

BERYCE ANN NELSON

... I would like to quote from an article...in a magazine entitled "Australian Society"... this interesting article... addresses the failure of all political parties, bar the National Party to attract support from women for parliament in seats in which they can win... [We] are all women who fit into the team, are part of that team, and represent our electorates in the same way as any other member of parliament does... (QPD, vol.304, 17/3/87, 1987,p.732)

Liberal Party - Electorate of Aspley - 29.11.1980-22.10.1983

National Party - Electorate of Aspley - 1.11.1986-2.12.1989

PERSONAL DETAILS

Beryce Nelson was born in Brisbane on 10 January 1947, the daughter of Arthur Lloyd Noble and Thelma Ann Kelso.

Educated at state schools in Toowoomba and Brisbane and at a Brisbane secondary school, she gained a Diploma of Radiography in 1967 for which she won the Kodak student prize. She then attended the University of Queensland as an undergraduate from 1979. Beryce Nelson has lived in Toowoomba and Tara in Queensland and at Castle Hill in New South Wales.

She currently resides in Brisbane where she practised as a radiographer (1967-71). On 24 August 1968 she married John Arthur Nelson, an accountant, and has two daughters and a son. She is a member of the Roman Catholic faith.

She has been involved in various organisations such as the Endeavour Foundation, the Institute of Radiographers, the Red Cross, the Institute of Public Relations, the Queensland Sub-Normal Children's Welfare Association, the Prince Charles Hospital auxiliary, and Zonta. Beryce Nelson was a former president and public relations officer of the Down's Syndrome Association (1977-80). In addition, she is a Justice of the Peace, and art, music, swimming and collecting books and coins are among her interests.

Beryce Nelson has been an executive member of the Liberal Party Women's Council, president of the Queensland Liberal Party Speakers Group, member of the Queensland Liberal Party State Executive, secretary of the Queensland Liberal Party Health Committee, and chairperson of the Aspley West branch and the Petrie Federal Division of the Liberal Party.

Beryce Nelson joined the Liberal Party in Sydney in 1971. She was the first woman in Australia with children to be preselected for a safe conservative seat. This was the seat of Aspley which she was endorsed for in 1979 for the 1980 elections. Although she won the seat easily with 63.95% of the vote after the allocation of ALP preferences, she only gained 30.97% of first preference votes to 31.67% by the National Party

candidate. At the following election the result was reversed when the ALP candidate finished in second place with 34.09% of first preference votes to the National candidate (37.05%) and his preferences were therefore not distributed. Beryce Nelson received only 28.86% of the first preference votes and lost the seat by a large margin.

She resigned from the Liberal Party in 1984 and joined the National Party the following year. She was approached to stand for the National Party for the 1986 election for her former seat of Aspley and was endorsed in March 1986. Upon winning this election she became the first woman to make a comeback in the Queensland Parliament. She is also the only one ever to change parties. This time the ALP candidate finished first (35.67% first preference votes), but Beryce Nelson (31.36%) won the seat easily on Liberal Party preferences. In the large anti-National Party swing at the 1989 general election she suffered a crushing defeat, managing a mere 15.15% of first preference votes.

PARLIAMENTARY CAREER

In her relatively brief parliamentary career, Beryce Nelson was a member of the Parliamentary Refreshment Rooms Committee (1981-83) and of the Select Committee for Subordinate Legislation (1987-89). On 4 August 1983 she became the first woman to be elected to the post of Government Deputy Whip.

As chairperson of the Government's Brisbane River Committee, Beryce Nelson launched a special tourist booklet entitled Beautiful Brisbane River for Expo 88 which outlined the assets of the river and the significant heritage that lines its banks. As chairperson of the Ministerial Task Force on Services for People with an Intellectual Handicap in Queensland, she presented a 204 page report in 1989. On 25 September 1989 Beryce Nelson was appointed Minister for Family Services, the third woman ever to be appointed to the ministry in Queensland. However, her ministerial career did not last long as the Government fell and she lost her seat at the general election on 2 December 1989.

Beryce Nelson was particularly concerned about the plight of the elderly, the infirm, and the disabled, as well as compensation for victims of crime, health, and preservation of Moreton Island. She was a founding member and vice-patron of the Victims of Crimes Association. Her concerns in these areas are apparent from the following excerpts from her maiden speech:

ADDRESS IN REPLY

Mrs NELSON (Aspley): ... A recent radio and television survey in Brisbane showed that despite this apparent financial security, despite the closeness of city life and the comparatively easy access to its facilities, many elderly people are lonely and afraid. The biggest and most vulnerable group are aged widows on limited incomes. Since this whole group of the elderly will increase by 28 per cent by the year 2000, it requires a much greater awareness of responsibilities in families and by Governments, particularly if we are even to start to find practical solutions to this growing problem.

