



Speech by

Jann Stuckey

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

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ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Mrs STUCKEY (Currumbin—Lib) (4.54 pm): As I stand here in this House delivering my address-in-reply speech to the 52nd Parliament of Queensland as the Liberal state member for Currumbin, I wish to place on record the honour and privilege the people of Currumbin have bestowed upon me to represent them in this place. Once again they have invested their trust in me. I pledge my loyalty to this parliament and to the people of Currumbin, to whom I am truly grateful and deeply humbled.

Each of the 89 members in this House, through election to this hallowed institution, have an important duty to discharge with honesty, integrity and respect the conventions that underpin Queensland's state parliament.

The Premier has been given a clear mandate to govern. In accepting this role, he has accepted the responsibility to govern all Queenslanders equally in a bipartisan way, regardless of party persuasions, to deliver for all in this great state and to not show either favour or neglect of basic services for communities in need.

In my first speech in 2004 I spoke of my belief that actions speak louder than words. Spin, grin and talkfests are a complete waste of time and money if there is an absence of action taken to rectify problems and to implement findings. Also a complete waste of time and money are huge spending campaigns that drown voters with mail that clogs their letter boxes, make false claims on issues and pester people in their homes with unappreciated phone calls asking for votes right up to election eve.

Having lived and raised a family in Currumbin Waters for almost 20 years, I have a firm grasp on local issues. Working actively on community projects and initiatives over the years, I know the challenges that lie ahead for our fast-growing population. Through regular information booths, attending meetings, tabling petitions and hosting public forums, I hear first-hand what matters most to residents. High and regular levels of community activity throughout the electorate resonated in my favour with voters in Currumbin re-electing me for a second term. Of the 30,025 enrolled constituents in Currumbin, 26,611 constituents voted, which equates to 88.63 per cent.

This win could not have happened without the support of a small army of individuals. May I apologise now for those I omit to mention. Sincere thanks go first to my campaign team, many of whom came on board because of issues I assisted them with. We might not have had much money, but we had an unswerving desire to keep Currumbin in Liberal hands. I thank Anne Phillips, Anne and Robert Wright, Tony Shield, John Vanzino, Peter Barrett, Luke Barnes and the Tweed Young Liberals, Anthony Robbie, Margaret May, the federal member for McPherson and her husband David for their wisdom, advice and many hours of assistance. I will be eternally grateful.

I also thank Alan Campigli, Don McHenry and Arthur Elliott, who were such willing helpers. Truck drivers Bob Rothwell and Ray Farrow, Linda Stevens, John Nettleton, Pat Hoban and Lois Helmick, and Ruth and Keith Fleming all battled the elements in rain or shine to garner votes for me. To our office volunteers, Lauren Hertel and Paul Smith, you are absolute champions. Thankyous also go to Sue Boyce,

president of the Liberal Women's Council, for friendship and much-needed financial support. I would like to mention Bob Quinn and thank him for his guidance and wise counsel during the 51st Parliament.

I would also like to mention my dad.

Honourable members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jones): Order!

Mrs STUCKEY: Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like some respect when I speak about my father.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Jones): Order! I call honourable members to order.

Mrs STUCKEY: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Despite being in their mid-80s, my dad, World War II air force veteran Eric Coleman, and my wonderful stepmother, Mazie, were actively involved in pre-polling and booth work on election day. I spoke of my father in 2004 and the huge role that he played in my entry into politics in the Liberal Party. My two sisters and dear friends the Hertel family were there on the hustings, too. Olivia and Edward, our two amazing kids, have grown into well-adjusted, hardworking adults and they know that by going the extra mile and persisting the sky is the limit.

Bev Malseed in my electorate office has, over the past two years, built up strong relationships with constituents and handled their issues in a pleasant, professional and efficient manner. Bev was on a month's leave and overseas for virtually all of the election period but, through her dedicated attention to constituent issues, we have a strong foundation of trust amongst constituents. Angela Owen-Taylor deserves a medal for literally running the electorate office single-handedly with help from volunteers against a barrage of Beattie propaganda. She also had to deal with countless complaints from people angry about the amount of junk mail stuffed daily in their letterboxes.

With regard to my husband of 30 years, Richard, I really struggle to find adequate words to communicate my sentiments and what he really means to me. His belief in me and the desire to see me not only achieve my goals and dreams but also the hopes and aspirations of others, especially those with special needs, is a constant source of energy and inspiration.

First speeches by members in a new parliament provide a genuine occasion for them to highlight the attributes, demographics and also the problems experienced in their regions. Speeches provide a postcard glimpse of other areas of the state, enabling us all to better understand the various characteristics that define each other's region, along with the range of issues that residents face. I will do my best to cover a good percentage of these in the time allocated to me.

