



Speech by

CHRISTINE SMITH

MEMBER FOR BURLEIGH

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DAYLIGHT SAVING

Mrs SMITH (Burleigh—ALP) (12.15 p.m.): Once again it is that time of the year, the approach of summer, when everybody gets hot under the collar and begins arguing about daylight saving, which starts in New South Wales this weekend. Since the referendum in 1992, at which daylight saving was soundly defeated, public opinion has shifted very little. The latest polling on the subject of daylight saving showed that support at the border of New South Wales and Queensland is at 67 per cent and falls steadily away as we move north, falling to 50 per cent in Ipswich and on the Sunshine Coast, and considerably lower the further north we go. A Queensland-wide survey in 1995 could show only a slight swing against daylight saving. A 1999 Gold Coast survey could only raise a two-thirds support figure amongst the local population. This represents no change from the 67 per cent yes vote in 1992. Very few people are concerned by this issue. Yes, it is true that the majority of Gold Coasters do want daylight saving, but they do not rate it as important. Most people are sensibly more concerned about education, health and jobs.

Peter Beattie clearly said before the last election that there would be no move to daylight saving. Only the most determined self-deceiver could claim that Mr Beattie had no mandate for every promise he made prior to the 2001 election. Daylight saving is inappropriate for Queensland. It was a scheme originally designed by high-latitude nations to suit their gloriously mild summer days and strongly contrasting seasonal daylight variations. Queensland does not fall into this category. Queensland is situated between 30 and 10 degrees south and consequently has a hot, humid climate and limited seasonal daylight variation. Because of this, daylight saving would be of almost no benefit to the state overall and would actually impose hardship on large sections of it.

Before the pro daylight savers start, I would like to make it clear that I am not concerned with fading curtains and cows not giving milk, but I am concerned about small children in north and western Queensland catching school buses in the dark—but then I am a sucker for protecting small children and encouraging their education. Anyone who first discovered that north Queensland existed when they visited Townsville last month should check with my colleagues from the north as to how daylight saving would cause hardship in their areas. The truth is that the main concern about daylight saving in my electorate is for those who live or work or who have children who attend school across the border. Then there is significant disruption to people's way of life and it does cause a problem. Some businesses that deal with southern states report difficulties also. Many people have begun to lobby in favour of dividing Queensland into two zones, offering this as a solution to the problem. There is an argument to be made in favour of two time zones for Queensland. However, this would cause as many problems as it would solve. There is still a difficulty for people living at the border. It will simply be a different border than the one which causes the current difficulty.

I am afraid that dividing Queensland will serve to cause not only a time but also a psychological and emotional divide. One thing we do not need to encourage is an 'us and them' status between urban Queensland and country Queensland. This very Smart State has a great deal to be proud of. South-east Queensland is not part of New South Wales and we do not want to become part of it. We need to maintain our own identity. This is a state with a proud tradition. We need to increase unity, not discourage it. Over recent years, many businesses who are concerned with this issue have opted to shift their operating hours to line up with southern states. Last year, some Gold Coast businesses decided to give adjusted business hours an official trial and opened their doors an hour earlier during

Australia's daylight saving months. I think this is a brilliant idea. For those for whom it is more convenient to operate on the same time zone as southern states it is an excellent solution. It has the support of this government. I would encourage all chambers of commerce to consider this as a possible solution to some of their difficulties with daylight saving.

I have no intention of downplaying the concerns of people on this issue. I know that to some people it does cause concern and frustration but, with the utmost respect for their feelings, I must maintain my position against daylight saving. I firmly believe it will not be in Queensland's best interests and that the majority of Queenslanders do not want it.