Because this burden will fall more heavily on the Queensland

Government, it is important that we begin now to plan for services which will undoubtedly be required by 1990 and beyond. Our country hospitals should be divided into acute and nursing-home sections so that elderly people requiring full-time nursing care can stay close to their families instead of having to leave them and live thousands of miles away from them. Individual families must be encouraged to take more responsibility for the care of their parents where there is no serious disability other than age itself.

The Government must ensure that residential centres for the aged are as home-like as possible, and must enable those residents to enjoy as much privacy and independence as possible, whilst still providing essential supervision and security. The Government must also ensure that building and health regulations are strictly adhered to, and regular and unannounced inspections of such centres should be made to maintain a high quality of care. I believe this particular facet of the care of the elderly requires urgent attention. Present funding arrangements are forcing elderly people to move into residential centres long before it is really necessary in order to avail themselves of nursing-home facilities later. This has led to an acute shortage of such accommodation and the position should be re-examined immediately.

Building codes should be altered to allow the construction of small granny flats adjacent to family homes. This allows elderly parents to live close to their families but to maintain their own independence, with both groups maintaining their privacy.

... I would now like to draw the attention of the House to another challenge of the 1980s, and it is a special interest dear to my heart - the care of the disabled. This is a much smaller group but it is growing rapidly. Because of the wide range of disabilities (physical, emotional and intellectual) in our society, there is great diversity of thought as to what are the best ways to assist disabled people and their families.

... The greatest disability such people face is other people's attitudes towards them. Somehow they are made to feel less than whole beings, as if a physical or intellectual handicap deprives them of the normal human feelings of love, hate, etc. It is therefore, I believe, the greatest responsibility of Government in this decade to help break down those barriers of ignorance between the disabled and the rest of the community.

... It is neither suitable nor acceptable to have permanently disabled people as patients in hospitals. It is wrong for their care to be solely nurse-based, although good nursing care is vital to the progress of some physically disabled people... (QPD, vol.283, 10/3/81, pp.108-9)

Although not supporting a feminist viewpoint during her six years in the parliament, Beryce Nelson nevertheless raised many issues that impacted on women. The following are a few examples:

ADJOURNMENT

Married women teachers

Mrs Nelson: The single ones have all been placed. It is only now that my investigations show that married women, whether they have a special skill or not, are simply being refused employment. Several test cases are being conducted at the moment. Women are being refused

employment purely on the basis of their marital status.

Mr Yewdale: It's Government policy.

Mrs NELSON: It is not Government policy, because all other departments are interpreting that minute in a much more generous way. If it is said that that minute means that people have to be of equal merit before marital status is considered, that is a fairly reasonable argument. However, the Department of Education is not taking the equal merit part into consideration. It is simply making a judgment on marital status alone.

I believe that the House should draw to the attention of Cabinet that that minute needs to be reviewed and rewritten and that the Department of Education needs to be shaken up if it will not allow good women to enter the teaching profession.

Mr KATTER: I could not help but reflect on the previous speaker's looking at the matter from the perspective of women's interests only. If the Government adopted the policy of employing married women, it would be utterly impossible to staff country schools. If there is a solution to that problem, a different attitude might be adopted. (*QPD*, vol.284, 4/8/81, pp.1443-4)

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST Toxic shock syndrome

Mrs NELSON: I wish to draw to the attention of the House a matter of public interest. I show to the House for recording in "Hansard" an article in yesterday's "Telegraph" headed "Toxic Shock in WA". It reads -

"Perth: A 30-year old woman has become Western Australia's first victim of tampon linked toxic-shock syndrome."

... I should like to say more about the Australian scene. This type of product, which may or may not already contain the bacteria, appears to create an environment that is a ripe breeding ground and induces a rapid onset of the condition. Specific cases of concern - I draw the attention of the House to this because it has not received wide publicity in the media - were noted where tampons were used by women using IUDs as a means of contraception. Many of the fatalities have occurred in those instances. There has been some debate, and, in fact specific medical advice, that a lack of hygiene may cause the introduction of the bacteria into the body. However, the Australian communicable diseases intelligence bulletin of 30 January 1981 shows that the first patient in Australia to have pericarditis was a woman in Victoria... affected by a product that was contaminated before she used it, and tests on the remainder of the packet that she had at her home showed that the bacteria was present in the unwrapped product.

