



Speech by

Dr DAVID WATSON

MEMBER FOR MOGGILL

Hansard 21 June 2002

QUEENSLAND BY INVITATION

Dr WATSON (Moggill—Lib) (2.48 p.m.): Earlier today I had the pleasure of presenting copies of the publication *Queensland by Invitation* to two immensely talented and charming constituents, Ms Sue Gough of Brookfield and Mrs Dorothy Singe of Kenmore. I was pleased that the Premier was also able to drop by for a few minutes to be with us and thank him for so doing.

As members may recall, the Premier invited 400 Queenslanders from all walks of life to submit their view of Queensland—words or pictures that capture the spirit and the heart of this state. One hundred of the participants' picture and word combinations were selected for inclusion in the publication. Sue Gough and Dorothy Singe were two of those 100.

Sue Gough, formerly a theatre critic, chose Queensland's most thriving cultural community and the oldest continuously operating theatre company in Australia, Brisbane's La Boite Theatre. It is the only functioning theatre in the round in Australia and stages Australian works and aims to encourage debate. Sue told me that she chose La Boite because it was no longer going to be viable in its present location with the development of the Lang Park stadium—the noise there will be simply too great. At the time this was chosen there was some concern as to whether La Boite would be able to continue in another location.

Coincidentally, Dorothy Singe also chose a theatre as a topic—the Empire Theatre in Toowoomba, which was built in 1911.

Mr Copeland: A beautiful theatre; a fantastic theatre.

Dr WATSON: The member for Cunningham is right. It is a beautiful theatre.

Mr Shine: We built it.

Dr WATSON: I also acknowledge the comments of the member for Toowoomba North. At the time, it catered for touring theatrical productions and local concerts. It was destroyed by fire in 1933, rebuilt in 1935, closed in 1970 and then acquired by the Toowoomba City Council in 1993. It was restored and now operates as a professional regional theatre. Dorothy's husband, Jack, was one of the people engaged to restore the theatre. Jack had a distinguished record in the ABC.

The Empire Theatre is the only restored live theatre in Queensland. It reopened in 1997, seats 1,567 and is the largest regional theatre in Australia. The theatre has served the cultural needs of the Darling Downs for 80 years and promises to continue to do so far into the future.

Sue and Dorothy are also very well-known writers, with Sue writing a number of novels and Dorothy writing short stories. In fact, she has been instrumental in a short story produced in my area just recently. It was wonderful having Sue and Dorothy at Parliament House today and I congratulate both of them on their very fine contributions.