Let me introduce honourable members to Currumbin, an exquisitely beautiful 146 square kilometres of beaches, valleys and rainforests. Currumbin really is breathtaking with her natural beauty and nostalgic history—a history that locals are prepared to protect fiercely. As the southern gateway to Queensland, bordering New South Wales, Currumbin is a world-renowned tourist destination for our stunning beaches which play host to surfing titles and are the location of the famous Coolangatta Gold ironman races. We are lucky to have lively Neighbourhood Watches, Lions, Lionesses, Rotary and general community groups and volunteers spread throughout the electorate, all contributing greatly to the social fabric, health and wellbeing of our area. Our two chambers of commerce, the Southern Gold Coast and Creek to Creek, chaired by presidents Barry McNamara and Darren Mackintosh respectively, are active on behalf of our business sectors.

One of the Gold Coast's first tourist attractions, the tranquil oasis Currumbin Wildlife Sanctuary, is also nestled in our midst. We are blessed to have such a magnificent parcel of protected parkland in our electorate. Landslides caused by heavy rains on 30 June 2005 caused several hundred thousand dollars worth of damage to the property and to several homes on Currumbin Hill. To date, neither the sanctuary nor the affected residents have received much help from the state government. An absence of funding to assist with park maintenance reeks of favouritism, as another fauna park nearby receives considerable funding from this government. CEO Michelle Monsour and her dedicated team have performed wonders in re-establishing and repositioning this remarkable attraction, and it is a real pity the government cannot see it as worthy of assistance.

Coolangatta airport is a major employer in our region with tourism providing significant employment. Bumper numbers of passengers are arriving at our terminal and enjoying the many attractions our area has to offer. To maximise the opportunities that these visitors will bring, the M1 requires upgrading sooner rather than later and the rail line to Coolangatta must be fast-tracked sooner than 2025. Like many other areas, we are experiencing growing pains and require better infrastructure and transport services with some newer suburbs like Lakewoods in Elanora devoid of any public transport services at all.

Affordable housing continues to be a problem across the Gold Coast and the number of homeless people is escalating at an alarming rate. Blair Athol Crisis Accommodation at Bilinga turns away over 5,000 individuals a year. For the past 17 years manager extraordinaire Liz Fritz and her staff have struggled with

no funding increases. To her delight, Liz was advised a few months ago that the Minister for Communities had supported a submission from a consortium of agencies headed by Blair Athol in favour of more than half a million dollars in funding to assist them in their efforts to provide services under the banner of HOST. Considering the huge demand for low-cost housing, I, together with many residents, am amazed that the government is building new one-bedroom units right on the Gold Coast Highway in prime real estate when there could be so much better value and more accommodation provided even two streets away.

As I have previously mentioned, Currumbin's beaches are world famous and are patrolled by some of the nation's finest and oldest surf-lifesaving clubs. Point Danger branch has 11 clubs, the majority of which are located in my electorate. Surf Life Saving Queensland has battled unsuccessfully for an increase in funding to continue its vital efforts for many years. With the federal government making 2007 the Year of the Lifesaver, I am pleased to see the state government finally lift its game by boosting funding after a decade of inaction. Recognising the role our volunteer lifesavers play, not to mention their immeasurable contribution to tourism dollars, in 2005 I implemented an annual award with the prize of a surf rescue board for all clubs in the Point Danger branch. Tugun won the first year and last year Pacific was the victor.

Educational needs are a priority, with seven primary schools, a brand spanking new special school and two large high schools in our area. It is recognised that youth hold the key to the future. By maintaining close contact with all of the schools in Currumbin, I am able to follow their progress, initiatives and achievements.

Together we have achieved much in Currumbin during the 2½ years between elections, and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the victories that were won by the community with my full support and commitment. The citizens of Currumbin are known as a passionate lot and have been vocal on a number of issues. This government, under considerable duress, did listen and respond to some of these and the people of Currumbin are grateful for this. I have no problem in thanking the government for taking positive actions and I am on record in this House as having done so on a number of occasions. However, the fact remains that most of the issues the government did respond to favourably only came about because of intense public pressure.

By far the biggest issue for Currumbin prior to the last election was the long-awaited, much-promised Tugun bypass western route, a project that has sorely tested the patience of residents for more than a decade. Only days before the election on 7 February 2004 the entire Currumbin electorate received a letter from the Premier that tossed out the preferred route and ripped people's homes out from underneath them. His direct mail letter said—

Only my government has a solution for the Tugun bypass. We will fix this issue once and for all.

...

We have identified a new eastern corridor including land within Gold Coast Airport as the alternative to the western (C4) option scuttled by New South Wales. This corridor will require the resumption of 14 houses on the eastern edge of the airport.

The public outcry was deafening and, together with federal member Margaret May, I lobbied hard on behalf of the people of Bilinga and Tugun. Within two months of being elected, I met with the Queensland Minister for Transport, the NSW member for Tweed and the New South Wales opposition leader with a message from residents that any route other than the C4 was not negotiable. The federal government flexed its muscle over its funding promise and, thankfully, the Queensland government was finally able to negotiate the go-ahead with a very reluctant New South Wales.