... I am pleased to tell the House that the Queensland Minister for Health... has taken the matter up with the National Health and Medical Research Council. (*QPD*, vol.283, 11/3/81, pp.173-4)

MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST In Vitro Fertilisation and Artificial Insemination

Mrs NELSON: I call for the suspension of all programs in Australia involving in vitro fertilisation and artificial insemination until uniform legislation has been passed by all States and the Commonwealth

Government. My reason for calling for such a suspension is not because I oppose the principles of either artificial insemination or in vitro fertilisation but because of the massive moral, ethical and legal complications that are ensuing in Australian society and for which there appears to be no answer at the moment. (*QPD*, vol.289,10/11/92,p. 2117)

Beryce Nelson was instrumental in bringing the Peace and Good Behaviour Bill before Parliament in 1982.

PEACE AND GOOD BEHAVIOUR BILL

Mrs NELSON: I support the Minister's presentation of the legislation and join with the spokesman for the Opposition and the member for Toowong in supporting the first introduction of such a measure in any Parliament in Australia. Queensland has made the first attempt by any State Parliament to take some effective action against domestic violence.

There is a quite remarkable tendency across Australia to treat domestic violence as violence against women, but it is directed primarily against children. Of course, there is also violence against women, and quite frequently it is directed against the aged. In fact, over a long period Australian family life has been noted for its violence. The police in a number of States, including Queensland, have for a number of years tried to gain power of entry to enable them to deal with domestic violence. (*QPD*, vol.289, 10/11/82, p.2139)

ADJOURNMENT

Crimes against women

During my speech, I wish to address an issue that I regard as a major problem in the Parliaments of Australia, in the media in Australia, in the judiciary in Australia and in the police forces of Australia. I refer to the peculiar attitudinal problem that has become manifested in relation to women and violence. The problem has come to the fore particularly in the last 15 years. If ever there was evidence of the need for the task force, it emerges when an examination is made of even the most recent editions of newspapers - even those published within the last 24 hours. Those newspapers contain the most terrifying examples of the underlying social problem pertaining to the way that women are dealt with in society contrasted with the way that men are dealt with when they commit acts of violence upon women... I believe that both of those cases are examples of an attitude that is fairly deeply entrenched in Australian society: that a wife is the property of her husband. When a how, when, why and where investigation was carried out to try to find evidence to establish motive, etc., in those cases, did anyone look at the reason why the woman wanted to move away from a man who was obviously peculiar in his life-style and behaviour. Did anyone stop to think that she might have needed to leave him? No! the attitude is that she is his property and therefore there is compassion for the man. (*QPD*, vol.310, 18/10/88, pp.1516-7)

Among other matters that she pursued are education of gifted children and the health

problems posed by cigarette smoking:

**MATTERS OF PUBLIC INTEREST
Education Of Gifted Children**

Mrs NELSON: It has come to my attention in the electorate that a proposal has been presented to the Department of Education to establish a facility that would provide research data on gifted children for both the Department of Education and the North Brisbane College of Advanced Education.

I believe it is time that this State started to do something to provide educational facilities for gifted and talented children. Queensland is the last State in the Commonwealth to consider this matter. The department has set up a committee to consider it, but at this stage someone is travelling overseas looking at facilities there while children in this State - at least 6 000 and possibly up to 10 000 of them - wilt on the vine, leave the system, fail exams and drop out of our educational institutions because of boredom and frustration. I believe it is time that this matter was examined objectively and rationally and that we commenced the introduction of the proper sort of facilities that these children have been denied for so long... (QPD, vol.283, 29/4/81, p.832)

**ADJOURNMENT
Health Problems Caused by Cigarette Smoking**

Mrs NELSON: Some weeks ago I attended a conference at the Bardon Professional Development Centre where matters pertaining to the prevention of disabilities were mentioned. I wish to speak about a major cause of disability in our society at the moment, - smoking.

One of the saddest episodes in human history is the simultaneous application of science and technology and sophisticated advertising programs to the tobacco industry. Smoking is a major cause of disability and death, but the full impact of the problem is not generally recognised. It has reached colossal proportions in developed countries and is rapidly spreading throughout the Third World. It is completely and utterly preventable and only insignificant and token efforts have been made to alleviate the problem... (QPD, vol.286, 1/12/81, p.4215)

After losing her seat in the general election of 1989, Beryce Nelson returned to working in the field of public relations, and is a member of the executive of the Boards of Musica Viva and the Abused Child Trust.

**INDEX TO PARLIAMENTARY SPEECHES
1981/82 - 1989**

1981/82

Address in Reply (amendment-Mr Casey), 107.

