



Speech by

**BONNY BARRY**

**MEMBER FOR ASPLEY**

---

Hansard 14 October 2003

### **ARTS LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

**Ms BARRY** (Aspley—ALP) (4.19 p.m.): It gives me great pleasure to support the Arts Legislation Amendment Bill 2003. The objective of the bill is to implement the recommendations of the review of five separate acts that provide for the administration of Queensland's five cultural statutory authorities—the Queensland Museum, the Queensland Art Gallery, the State Library, the Queensland Performing Arts Trust and the Queensland Theatre Company.

Arts Queensland recently undertook a review of the acts and it had consultation with each of these authorities and their boards. The review occurred within the context of Creative Queensland, the whole-of-government cultural policy 2002, which also followed extensive community consultations. The policy released in October 2002 outlined the Beattie government's commitment to an investment in people, places, collections, traditions and cultural enterprises. I do not think it can be said any better than in the introduction to the policy itself from the Premier and the minister in which they say—

The Queensland Government Cultural Policy 2002, Creative Queensland, is the first whole-of-Government policy which sets the future directions for delivering a vision for a culturally dynamic State. Creative Queensland recognises that cultural development is a key component of the Smart State through its contribution to the social and economic wellbeing of Queenslanders. It is a commitment to a cultural environment which enlivens us as individuals and enriches our communities.

This policy is a commitment to the importance of arts and culture in our society.

The bill seeks to give clear guiding principles to those statutory authorities in the following terms. It gives them direction that we should affirm and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, that there should be a responsiveness to the needs of communities in regional and outer metropolitan areas, that children and young people should be supported in their contribution and appreciation of art and culture, that diverse audiences should be developed, that opportunities should be developed for international collaboration for cultural exports, especially in the Asia-Pacific region, that the content should be relevant to Queensland and should be promoted and presented that way, and that capabilities for lifelong learning should be developed.

In particular, I wish to speak a little about the government's commitment to young people and children as consumers. It would not surprise members—I have said this before in the House—that there are over 6,000 young people and children within the electorate of Aspley. I know that is mirrored across the 89 electorates in the state. The government has within its Creative Queensland policy a policy on children and young people in which we state very clearly that we are committed to supporting children and young people as youth arts participants, as young artists, and as consumers of arts and cultural products and services.

I like to think, as a mother of four discerning children, that I work really hard as a parent to have them think about what it is that they watch. I have to confess that I have failed, because recently I came home early on a student-free day and tried to talk to my teenage sons, whom I think are pretty clever—I was talking about their day and my day—only to be told, 'Mum, would you please sit down and be quiet. We are watching *Judge Judy*.' I realised how important it was that we should work closely—

**A government member:** They were getting legal advice.

**Ms BARRY:** Thank you; I did not appreciate that they were getting legal advice. That very much brought home to me the view that it is important that we work with our children to be discerning

consumers of media. It was after that particular incident that I took the opportunity to represent the minister at a Queensland University of Technology function in which they hosted the Kids on Screen program, an interactive media event for children, parents, teachers and film makers. It was a children's program that drew on international award-winning children's television and film and combined their screening with a number of educational activities. The Kids on Screen program gave children the opportunity to speak face to face with television industry managers and producers, telling them what it is that they want to see on the small screen.

There was an industry panel that facilitated discussions on the current issues and trends in children's television production, a workshop, and a case study that basically looked at pitching a hypothetical program for children to national and international markets. The Kids on Screen program highlighted the influence that the media has on the lives of our children and young people. It was attended by over 600 children. The Kids on Screen program complemented and extended the application of the arts syllabus years 1 to 10 media curriculum that is currently being implemented in our Queensland schools. It was an inaugural event that was initiated by the late Cassandra Weddell, who was instrumental in bringing on the Kids on Screen program—

**Mr Foley:** She made a terrific contribution.

**Ms BARRY:** She made a tremendous contribution. Cassandra was a strong advocate for the development and enhancement of children's learning through the use of media. I am certainly now watching very closely what my children watch on television. However, I still cannot get rid of *Dragon Slayer* of a morning.