My Labor opponent in the recent election has accused me of taking credit for things the government did. My involvement is there in black and white and without it we may well be suffering the proposed B4 route the Premier tried to impose. Incredulous during this campaign was the threat that only my Labor opponent would deliver this piece of infrastructure. He used fear tactics stating that the Tugun bypass was at risk of being stopped if conservatives won government. Additionally, he was boasting to the electorate that he had played a part in the Tugun bypass, yet I fail to find any reference to him on this important subject prior to his preselection a few months before the election. Worse was that his brochures spelt the suburb of Tugun incorrectly.

Queensland's only six-star rated EnviroDevelopment accredited project, the Ecovillage, was officially opened on 6 December 2005. Consisting of 144 lots on a 110-hectare site, this highly sustainable residential development fits ideally in the picturesque Currumbin Valley. With World Heritage rainforests providing a lush backdrop, the company behind this project, Landmatters, is to be congratulated on its vision, which is to inspire awareness of sustainable living and development practices.

A wonderful addition to the Currumbin community is the new state-of-the-art special school located in Currumbin Waters. Parents, teachers and students relocated seamlessly from their previous home atop Kirra Hill at the beginning of term 3 last year and are building strong links with the local businesses, groups

and citizens. Jointly funded by both state and federal governments, the school was officially opened by the minister on Tuesday, 21 November.

Jan Derbidge and the Save Kirra Hill Committee are some of the most passionate lobbyists you will ever meet. Believe me, they are champions. Numerous advocates of this group attended the school many moons ago and have cherished memories they want to see preserved and protected. With help from my office, they embarked down the arduous task of applying for heritage listing in 2004.

Knocked back once, they are determined to continue their push for the original school building to be listed. I have already congratulated the government for generously donating the site of the old primary school to the community on 8 February 2005 so that Kirra Hill will be preserved for public use. Now that the special school has moved to its new location it is important that the government honour its promise and gazette the land to council for care.

Fulfilling a pledge I made at the last election to engage in thorough community consultation, the following groups have flourished. Fix Currumbin Creek Committee chairman, Brad Smith, has been an enormous asset to the Gold Coast City Council with regard to dredging appropriate channels in the mouth of Currumbin Creek. The Currumbin Creek stakeholder group was formed in response to residents' concerns about traffic congestion and safety issues along this state government controlled road.

Law and order issues have flared up on a number of occasions. However, a range of police and community initiatives has seen more harmony in our suburbs. The Eleonora Police Beat became officially operational on 3 May 2005. As a result of several public forums, the Palm Beach Community Consultative Committee was re-formed, Southern Alliance was tasked to the area and a youth group has formed due to the persistence of students Elyse McNeill and Ella Horton. Early in 2006 I instigated Youth Community Spirit Awards to recognise young people who have, through their actions, delivered benefits to our community. A petition of almost 5,000 signatures resulted in Palm Beach Police Station opening its doors during the day on weekends. Our region would benefit further from the school based police officer program.

The Tweed sand bypass project has, since its operations began, pumped over 5,000 million cubic metres of sand onto our southern beaches resulting in the loss of nine surf breaks. Competition for remaining breaks is fierce. A group of surfing and beach nourishment stakeholders formed Guardians of the Points. Mena Tsikleas and Phil Arnott are to be congratulated for their commitment to boosting education programs and seeking to improve recreational amenities.

Tugun is to be the location of a large billion-dollar desalination plant that has been rushed forward for completion by November 2008. An increasing number of residents have raised concerns as to the cost, the energy sources, the environmental impact on land and at sea, the effect on their lifestyles and the reduced property values. There is no question that we must secure our water future and desalination is a method worth considering. However, our community deserves answers.

A major attraction to the Currumbin area away from our golden beaches are our lush valleys in Currumbin and Tallebudgera. To their merit they have until recent times resisted the urban creep. The South-East Queensland Regional Plan announced by Terry Mackenroth prior to retiring from parliament in 2005 gave the impression that our valleys were protected from high-density developments. Nothing could be further from the truth. It is fact that Mr Mackenroth sits on the board of the Devine Group that plans to build a 530 house high-density hideaway development in an area defined as outside the urban footprint. My opponent decided to use this sensitive issue for Currumbin Valley residents as a political football in the last few days of the election promising a call-in if Labor won. Talk about blackmail! Well he lost and the new minister, to his credit, has called the project in. Unfortunately, the project was given the go-ahead. The Premier did state that he would not allow the South-East Regional Plan to be compromised. All was to no avail. It has turned out that the whole exercise was nothing more than a cruel hoax exposing the environmental credentials of the Labor Party as a complete and utter sham.

Here in this House today, in these formal circumstances, I once again pledge my unequivocal commitment that I will continue to represent all of the residents of Currumbin boldly, truthfully, proudly and in a proactive manner to make sure we get a reasonable deal. I thank residents for once again placing their faith in me, for withstanding a massive spending campaign from Labor and for sending them a message that Currumbin cannot be bought.

As members have heard, it has been a busy 2½ years in Currumbin and I have loved every minute of it. I will continue to recognise this government when it responds in a positive manner to resolve issues that fall under their jurisdiction. In return, together with the people of Currumbin, we expect this government to serve us as it does the rest of this great state, fairly and honestly.