



Speech by

Peta-Kaye Croft

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

Hansard Tuesday, 6 February 2007

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

Ms CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (4.20 pm): It is an honour to stand in this place once again as a member of the 52nd Parliament. Indeed, it is an amazing experience. Even more so, to represent the people of Broadwater for the third time is an opportunity bestowed upon me for which I am very grateful. The Broadwater electorate is traditionally not considered Labor. In the last election, the Labor vote increased again due to hard work, grassroots campaigning and strong leadership demonstrated by the Premier and the Deputy Premier. The Gold Coast Labor team is also strong in its commitment to working to get the best results for the Gold Coast.

The Gold Coast is a very different place from what it was some six years ago. The estimated population of the region is now more than 482,000, with growth expected to continue over the next two decades. The number of residents is forecast to rise to about 719,000 in 2026. The state government's funding injections have kept the momentum of success going for the Gold Coast—funding for infrastructure projects such as the Gold Coast Convention Centre and the new Skilled Park Stadium at Robina, increased funding for tourism and established educational facilities such as Griffith University to create a dental school to support vital research and to provide more medical places, and funding for community renewal projects that help build safer and supported communities.

No doubt, every member in this House has many stories to tell about the campaign that they endured in the lead-up to the election date of 9 September. A campaign experience is one that could provide a plot for a fascinating play. Indeed, there was drama, intrigue and suspense. Therefore, the Broadwater cast is indeed worthy of high recognition. My campaign team was unrelenting in its commitment to me, my re-election and to the party. My team worked long hours and often under extreme pressure to meet deadlines and requests. Each member of my team brought different skills and abilities. Each member harmonised to develop into a great team of which I am extremely grateful and proud.

To Matt Rocks, my organiser who has worked on my campaign twice now and who helped to deliver the outstanding result of an increased margin, I give a huge thank you. He was as tough as an organiser should be, but he knew what needed to be done and he did it. To my fantastic staff, Sam Wilson and Christie Turner and to Robert Hough, Sandra Leggeri, Nina Watson and Bob Brown, thank you for your hard work, undeniable loyalty and individual efforts in this campaign. I need to make special mention of my campaign manager, Mr Rana Watson. Rana displayed unquestioning dedication to my campaign. A campaign for Broadwater requires extensive engagement with the community and Rana was there with me every step of the way—meeting at community stalls, street stalls, mobile offices and meetings. Rana has gained huge experience from his role as campaign manager and there is no doubt his willingness and energy to work so hard for the community, which was demonstrated during this time and over the many years he has spent as a resident of the electorate, is excellent preparation for his candidacy for Fadden. Rana will make a fantastic representative for the people of Fadden in the federal parliament and I wish him well in his efforts.

The Broadwater branch of the ALP is strong in its commitment to the party and the community. The branch is diverse in its membership and each member has its own way of supporting me. To the Broadwater branch members, thank you for your support and your assistance. To the holders of degrees in

folding, enveloping and letterboxing, I give a big thank you. I would also like to mention my union, the Liquor, Hospitality and Miscellaneous Workers Union, and its secretary, Ron Monaghan, and thank them very much for their support. There were many people who assisted on election day at polling booths. It was indeed a big day and the result of retaining Broadwater was assisted by those people who offered their help and support at polling booths. These people are not members of the party. Some had never worked on an election campaign before in their lives, but they volunteered to help me and the campaign team. For that I am truly thankful.

Campaigns, election days and the ongoing work for a pollie indeed ensures a busy schedule that can be demanding on all of us, but equally so on our families and friends. To my partner, Garry, whose humour ensures that I always see the lighter side of life and whose generosity always makes me smile, I say a huge thank you for supporting me as I continue to do what I enjoy. I would like to thank my father, Owen, who is in a nursing home in Townsville. He has followed my parliamentary career with great interest. Dad calls me to get an update on how things are going for me and he is always forthcoming with good advice and support. But I will always be thankful to my mother for an upbringing that was influenced by a strong commitment to social justice. Sometimes it is challenging to resolve issues for residents without relinquishing some portion of your own personal beliefs. I found that being a parliamentarian does not always allow for one's true beliefs and thoughts to be exposed. It is my mother who has always encouraged the need to be compassionate. Compassion encourages us to reach out beyond our fears. Compassion can indeed influence one's decisions and actions greatly.

I understand that life can present many challenges. Over the past six years I have met people who have faced great disadvantage and despair. Indeed, I have learned a lot about the diversity of the people whom I represent in my electorate. I have met many people who work so hard in the community. Their efforts are remarkable and inspiring. My personal commitment is to continue to give compassion in my efforts and to continue to work with the government and my colleagues to address the tough issues of mental health, the disadvantages faced by people with disabilities, and the great need for more affordable housing. My commitment remains to be accessible to residents and to be proactive in working with community groups to continue to improve the area in which we live.

During the last term I was delighted to have worked as the secretary on the founding committee of Radio Lollipop—a radio station for sick children at the Gold Coast Hospital. A new committee has since been elected and I will be pleased to continue a close association with this fantastic bunch of volunteers. I will next focus my energy as an invited member of the established Titans Community Fund Board, which is chaired by the federal member, Margaret May. The committee is dedicated to supporting the Gold Coast community through its association with its new NRL team, the Gold Coast Titans.

Engaging with people at my street stalls and mobile office has afforded me an opportunity to learn so much about people—about how people feel about certain issues and the direction of my local area. With many people choosing to move to the fast-growing Broadwater electorate, it is critical that the government moves to improve infrastructure in advance of that population growth. Road and energy infrastructure are key issues that have been raised by residents. The Beattie government has demonstrated its commitment to preparing the Gold Coast for the intensive growth rate that it faces. The Beattie government will spend \$626 million over the next three years on state controlled roads on the Gold Coast. An amount of \$28.25 million has been earmarked for the duplication of that section of Hope Island Road between Santa Barbara Road and Lae Drive at a total cost of \$93 million and the completion of duplication works of Hope Island Road between Oxenford and Santa Barbara Road at a total cost of \$18.99 million. I look forward to assisting the member for Gaven to turn the sod to mark the beginning of some of that construction. This road is indeed in need of upgrading. Many residents have raised their concerns about it with me. I am pleased that construction of the first stage of a larger plan will begin this year.

Energex is investing \$115 million in this current financial year for a range of projects that will benefit the Gold Coast, including significant upgrades of infrastructure at Hope Island and Hollywell to ensure that the system copes with the new residential and commercial developments in the area.

Supporting local schools in the Broadwater electorate is one of my top priorities. The Beattie government will provide \$4.47 million to 70 schools on the Gold Coast as part of its \$50 million School Community Development Fund, which means that the funds will be allocated by the local school communities to projects that are important and to priorities to creating a better learning environment.

To ensure children attending school for the first time get off to a good start—and we all know that the new prep year has begun this year—I was delighted to be at the Labrador Primary School recently to present prep year students with their commemorative cap and water bottle. Coombabah State School's major resource centre upgrade to support the ICT initiatives will also be soon completed at a cost of \$838,000.

The Beattie government has provided \$532,000 to complete the redevelopment of the Hollywell fire station. The Paradise Point Bowls Club, the Runaway Bay Junior Rugby League Football Club and the Dodgers Touch Club have all received funding for improvements to their facilities.

The Broadwater electorate on the Gold Coast is a pleasant place to live, work and play and, together with its people and the Beattie government, I will continue to work towards improving the infrastructure services offered in the area. I look forward to informing and consulting with the community about legislative changes and the many Beattie government initiatives that will be introduced. I look forward in this House to representing their views, the concerns and feedback I receive.