Adjournment-

Butcher, Mr Darrell, 5036.

Cigarette smoking, Health problems, 4215.

Electricity changes, 1189

International Year of Disabled Persons, 4622.

Married women, Employment by Education
Department, 1442.

Noise problems in urban areas, 3379.

Parents of disabled children, 2314.

Public Service superannuation, 674.

Road toll, 2577.

Sugar Board publication "Sugar", 331.

BILLS:

Agricultural Bank (Loans) Act Amendment (2°),
467.

Appropriation (No. 1) (2°), 1534

Bread Delivery Act Repeal (2°), 4735.

Clean Air Act Amendment (2°), 1995.

Collections Act Amendment (2°), 869.

Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement (2°),
1722.

Commonwealth Games (2°), 4506.

Food (2°), 1319.

Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act
Amendment (2°), 4746.

Industry and Commerce Training Act Amendment
(2°), 4684.

James Cook University of North Queensland and
Townsville College of Advanced Education Amalgamation (2°), 3884.

Land Act (Aboriginal and Islander Land Grants)
Amendment (committee), 5396.

Local Government Act and Another Act Amendment
(2°), 4150.

Maintenance Act Amendment (2°), 1850.

Medical Act Amendment (2°), 947.

Queensland Cultural Centre Trust Act
Amendment (2°), 3158.

Sewerage and Water

SUPPLY Act Amendment (2°),
1907.

Stamp Act Amendment (1982) (2°), 5591.

Financial Statement, 2421.

Matters of public interest-

Asbestos related diseases, 3136.
Aspley hypermarket, 4856.
Demolition sites, Inspection, 5077.
Dental care for disabled persons, 3929.
Education for gifted children, 832.
Fibrolite roofs, Cleaning, 3136.
Toxic shock syndrome, 173.

Points of order, 1376, 1723, 3520, 5593.

SUPPLY:

Estimates in Committee-
Education, 3769.
Employment and Labour Relations, 3562.
Health, 2786.
Justice and Attorney-General, 3294.
Local Government, Main Roads and Police,
3190.

1982/83

Address in Reply, 243.

Adjournment-

Aspley hypermarket, 875.
Australian Labor Party policies, Federal, 3147.
Divorce Law Reform Association- Queensland,
1053.
In vitro fertilisation, 2966.
Life assurance policies, 1577.
Pornographic video films, 2966.
Rank Xerox contracts, 3374.

BILLS:

Adoption of Children Act Amendment (committee),
3307.
Appropriation (No. 2) (2°), 2836.
Commonwealth Games (Modification of Laws) Act
Amendment (2°), 807.
Criminal Law Amendment (No. 2) (2°), 3031.
Elections (2°), 3522; (committee, 3579, 3581, 3587.
Factories and Shops Act Amendment (committee),
3917, 3918, 3919.
Fire Brigades Act Amendment (2°), 4012.
Health Act Amendment (2°), 2363;
(committee), 2369.
Hospitals Act Amendment (1982) (2°), 1028.
Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act and
Another Act Amendment (2°), 3729;

(committee), 3755.

Law Courts and State Buildings Protective Security
(committee), 4101.

Noise Abatement Act Amendment (No.2) (2°), 3205.

Peace and Good Behaviour (2°), 2139.

Private Employment Agencies (committee), 3495.

Small Business Development Corporation Act
Amendment (2°), 3934.

State Enterprises Acts Repeal (2°), 3452.

Financial Statement, 1488.

Matters of public interest-

Artificial insemination, 2117.
 Cane toads, 3005.
 Divorce Law Reform Association - Queensland,
 909.
 In vitro fertilisation, 2117.
 Motor vessels, Compulsory third-party insurance,
 3397.
 Women in the work-force, 4050.
 Women of the Year luncheon, 1323.
Points of order, 2116, 2808, 3737, 3738, 3917,
 3942.

Standing orders, Proposed amendments
 (committee), 3417, 3429.

SUPPLY:

Estimates in Committee-
 Commerce and Industry, 1780.
 Welfare services, 2577.
 Works and Housing, 2054.
 Working hours, Demands for reduction,
 361.

1983

Personal explanation, 149.

1987/88

Address in Reply, 731.

Main topics discussed-
 Disabled persons, 736
 Middle income earners, 734.
 Pathology services, 735.
 Senior citizens, 733.
 Women in politics, 732.

Adjournment--

Clark, Mr P., 234.

