



Speech by

ANITA PHILLIPS

MEMBER FOR THURINGOWA

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THURINGOWA ELECTORATE

Ms PHILLIPS (Thuringowa—ALP) (11.48 a.m.): I could not be more thrilled that my parliamentary colleagues are finally discovering this part of north Queensland. While it makes me proud to show off our wonderful twin cities, it makes me just as proud to stand in parliament and remind everyone of the Beattie Labor government's achievements in this area, contrary to the nonsense spoken by members opposite.

In my first speech to parliament, I identified three main priorities for my first term: the welfare of families and children, the sustainable economic development of the area and an enhanced lifestyle for the people who live here. I am delighted to say that, with the help of a listening government and the people of this region, we have already made major achievements in all of these areas. This is truly a government of action, not just words, as have been claimed by some.

Recently, one of my proudest moments was watching a young family move into a new house as part of the Rasmussen renewal program—a whole-of-government initiative. Ken and his wife, with their two children, have moved out of a maisonette and into an airy three-bedroom house. It has a large garden and Ken is already planting shrubs and flowering plants everywhere, which is quite a feat, as he is technically classified as blind. This family is typical of those who are part of the changes happening in Rasmussen.

This project is beginning to turn a suburb into a thriving community, with physical improvements to houses in the built environment as well as projects that will address social and other needs. This is certainly good for families, and schools in Thuringowa are now also better places to be after some very generous funding grants. In the budget, the minister announced \$1.8 million for airconditioning in schools in Thuringowa, and today we have this excellent announcement for additional funding which soon will be cooling down students at Kelso, Kirwan, Weir and Rasmussen State Schools. Gambling fund moneys are literally paving the way, with allocations for outdoor learning areas, shade covers and new computer equipment. And non-government schools like St Anthony's in Deeragun and the Good Shepherd in Rasmussen have also benefited with over \$1 million being provided for great new facilities.

Recently, I was also thrilled to learn that three outlying schools, Bohlevale, St Anthony's and Rasmussen, all have been chosen to take part in the trial run of the new preparatory year scheme. Thuringowa has widespread areas of urban sprawl, and it is wonderful that the minister has heard my pleas and seen fit to approve trials in these communities. The Beattie government has also spearheaded a campaign to safeguard the most vulnerable residents of the Twin Cities. We have established abused child trust services in the region, provided funding to groups tackling the ongoing problem of substance abuse and initiated support for the Hub program, an early intervention project that aims to help struggling families with young children.

But, as they say on television, that's not all. In the area of economic development, the future is also looking just as bright. Bio-North has been established to work with James Cook University and the Australian Institute of Marine Science. The Regional Communities Forum has been established to give people the chance to speak directly to ministers, and through the Department of Employment and Training we are helping break the unemployment cycle in the region, providing around \$730,000 in funding over the last six months. We have provided funding to begin with and persuaded the federal government to accept its responsibility for the new Douglas Arterial, which will revitalise business both in Thuringowa and Townsville. We have launched the Townsville to Cairns section of the QR Track Renewal Project. What about the fabulous developments in enhanced lifestyle that one cannot help notice everywhere one turns.

Here in Townsville all members will have been impressed by our Strand. In Thuringowa, it is skateparks at Pioneer Park and the Northern Beaches, the BMX track at Charles Moroney Park, the new \$700,000 music centre at the Northern Beaches High School and improvements to community centres. In particular, I have worked hard to see sporting opportunities for young girls improved. That is why, while our WNBL team Townsville Fire is not in my electorate, I helped to get assistance for the team. The whole community was thrilled when the Beattie government allocated funds for the upgrade of the Murray Stadium. Just recently I was privileged to be asked to chair an exciting new committee that aims to improve public transport in the Twin Cities, particularly for people with limited mobility who may otherwise be isolated in their homes, with no social outlets.

All in all, the future is looking pretty good up here in the north. While the people and the sunshine have a lot to do with that, I am proud to say that I am a member of a government that has also played its part. If we keep listening, it can only get better.