




Speech by
Bill Byrne

MEMBER FOR ROCKHAMPTON

Hansard Thursday, 21 June 2012

ROCKHAMPTON, SHADOW CABINET

 **Mr BYRNE** (Rockhampton—ALP) (2.43 pm): I rise to inform the House of last week's two-day visit to my electorate of the 'Significant 7' of the Labor shadow cabinet. There was a great cartoon in the local newspaper to commemorate the occasion. In fact, it was so poignant that I will try to get it framed. Four of the members representing southern electorates, led by the Leader of the Opposition, travelled to Rockhampton on the tilt train service. These ladies of the opposition all commented most enthusiastically about the comfort, the quality service and the timeliness of the journey. This journey also provided members with a unique opportunity to engage Queenslanders from all parts of the state in extended casual conversation and this, of course, proved to be immensely rewarding. Most importantly, we of the Australian Labor Party are very keen to encourage rail travel, and what better way to demonstrate this!

These ladies from the southern electorates were greeted at the Rockhampton station by two regional lads in the form of myself and the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. Labor caucus members were accommodated at The Edge Apartments overlooking the mighty Fitzroy River. What a glorious place to base yourself when visiting Central Queensland if members are ever in the region. Rockhampton is the beef capital and one of my jobs was to ensure that there was no shortage of quality protein. This was delivered on the Tuesday evening by the renowned Cambridge Hotel steakhouse, a venue that is well known to many members representing regional electorates. Labor members and their guests, including the mayor and media representatives, were not disappointed—and, surprisingly, we paid the bill when we were finished!

Wednesday commenced with a breakfast with local business and community leaders. This again provided an avenue for Labor members to engage hardworking Queenslanders in talking about their contemporary concerns. Later the shadow cabinet convened at the Central Queensland University Rockhampton campus. It was very generous of the university to provide a venue for that meeting. Our appreciation is extended to Vice-Chancellor Scott Bowman and his staff. The shadow ministers used the afternoon to meet people and visit locations relevant to their shadow portfolios. These engagements included the Leader of the Opposition meeting with many union representatives at Trades Hall as well as meeting a broad gathering of teachers so as to hear their concerns about the future of education in Queensland. Of course, Wednesday was also State of Origin. The majority of members attended a function organised by the North Rockhampton Labor Party. Everyone present enjoyed the evening. As members already know, many of my immediate family would have been overjoyed by the result of the evening in that they claim New South Wales allegiance as their state of birth.

Honourable members: Shame!

Mr BYRNE: 'Shame!' I hear members call, but there is no more direct evidence that opposites attract. The Labor caucus reacquainted itself with Central Queensland and its people during the visit. This is a big state and I hope that this parliament never forgets it. This Labor visit to Rockhampton is the first of many across the state that our members will be undertaking with great enthusiasm.