The Creative Queensland Cultural Policy 2002 has as its base the desire to build a number of initiatives for our young people, that is, by creating industry pathways that will assist young people's transition from school to work. It includes mentoring, career support, industry based learning and paid work experience for young artists. Anyone who regularly visits, as all honourable members would, local high schools will see the talent and work being undertaken by students and teachers in media arts in our schools. The policy also seeks to develop community pathways for young children and people, with opportunities to plan, manage and deliver their own cultural events and activities.

This legislation further strengthens what is the minister's, the government's and the parliament's role in promoting and providing for arts and culture in Queensland. Similar to the member for Cunningham, I recently had the opportunity to launch a lovely piece of literature within my electorate. I recently had the pleasure of launching the ninth book of poems and prose from the Geebung Writers Group in north Brisbane, called *Literary All Sorts*. Members can imagine my pleasure when I read the foreword by the member for Nudgee, Neil Roberts—

**Mr Foley:** A fine haiku poet himself.

**Ms BARRY:** That is right; he is. It is really scary that I now know what a haiku is. In that book was his first poem, written in 1980, called *Nan's House*. The member for Nudgee has done some fantastic things in this House—things of which he can be very proud in terms of his contribution to policy and legislation. But I do not think that I have ever seen him quite so pleased as when he said to me, 'Have you read my poem?' and I said to him, 'Yes, and I enjoyed it.' I thoroughly commend to everyone *Literary All Sorts*, prose and poetry by Geebung Writers, if for nothing else than *Nan's House* by the member for Nudgee.

**Mr Poole:** He used to be a jockey, too.

**Mr Mickel:** He is the world's tallest jockey as well as a poet.

**Ms BARRY:** Sorry?

**Mr Hayward:** He is the world's tallest jockey.

**Ms BARRY:** I did say that I looked up to him, and everybody knew what I was talking about.

This legislation reinforces the minister's and the government's commitment to arts and culture as its core business—core business for us as a government and as a community. That is certainly evidenced now by the quality of the art that we see in our public buildings and certainly by the attention that such art receives. Anybody who has been to any of the buildings opened as part of the \$2.6 billion rebuilding of the Queensland public health system will have taken real pleasure from the work on display in those fine public buildings. Such is the government's commitment to public art that it is beginning to find its way into the private sector.

I had great pleasure in August also of being with the Minister for the Arts when he unveiled a large bronze statue by Aurukun artist Garry Namponan at Westfield's new shopping centre at North Lakes, which is north of the Aspley electorate. It was a private commission by Westfield, because it understands the value of commissioning high-quality artworks for its shopping centres. Garry is the first Aurukun artist to be commissioned by a commercial client for a large-scale public work. The artwork, called *Punchiy Kor*, is a sculptural water feature and consists of four bronze turtles, the largest of which is 2.4 metres long, and five bronze brolgas, his grandmother's totem. I think Garry was a delighted, as

the minister and I were, to see a bunch of north side children jumping all over the turtle and the brolgas. I think the best place for art like that is in the middle of a shopping centre, where kids can enjoy it.

This commission is further evidence of the success of the Queensland government's Reconciliation Art Project in increasing opportunities for remote artists such as Garry Namponan. I wanted to say how much I enjoyed seeing the commissioning of such public art. It is indeed a testament to the success of the Art Built-In policy. I just want to say a few words because of the concern of the member for Cunningham about the Minister for the Arts being involved to that degree with respect to consultation about policy. I have to say that in my first term in parliament I do not think that I have ever heard so much poetry or sung so much music ever in my life.

**A government member** interjected.

**Ms BARRY:** Yes, I did participate as a member of the *Herd of Cats* for the Cerebral Palsy League as a doo-wop girl. I think it was one of my only public appearances, but it was great. I have to say that I am much richer for the experience.

I am a woman who considered that the best kind of written work was a shopping list that had all the items ticked off. However, I confess to now no longer skipping the forewords in books. I actually take time to read the poetry that the author adds in there because not only am I feeling guilty because the Minister for the Arts would expect me to read the foreword but it is indeed a window to the soul of the author. I have begun to truly appreciate it.

The legislation does strengthen our role. It provides for leadership by the Minister for the Arts. This minister in particular has demonstrated that a Minister for the Arts can be a powerful and positive change agent and that change can be achieved through a minister who is passionate about the arts in Queensland and that change can be positive and lasting. It certainly demonstrates how important the arts and culture are to our society in Queensland. It is smart legislation. It is pleasing legislation. I congratulate the minister. I commend the bill to the House.