



Speech by

PETA-KAYE CROFT

MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

Hansard 22 March 2001

FIRST SPEECH

Mrs CROFT (Broadwater—ALP) (3.05 p.m.), who was received with government 'Hear, hears!', said: It is an honour and a pleasure that I be given the opportunity to move—

That the following address be presented to the Governor in reply to the speech delivered by His Excellency in opening this, the first session of the 50th Parliament of Queensland.

May it please your Excellency:

'We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland, wish to assure Your Excellency of our continued respect for the Crown and loyalty to the system of government in this state and to tender our thanks for the speech with which you opened the first session.

The various measures to which Your Excellency referred, and all other matters that may be brought before us, will receive our careful consideration, and we shall strive to deal with them so that our endeavours may contribute to the advancement and prosperity of people of this State.'

I am extremely honoured to be asked to respond to the Governor's speech.

The recent state election delivered a truly historic result. The overwhelming endorsement of the Beattie government was, in part, a result of positive policies outlined to the people of Queensland in a positive campaign. It was also the result of a government that could justifiably stand on the record of its first term. At a time when incumbent governments are an endangered species, the people of our state returned Labor to office. At a time when people want governments that listen, Labor was returned because it listened in its first term and acted on people's concerns. Part of that listening process involved three community cabinet meetings in the Gold Coast region in the government's first term.

I am honoured to be one of the 37 per cent of the female gender who now occupy seats in this House. This is a wonderful example of the choices that women have in today's society. I note that the majority of these women are in the Labor Party, proving how progressive and modern our ideals and philosophies are. I am extremely honoured to be a part of this magnificent winning team, and to work in the company of the many members who have inspired and influenced me. While the election result was a wonderful achievement, good results come from hard work.

As to be expected, mine has not been an easy journey to this House. My early years were spent in areas vastly different from that of the Gold Coast. I grew up travelling to and from Cloncurry in north-west Queensland and Townsville on the Ansett 'milk run' route. Out west I spent time on a cattle property, being a regular hand, mustering and branding. This gave me a broad understanding of how rural electorates have very specific needs, and I inherited a true appreciation of our unique Australian heritage. While I took on board the experiences and knowledge of the west, the time I spent in Townsville added another dimension to my character. I met people from the art world and many Aboriginal community groups.

The part of my childhood I spent in public housing also exposed me to less privileged people and greatly influenced my personal commitment to helping others. I became a city person when I moved to Brisbane. Looking back, I can now appreciate how the incredible cross-section of Queensland people I met at that time has profoundly shaped me into the person I am today. Because of this diversity—living in the bush and the city—I believe I understand what gives Queenslanders their strength and sense of survival. I am sure it will also give me a greater appreciation of the wide variety of issues that we are called upon to consider in this House.

In 1984 I went to boarding school. I learnt to respect traditional values, but most importantly I learnt to consider others. I also learnt through my mother's guidance to appreciate the wonderful differences that come with a multicultural society. My degree in Japanese language at Griffith University led me to Kyoto in Japan. With a greater understanding of the language and culture, I returned to the Gold Coast to work as a Japanese-speaking tour guide. My job as a tour guide enabled me to deliver to international visitors an informative commentary about Australia and the Gold Coast. I told the guests of our nation's history, our culture and the wonderful flora and fauna of our environment. Especially satisfying was the time I spent as a tour guide at Uluru. That cemented my belief that we must do all we can to preserve and understand our indigenous culture.

I am passionate about setting things right and trying to encourage justice and fairness. Because of my work experience and because of the nature of my electorate, the tourist industry is one area in which I plan to take an active interest. My most recent employment has put me in touch with many of the problems that need to be addressed in the tourist industry, namely, the tour guide industry. Quick-fix legislation is not necessarily going to get the best outcome for all concerned. It might surprise honourable members to know that tour guides have no job security, no training and no defined career paths. This is certainly not acceptable for an industry that prides itself on providing international best practice standards.

I have discussed the issue with my colleague and fellow Gold Coaster the Minister for Tourism. The minister has advised me that she intends to enact legislation later this year to provide a mandatory code of conduct and to license tour guide operators. This will undoubtedly help in the ongoing process of building a strong and professional tourist industry. In welcoming this initiative, I also point out that the next logical step is to have industrial agreements which protect the employees and thereby protect the industry. I know that Ron Monaghan of the Liquor Hospitality Miscellaneous Workers Union is sitting down with the industry to develop a better industrial accord. I know this will be welcomed by anyone interested in a viable tourist industry which showcases Queensland and delivers secure jobs to Queenslanders.

Like me and others interested in developing a highly skilled and internationally acclaimed tourist industry, the minister wants to make sure that we are putting our best foot forward for the people who work in that industry. The tourist industry in Queensland has the greatest asset of our state's natural beauty. Nowhere, in my view, is that more evident than on the Gold Coast. But the other natural resource that we have is our people. It is pointless having this great natural beauty without the people who can explain it to those who come from all over the world to see it. While I welcome the moves under way to address the problems of the industry, I want to give all concerned a clear message: I know the industry and I know the people who work in it. I will not sit back if tourism industry workers are not treated fairly and justly.

