



Speech by

## Hon. Peter Lawlor

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

Hansard Wednesday, 20 May 2009

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### ADDRESS-IN-REPLY

**Hon. PJ LAWLOR** (Southport—ALP) (Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading) (8.55 pm): Firstly I congratulate the member for Logan on his election as Speaker of the parliament. As other members have mentioned, he has brought new standards to the chamber. For instance, one can no longer refer to the opposition as 'you jokers', as a member whose name escapes me used to do quite often. I congratulate him on his elevation to the position of Speaker.

Many times over the past eight years I have spoken of the economic and social pressures on people living in Southport. I have spoken of their concern for the cost of living generally, the cost of accessing health care, the need for children to get a good education, the importance of training, job security and the creation of new jobs, the effectiveness of community policing, the protection of our environment and public housing issues. These concerns still exercise the minds of Southport residents, which is not surprising given the rapid growth of the area. Since I spoke in the last address-in-reply these concerns have been exacerbated by the global financial crisis.

I thank the people of Southport for choosing me to represent them in this parliament for a further three years. As with previous elections, this was not a victory for me but for the branch members, family, staff, community members and groups and friends who worked so hard for success. I extend my particular thanks to my children, Ali, Jane and Phil, and my son-in-law, Clive, for their support. In the case of Jane and Phil, that support consisted mainly of phone calls from Dubai and London at all times of the day and night with advice and encouragement. Ali and Clive assisted on election day with setting up election booths, manning a booth all day and then scrutineering when the polls closed. Given that they have two energetic and exhausting young boys in Henry and Zac, it probably seemed like a holiday to them.

Thanks to my staff members, Sharon Masters and Tim Nairn, who are a great support and who work so effectively under, at times, stressful conditions. I also thank my campaign manager, Terry Callighan, branch members and friends, especially John and Meg Coonan and Don Dwyer, who worked so hard on election day and helped me celebrate the next day. Special thanks to Pat Jackson, Terry Dyson, Penny Klinge and Desley Monsour for keeping the troops fed and watered. Lindesay Jones was again a great support and adviser, as he has been to me for almost 20 years.

Much of the credit for the return of the government must, of course, go to the Premier, as has been mentioned by many people on this side of the House. She showed fortitude and stamina and fought to the very end for every last vote. Through all that, she was pleasant and even kept her sense of humour in the face of certain sections of the media abandoning even the facade of objectivity. By inference she was blamed for the Moreton Bay oil spill, for instance. She was also belted for the downgrading of the state's AAA credit rating.

I do not underestimate the benefit of a AAA rating. However, I would prefer, as the government does, to continue with our Capital Works Program and the budget deficit that results in order to protect and indeed increase the number of Queensland jobs. One really has to ask oneself about the rating agencies and about how much credibility they have. One wonders why anyone would really listen to them. All the investment banks and companies in the USA that were given AAA ratings—Lehman Brothers, Merrill

Lynch, Bear Stearns—where are they now? Rating agencies make weather forecasters look good, I reckon. I offer my commiserations to my opponents Graeme Hill, Mark Tull, Stephen Dalton, Brian Morris and Tania Wright. It is no fun getting beaten at anything, especially an election.

**An opposition member:** You have plenty of experience at that.

**Mr LAWLOR:** I know I have had plenty of experience because I stood three times for Southport before I finally won in 2001. That is where pig-headedness will get you to.

**An opposition member:** No disagreement from me.

**Mr LAWLOR:** There is no need to agree with that. Despite the meltdown of the world economy, Southport continues to grow, with almost 50,000 people now living in the area. This government has recognised and taken the steps needed to preserve what makes Southport such an attractive place in which to live. During my last term I oversaw the completion of a number of important projects. Traffic congestion has been alleviated with the completion of the Frank Street stage 1 and with the duplication of the Loder Creek bridge at a cost of over \$20 million. The second stage has commenced, which continues into the seat of Broadwater. That second stage is going to cost \$55 million and is underway as we speak. The upgrade of Smith Street, one of Southport's arterial roads, was completed last year with the inclusion of a T3 lane in both directions and the replacement of a dangerous roundabout at High Street with traffic signals. I also look forward to the completion of the Gold Coast rapid transit system, which will provide public transport to a number of key facilities and areas, making Southport one of the most accessible areas for everyone on the Gold Coast.

Southport is home to the Gold Coast's major health facility in the Gold Coast Hospital and will soon be home to the new Gold Coast University Hospital which, at a cost of \$1.55 billion, is due to open in 2012. Cancer, cardiac, neurosciences, neonatal intensive care and trauma services will be offered at the new facility. It is located just across the road from Griffith University. The hospital will provide a learning environment for the next generation of nurses and doctors. It will contain 750 beds—approximately 300 more than the current hospital—and, importantly, it has room to grow as the demand for services in the region increases over time.

The Arundel Police Beat was completed, as was the new Southport Fire Station upgrade at a cost of \$3 million. There was a new fire truck and also three new ambulances and additional ambulance officers and paramedics. Maintenance funding for all schools continues as does the actual work itself. The enterprise centre at Southport State High School has been completed at a cost of \$2.5 million. The government also contributed \$18 million to the Broadwater Parklands project, which is being completed by the Gold Coast City Council.

An important part of the campaign, of course, was the \$60 million committed to the Carrara stadium. That will provide 300 jobs in the construction phase and 400 jobs thereafter. Of course, it is an important piece of tourism infrastructure on the Gold Coast. There are other issues which I intend to address in the term of this government and they include a review of body corporate legislation, particularly the issue of lot entitlements and the ability to adjust lot entitlements.

**Mr Hinchliffe:** Hear, hear!

**Mr LAWLOR:** I acknowledge the interjection from the Minister for Infrastructure, who takes a personal interest in that matter as well. Dredging of the Broadwater has commenced and the issue there that we must address is a permanent funding source.

I congratulate all members of this parliament on their election or re-election. It is also appropriate at this time that we remember several good friends who did not make it back: Bonny Barry, Phil Weightman, Stuart Copeland, Phil Gray, Andrew McNamara, Di Reilly and John English. I also wish Ken Hayward, Pat Purcell, Kev Lingard, Chris Bombolas, Rod Welford, Jim Pearce, Gary Fenlon, Linda Lavarch and Warren Pitt all the best in their post parliamentary life.