BILLS:

Appropriation (No. 1) (2°), 1903.
 Chiropractic Manipulative Therapists Act
 Amendment (2°), 5504.
 Cultural Record (Landscapes Queensland and
 Queensland Estate) (2°), 4656.
 Films (Censorship and Review) Acts Amendment
 (2°), 5150.
 Health Act Amendment (1987) (2°), 1262.
 Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act and
 Another Act Amendment (2°), 3773.
 Mental Health Services Act Amendment (2°), 838.
 Queensland Institute of Medical Research Act and
 Another Act Amendment (2°), 5552.
 Travel Agents (2°), 6151; (Committee), 6176.
 Universities and Colleges (Higher Education
 Administration Charges) (Committee), 505.

Matters of public interest-

Ashton-Lomax, Mr G., 5390.
 Clock Corner shopping centre, Carseldine, 5390.
 Delan Street, West Chermside, Zoning, 984.
Points of order, 456, 609, 3681, 4818, 4994, 5482,
 6177.

Questions-

Affirmative action legislation, 1308.
Breaking and entering crimes, 5320.
Brisbane River heritage, 6128.
Budgets, 2596.
Carseldine junior motor cycle club, 2743.
Child Protection Unit, 3992.
Customs, officers, 325.
Dino's Dial-A-Pizza, 2048.
Domestic Violence Task Force, 4069.
Expo 88, 4423.
Gympie Road, Aspley, 2086.
Handicapped students, 898.
Hot-air balloons, 6263.
Ionisers, 5044.
Labor women's conference, 1308.
P-10 curriculum, 1305.
Pest control, 898.
Pine Waters Canal Estate project, 5321.
Roads, 4555.
Unemployment benefits, 324, 384.
Voluntary employment agreements, 2048.
Workers Compensation Board rehabilitation centre, 5044.
Zillmere, Housing Commission redevelopment, 3806.
Speaker, Election, 4791.

SUPPLY:

Estimates in Committee-
Employment, Small Business and Industrial Affairs, 3112.
Health and Environment, 3292.
Mines and Energy and the Arts, 4229.
Tourism, National Parks and Sport, 3673.
World Heritage listing, North Queensland rainforests, 1986.

1988/89

Address in Reply, 151.

Main topic discussed-
Aspley electorate, 152.
Medical science, 153.

Adjournment-

Bald Hills, Application to rezone land for shopping centre, 586.
Crimes against women, 1515.

BILLS:

Appropriation 1989-1990 (No. 1) (2°), 5414.
Criminal Code, Evidence Act and Other Acts Amendment (2°), 3723.
Local Government (Chinatown Mall) Act Amendment (2°), 3956.
Mental Health Services Act and Another Act Amendment (2°), 5107.
Parliamentary (Judges) Commission of Inquiry (2°), 2571.
Recreation Areas Management (2°), 3300.
Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act Amendment (2°), 3443.

Marriages Act Amendment (2°), 3443.

Death-

Rasey, Mr T.W., 5119.

Financial Statement, 937.

Main topics discussed-

Community services, 941.

Crime, 942.

Education, 940.

Health services, 940.

Taxation Appeals, 938.

Matters of public interest-

Bald Hills, Application to rezone land for shopping centre, 171.

Customs House, Brisbane, Preservation, 3645.

Handicapped persons' organisations, Federal funding cut-backs, 4717.

Members' interests, Register, 4972.

Personal explanations, 292, 4581.

Points of order, 319, 457, 458, 459, 4970.

Questions-

AIDS, 3370, 3854.

Albany Creek Road vehicular access, 2912.

Brisbane River development, 2913.

Chermside West roundabout, 387.

Cultural landscapes legislation, 1906.

Environment, Conservation and Tourism portfolio, 386.

Fitzgibbon rezoning, 5678.

Greenhouse effect, 5214.

Historic buildings, 4588.

Hospital questionnaires, 5364.

Interest rates, 4589.

Kangaroo Point precinct, 1906.

Mount Olivet Hospital, 1905.

Neighbourhood Watch program, 970.

Ozone layer, 970.

Police staffing levels, 3769.

Queensland Street mall, 3769.

Speaker, Election, 5466.

SUPPLY:

Estimates in Committee-

Corrective Services and Administrative Services, 1922.

Vasta, Mr Justice, 5302.

1989

BILLS:

Children's Services Act and Another Act Amendment (2°), 1262, 1773; (Committee), 1777.

Electoral and Administrative Review Commission (2°), 167.

Matter of public interest-

ALP's record of accountability in Government, 26.

Ministerial statement-

Disability support services, 1271.

Points of order, 13, 630, 632.

Questions-

Brisbane City Council rates, 241.

Liberal Party State Director, 147.