off. They do not want to employ you at all and they do not want to know you, because they want you to be casual. They want a pool of labour that will work cheaply. They say it will work efficiently, but it will not. What loyalty would people feel towards somebody who does not care for them? Of course, just recently the Beattie Labor Government changed the workers compensation act. Until then, many people were not even covered by workers compensation, which was one of the greatest acts passed in Australia. It covered every worker in the state, irrespective of whom they worked for, where they worked or how they were injured. They were all covered.