I now turn to my electorate of Broadwater. Like many members here today, I have been voted to represent an electorate that has had a longstanding opposition member. I am proud to say that I am the youngest and the first woman member to have the honour of representing the Broadwater electorate. Broadwater is a unique electorate, yet at the same time it is representative of our whole state. It has luxury resorts and high-income areas, but it also has the jobless and low-income battlers. This provides me with many challenges which I am happy to take on. My primary aim is to reward those who supported me—and those who did not—with hard work. I give this pledge to the electors: I will work hard. I will deliver the three As—accountability, accessibility and active representation.

Broadwater covers many of the most famous names of the Gold Coast such as Sanctuary Cove, Sovereign Island and Hope Island. It also includes Santa Barbara, South Stradbroke Island, Hope Island, Paradise Point, Runaway Bay, Labrador, Hollywell, Biggera Waters, Anglers Paradise and Coombabah. It has a population of 47,000, a population as diverse as the Broadwater area itself. A large majority of residents who live in the Runaway Bay-Paradise Point area are retirees. Other areas such as Sanctuary Cove, Hope Island and Paradise Point are known for their high-income figures and consequent luxurious development. However, contrasting figures indicate a steady increase in younger and lower-income families in the areas of Coombabah, Labrador and Biggera Waters.

The one common reason many residents have chosen to live in the area is the lovely foreshore parks and reserves. Locals share the beauty of the Broadwater area with many visitors who come to shop, fish and relax. International resorts such as Sanctuary Cove, Hope Island and Couran Cove are known as tourist destinations. However, the smaller businesses and shopping centres in Broadwater also benefit greatly from the local tourist industry. I will do my utmost to maintain and develop the tourist potential of this area to the benefit of local residents.

I am proud to be part of a government that is so supportive of the Gold Coast. It was this government that rescued the Gold Coast marathon from disappearing by providing sufficient funds for this worldwide event to continue. This fabulous event, coupled with the Sanctuary Cove Boat Show, will continue to bring many visitors to this area. It was this government that upgraded local schools and community facilities and which continues to support development of the tourist industry. That support is

most welcome. At the same time, light industrial development in appropriate areas is one of my personal visions for the electorate. Already we are delighted with the coup in attracting the worldwide boat engine company Cummins to the area.

In its first term, this government's top priority was jobs, jobs, jobs. It will be the same in its second term. Jobs, jobs, jobs for the people of Broadwater will also be my top concern. As a swimming teacher, I recognise the skills children gain from an involvement in sport and how it prepares them for self-discipline and a healthy lifestyle. I know that the Broadwater community feels the same. There are many hardworking sports clubs working in the Broadwater area which deliver valuable community services. I will work with the sporting communities to encourage greater involvement by younger people in positive, constructive activities.

Whilst my passion to pursue the goal of representing Broadwater was strong, I certainly could not have achieved my success without the assistance and support of party members, friends and supporters in my electorate. To the members of the Broadwater branch, I thank you for your strong support in my nomination. Your untiring hard work and infectious enthusiasm played a major part in my campaign. To Betty and Tom Harrison, Wade Oestriech and Lorna Petersen, my heartfelt thanks. To my organiser, Simon Finn, and colleague Richard Alcorn, thank you for your assistance and friendship. To Robert Poole, the new member for Gaven, Helen and Brian Massa and Kim Forrester, many thanks for being the catalysts who encouraged me to take my own path.

I would especially like to thank my husband, Adam, for maintaining a harmonious and calm oasis for me during my hectic campaign. We met through working in the tourism industry. His knowledge of and support for the issues that persuaded me to seek election have been invaluable. I also thank my parents for a wonderful Australian upbringing. I enjoyed so many enriching experiences and connections to the true spirit of this country, and I know these shaped me considerably. To someone I really admire, Lesley Fogarty, thank you for being an inspiration.

I was born the year Gough Whitlam was elected Prime Minister. I am the daughter of a baby boomer. My beginnings were in the climate-challenged north-west of Queensland. I am closer to generation X than I am to those who can remember where they were when President Kennedy was shot. I have never known what it is like to wonder whether humans would ever walk on the moon. But none of that really matters anymore. What matters most are the people of the electorate of Broadwater. They have put their faith in me and I will repay their investment with the highest interest rate I can. The problems of Broadwater are now my problems. They will have my undivided attention for the next three years. I look at a glass of water as being half full, not half empty. I will bring this positive outlook to this chamber and to Broadwater.

I believe we can solve unemployment and youth-related problems. I know the tourist industry can treat its workers better. I will work to solve our transport issues. Above all, I will listen to what the electors of Broadwater have to say. I am proud to be a part of this historically large Labor government. I pay tribute to the Premier, Peter Beattie, for the excellent consultative style of government he has delivered. I again thank my husband, my mother, my branch members and my friends for their support. I say this to the people who put me here, the electors of Broadwater: I will use every ounce of energy and every waking moment to deliver honest, caring and committed representation, and I will.
